



PERFORMANCE
PHILOSOPHY

BEING AND SHOWTIME ReVIEW

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ReViewer: Beverly Fresh

Artist Object of Focus: *Being And Showtime* by H. Peter Steeves

Nature of Repetition: In the ReView I will re-experience notions of time explored in "The About Time Show" (Chapter 6 of *Being And Showtime*) which repeats and extends Edmund Husserl's Phenomenology and Time-Consciousness. I first became interested in using common language to disorient the audience in a 2015 iteration of my traveling one-man show called "MR. MDWST." From 2017-2019 I further explored how language can dislocate time through guttural chanting, repetition, and call and response in "Wild American Dogs Big Time Traveling Tent Revival," another performance project. Reading Steeves' chapter on time revived and deepened my interest in the

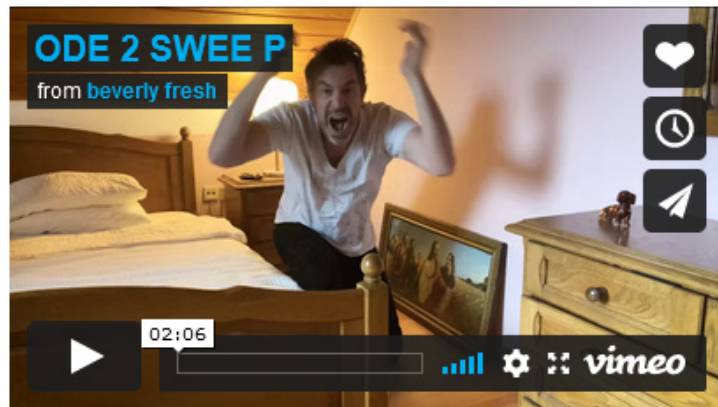


With this book Steeves recaptures the Greek notion of logos through 20th century phenomenology by showing us that thinking is inseparable from acting, and that this act has to take place in community and by a body in action. Each chapter in the book invites understanding not through a strict philosophical argument but through song, dance, magic tricks, and art intended to reveal insights into the subject we may never have considered before. My review is similarly and accordingly multimodal. Each component is summarized below.

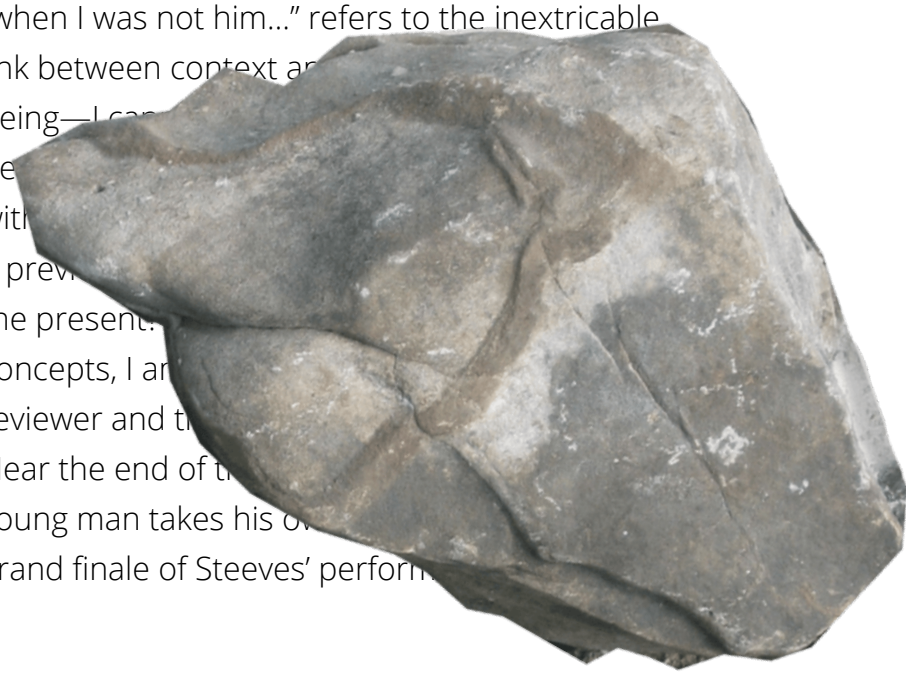
potential of vocal performance to confuse time and space and inspired me to compose “Ode to H. Peter Steeves” and to resurrect my own examination of time through a newly created series of multi-modal, multi-dimensional performances re-presenting Steeves’ investigation in new forms of action. This ReView will lead **Performance Philosophy** audiences to re-experience notions of time by intentionally disorientating through an expanded ReView format and the performance of language thus disrupting our shared experiences of time.

