

LILY GREENHAM

Pre-Eminence (Date Unknown)



The text read in *Pre-Eminence* takes its text from Josef Pieper's *The Four Cardinal Virtues*, a book in which the importance of Christian values are asserted as a counter to the "un-sound over-valuation of moderation that has made contemporary morality a hollow convention" (Pieper).

Greenham called her recorded sound work with the voice (often her own) 'lingual music':

Contrary to the traditional way of 'setting words to music', in 'lingual music' speech 'emerges as music'. The first step in working-process is the recording of a 'repertoire' of letters/syllables/other fragments/words and sentences. This is then used mechanically only. 'Lingual music'- pieces could not be performed live. The only sound-source used is the human voice (if not otherwise stated). The recorded material is electronically processed and the result leaves the listener at times in doubt whether he is listening to 'electronic music' or the human voice; at other times the voice comes over 'straight' and bears no trace of electronics.

Particularly pertinent to *Pre-Eminence*, she further develops the 'lingual music' concept:

In the pieces where I use tape-loops, either in part or exclusively, the 'musical' factor can be traced, i.e. one can hear how the music 'emerges'. When, for example, listening to a single loop, one is hardly aware of the musical aspect of speech; it is even doubtful whether one notices the particular pitch of the word. But from the moment the first superimposition of another loop is heard, the ear tends to distinguish 'music'. As a consequence, the more superimpositions of loops, the more 'chords' one perceives and one ends up hearing horizontal and vertical simultaneously.

Lily Greenham (1924-2001) was an Austrian-born writer, composer, visual artist, and renowned performer of concrete poetry, activities to which she approached as a self-confessed 'outsider'. The breadth of her work is now being increasingly acknowledged, her sound work particularly so with the help of *Lingual Music*, a two-disc collection of rare recordings released on Paradigm Discs in 2007.

Thanks to Clive Graham of Paradigm Discs for his help with presenting Lily Greenham's work.

Presented by Stiftelsen 3,14, PARABOL situates an adjacent ambience and mode of address in dialogue with the gallery's exhibitions.

Curated by Johnny Herbert