

Philip Glass – Koyaanisqatsi (2009)

Written by bluesever

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1. *Koyaanisqatsi* 3:27 2. *Organic* 4:57 3. *Clouds* 4:37 4. *Resource* 6:36 5. *Vessels* 8:12 6. *Pruitt Igoe* 7:50 7. *Pruitt Igoe Coda* 1:17 8. *Slo Mo People* 3:19 9. *The Grid - Introduction* 3:24 10. *The Grid* 18:05 11. *Microchip* 1:47 12. *Prophecies* 10:34 13. *Translations & Credits* 2:11
Voice of "Koyaanisqatsi" - Albert de Ruiter The Western Wind Vocal Ensemble Philip Glass Ensemble Michael Riesman – conductor

Philip Glass' score for Godfrey Reggio's 1983 film *Koyaanisqatsi* comes from one of his most fertile creative periods, soon after *Satagraha* and about five years after *Einstein on the Beach*, and it contains some of his most immediately appealing music. For listeners who are not likely to wade into one of his huge operas, *Koyaanisqatsi*'s manageable dimensions make it an ideal introduction to Glass' work (if there is in fact anyone out there who has not yet been introduced to it) because many of its sections are so memorably distinctive. The opening, with a broadly amplified very low bass intoning the film's title (which means "life out of balance" in Hopi) while the orchestra weaves an apocalyptically menacing web is one of Glass' most unforgettable inventions. The ululating chorus of mixed voices, "Vessels," at first unaccompanied, and then joined by the throbbing of instruments, is a marvel of open-throated lyricism that should dispel any stereotypical misconceptions of Glass as a rigidly mechanistic technician.

The 1983 soundtrack includes about 46 minutes of music, a little more than half the length of the film. The strongest tracks are included, and while the listener with a passion for completeness may want to seek out the complete soundtrack, released for the first time in 2009, there is plenty here to savor. Glass' ensemble, as always, performs with mind-boggling discipline and soulful commitment, and because of the darkly pessimistic tone of the film, with a stark and sobering gravity. His use of a large ensemble of orchestral instruments, as well as the Western Wind Vocal Ensemble, along with electronic instruments, allows him a wide palette, ranging from the warm of human voices to the high-tech pulsing of synthesizers. Careful engineering is integral to Glass' compositional process, so the CD's sound is certainly his own best realization of his artistic vision. ---Stephen Eddins, Rovi

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