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ReVIEW OUTLINE The collection of performative lectures that comprise *Being And Showtime* by philosopher **H. Peter Steeves** shows us that to be alive is to perform, and that **there is no true, singular, or authentic state of being** but rather a constantly shifting series of performances dependent upon a given context. Each chapter and the very form of the book itself convey the “to-ness” of performance—a deliberate target which gives the performance meaning. In picking up the book, we physically begin to embody this concept as we engage with the book and become aware of ourselves performing the role of reader. Further, the form of the book initiates us to do something physical with the book itself (flipping, smelling, scratching, peeling etc.) and



1) Ode To Swee P aka H. Peter Steeves aka The Godfather of Philosophy by Beverly Fresh is a performance for video (approximately 2 minutes) that expands on the form of the Greek irregular ode, with the purpose of honoring and amplifying the person known as H. Peter Steeves and his work, *Being And Showtime*. With “Ode” I re-experience notions of time explored in “The About Time Show” (Chapter 6 of *Being And Showtime*) which repeats and extends Edmund Husserl’s Phenomenology and TimeConsciousness. For example, the opening refrain of “Ode” repeats the lines “now, no now, no now..,” activating the concepts of retention and protention. The line “when I was not him...” refers to the inextricable link between context and being—I can be with a previous concept, I am in the present. Near the end of the performance, a young man takes his own grand finale of Steeves’ performance.



eludes a passive reading experience. Throughout, Steeves juggles conditions and continually poses unexpected demands from this dual performance (both author and audience/readers) and the context (the book and the lecture). Expectations are destabilized and the default constraints of both viewership and format are loosened, freeing us to experience things anew—concurrently intellectual, emotional, and entertaining. In my review I will animate *Being And Showtime* through three distinct modes of performance and their respective contexts:


1) The Rogue

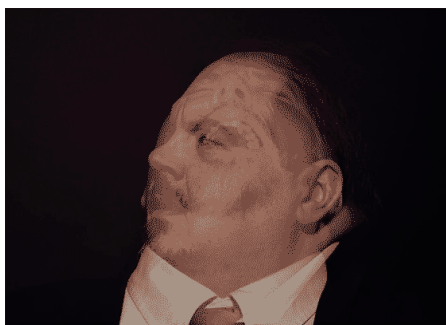
(role/performance), Video (context)

2) The Existential Disc Jockey

(role/performance), Pirate Radio Broadcast (context)

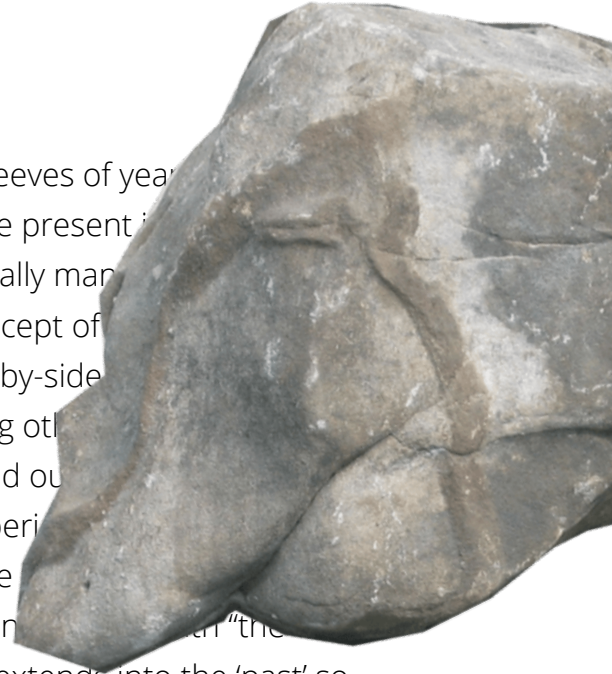
3) The Alternative Scholar (role/performance), Multimedia Web Page (context)

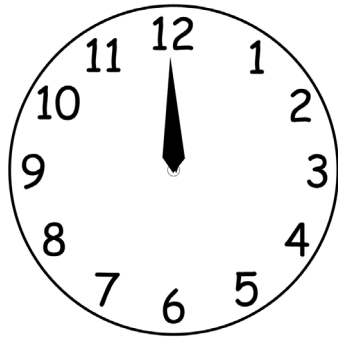
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where the H. Peter Steeves of year H. Peter Steeves of the present space on stage physically manifest phenomenology's concept of present appears side-by-side the result is something other than the concept of present and our but instead a new experience. The last words of "Ode" are when Steeves summons "the nowmoment actually extends into the 'past' so that what 'now' means is a thick slice of time—a portion of time that includes what we used to think of as the past, but now we realize is actually still the present." The entire performance of "Ode" takes place crouched near the corner of a bed as a nod to Steeves' reference to sleep as a little taste of death in Proust's *In Search of Lost Time* with a vocal delivery that is simultaneously compelling and unsettling. In the act of paying tribute, the rogue has taken the subject and made it a work completely his own, becoming part of Beverly Fresh's ongoing series of *odes* dating back to 2005.

