

Table of Contents

Messiah-Richard Grayson with the Midnight Amblers 1

Messiah-Richard Grayson with the Midnight Amblers

URL:

www.eta-art.co.uk/metagallery/programme.html

12-6 pm Thursday to Saturday 5-28 January 2006 or by appointment

MESSIAH - Richard Grayson with The Midnight Amblers

A dual video projection, 1 hour 10 minute loop. 2004

"IF GOD BE FOR US WHO CAN BE AGAINST US?"

In 2003, Richard Grayson approached the Australian Country and Western Band The Midnight Amblers to collaborate on re-arranging and performing the libretto of Handel's Oratorio 'The Messiah'. Grayson's dual projection video MESSIAH is the outcome. Shifted from the matrix of classical music into that of country rock and blue grass, the lyrics, written by Charles Jennens in 1742, become strangely familiar, as if quoted from recent speeches by Tony Blair or George Bush. Words from the libretto caption the Amblers' apparently redneck image, but any seamless match between what we see and what we hear is undermined by the artist's editorial sleight of hand. The music is beguiling, but instead of Good Tidings, Grayson's MESSIAH brings us doubt - about current World Leaders who cast themselves as Saviours and a belief system used to justify extreme right wing political and social policies and American and British foreign policy in Iraq and the Middle East. Jennen's libretto for Handel's iconic celebration of the moment of Christian Redemption - Christmas - in Grayson's MESSIAH, becomes an ironic meditation on the destructive folly of fundamentalism.