2) The live broadcast, aired August 1, 2021 on the pirate radio project spaz.radio featured strange sonic song selections and cosmic commentary that correspond to and extend the themes in each chapter of *Being And Showtime*. Following Steeves' interpretation of logos being communal, songs were sourced with help from the *Weird Rap* online community. Just as *Being And Showtime* reimagines the book as an expanded and interactive object, my reimagining bends and





stretches the limits of a radio show through the guise of an introspective, psychedelic Wolfman Jack dj of pirate radio frequencies.



no now no now No now no now

EPILOGUE:

In the early 1900s Dada and Surrealism exploded the printed word through typographic experiments that challenged our notion of the page as a space. Mass-market publishing throughout the 60s and 70s created a new context for graphic artists, designers, and editors to step out from behind the stage and radically reconfigure what it means for something "to be a book." During this era, designers Jerome Agel and Quentin Fiore transformed media theorist Marshall McLuhan's seminal work into "an inventory of effects" in *The Medium Is the Massage*, a book aware of its "bookness" where the interaction of text, image and layout worked in concert to expand the authors concepts.

Being And Showtime is a contemporary masterpiece that launches from these precedents into an entirely new atmosphere. HPS proves he truly is The Hardest



This episode of the Weird Rap podcast and my ongoing service to the hip-hop community is dedicated to paying respect to the founders of this cultural movement and honoring the art form, with special attention to marginalized, underrepresented, and emerging artists.

3) All of this content will ultimately be embedded in a multimedia web page (**THIS WEB PAGE YOU ARE CURRENTLY NOT LOOKING AT**) featuring the outline described here (written as the alternative scholar) along with [hyperlinks](#), [gifs](#), [videos](#), [notations](#), and [additional text](#) amplifying various

Working Man in Academia, in this performative object that puts theory into action and brings it into being. This book is an all-embracing artform that could only come from one of the wildest minds at large. When The Godfather performs on page it is felt, and Steeves is undeniably generous and caring as a performer. He puts sincerity in showtime and offers us one of the most wig-blowing combinations of thought and printed matter in existence.

*Just as HPS reconfigures our notions of how a book behaves and his performative lectures call on us to perform our active viewership, my ReView of his work calls the passive reader into action. The hyperlinks and additional media on this page all directly relate to the contents of *Being And Showtime* while also opening up new experiences and possibilities of meaning.

This is not the end of the page.

points of the outline including more on “the ode,” “the rogue,” “the bed,” and the performance of self. The purpose of this ReView is to put the concepts of *Being And Showtime* into action and to think through them publicly via my own performance of being both a performer and a reviewer.



ODE 2 SWEE P

By Beverly Fresh
(lyrics for reference)

No now no now no now No now no now
no now No now no now no now Thinking
upon an itty bitty sweet peetah An so
below a time When I was not him And was
was not in And in was not on Our side or
up on top of gone Long is is on wrong
worn worn On gone! a little
a little deaaaade a little deaaaad,
deaaaade a little deaaaad, a little
ade (come on!) a little deaaaad, a
e deaaaade a little deaaaad, a little





deaaaade a little deaaaad, a little deaaaade
(come on!) The young man takes his own
hand “Nothing I cared In the lamb
days That time, would take ME Up
allow thronged loft By the shadow of
hand.....nowww” !NOT NOW! (Thiiiiick
iiiiice)

Works Cited

Steves, H. Peter. 2020. *Being and Showtime*. Chicago: Sawbuck. <https://www.beingandshowtime.com/>

Biography

BEVERLY FRESH (Zack Ostrowski) is a contemporary artist and musician.

Beverly has exhibited and performed throughout the United States and internationally, including China, Japan, Peru, Poland, Ukraine, Czech Republic, France and Germany. Recent notable exhibitions and performances include, REALLY SOMETHIN ELSE (2018), a solo exhibition at the DePaul Art Museum, MR MDWST - A REAL GOOD TIME (2015), a solo exhibition at the Cranbrook Museum of Art, TAKE THE BACK ROADS AND COLLECT MYSELF (2014) and a solo exhibition at the Pavillon am Milchhof (Berlin). He is the co-founder of sUPERIORbelly (1999), a multi-media art and design collective and record label based in Detroit, and cofounder of WILD AMERICAN DOGS (2013), an interdisciplinary art duo focused on producing experimental feature films and performance. In 2016, he co-founded the Archive of Midwestern Culture with Sociologist Greg Scott.

He has a BFA in Graphic Design/Interactive Media from the College for Creative Studies and an MFA from the 2D Department at Cranbrook Academy of Art, where he was the 2009 recipient of the Daimler AG Emerging Artist Award.

In 2017, he was the Visiting Designer-In-Residence and Head of the 2D Department at the Cranbrook Academy of Art. He is an Associate Professor and Area Head of Graphic Art at DePaul University in Chicago, IL.

In 2021, Beverly Fresh was recognized with the Meier Achievement Award for mid-career arts professionals.

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