

The Summation of Oranges



the Last Nightclub on the Edge
of the Desert

THE SUMMATION OF ORANGES

was first performed in the Penn Highland Building of East Liberty, in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, on Valentines Day, 1991. It was written and directed by Avi Wenger. Music was composed by Brian Kruman. Original slidework, by Thomas Fitzpatrick.

The Original Cast:

Sam C.	Colin Doty
The Holy Ghost	Lucy Vansickle
Zed	Avi Wenger
Chorus	Avi Bonhime
	Kim Caughey
	Sarah Erwin
	Michael Smith
	Jamee Vance
	Cory M. Backstreet

The Band:

trumpet	George Arner
guitar	Tony Janflone
bass	Scott Martin
saxophone	Lee Robinson
drums	Lou Ross
piano	Tom Salyers

THE SET: a nightclub, dirty, tattered, torn, somewhere at the edge of a Desert, where the wind blows hard and harsh, where the people are wizened, where feelings are skewed and emotions are extraordinarily real, where light plays tricks in the sand.

The set is half Desert and half Niteclub. the Desert is upstage from the Niteclub bound by three organically shaped and textured mountains, fifteen to twenty feet high. they occupy the entire upstage, left and right sections of the Desert. slides will be shown on these formidable shapes. a six piece band can be found nestled atop the stage right mountain. the musicians are dressed entirely in white and should be lit only by white, ethereal lights. somewhere in the Desert is a lifesize cardboard cut-out of the *three wise men*- Frank, Sammy and Dean. sand covers the Desert floor.

The Niteclub consists of eighteen cerulean blue tables shaped in the likeness of B-52 wings, ie. narrow and flared at the tips. the Niteclub is the domain of the audience. on each table is an alarm clock. the tables are arranged in a semi-circle, relative to an imaginary line which

divides Niteclub from Desert. the tables are laid out to form three 'vignette areas' nestled by the audience. members of the Chorus will play in these hollow recesses. above vignette area two (downstage center), hangs the front grill of a 1967 mustang, replete with working head lights. slides are shown on the side windows of the Niteclub and the three metal screens that dangle from the rafters above the imaginary line between Desert and Niteclub. an enormous rock occupies the downstage left area, while an open wooden sepulchre rests stage right center, overlapping the Niteclub and the Desert. there is a very large sandpile stage left, home to one called, Zed.

Zed is buried up to his neck in sand. Zed has a huge flowing beard. he wears a pair of orange sunglasses with round lenses. the Holy Ghost begins the performance from within the holy sepulchre. she is dressed entirely in black and reminiscent of a 'street walker'. Sam C. and the Chorus begin off stage, behind the center mountains. Sam C. is dressed on one side as Uncle Sam- blue coat, red pants- and on the other, in a robe- the prophet of the Desert. on one foot an army boot, while on the other, a sandle. he wears a red, white and blue top hat and is in white face. the six member Chorus are dressed in orange jumpsuits with a camouflage utility pack around their waists. they carry all their essentials.

The tech crew is divided between the slide projectors, manned from behind the audience, center rear of the Niteclub; and the lights and electronic equipment, worked from a double high, single wide scaffolding on the stage left side of the Niteclub.

As the audience enters bar room slides are projected onto the Niteclub's side windows. when the audience is seated the band begins **The Summation of Oranges** overture, *Walking in the Desert*. Zed and the Holy Ghost are visible. when the music ends...**Blackout**.

Part One, section one. *form is emptiness. emptiness is form.*

—[tape. Zed] soft yellow light against rafters—

[through many doors we gain access to the sanctum of truth. i think perhaps everything will work out. perhaps, i think, all things work out. i think perhaps, all thinks work out. all thinks, perhaps work, i think, therefore perhaps things work out...the subject changes as the door to the theatre opens. a soft yellow light shoots for the rafters, gets hung-up like lacy cobwebs under a cold moonlight. there above us like a shroud, coating our world brilliant, hang the stars, shining, (KMart blue light special. the three wise men are lit) *two for one, two for one*, a soft refrain, *two for one, two for one*. they enter to explore some ideas in the space they will perform]

—**The Desert Scene**—

should be performed very slowly. the disciples proceed into the Desert thru a notch between the central mountains and those stage right, above which are the musicians. up slides of sunrise at Bryce Canyon. the Chorus enters and immediately form a frozen tableau- they raise one of their own christ-like, above them- Sam C. arms outstretched, he issues a silent blessing. short freeze. then, in slow motion, the Chorus tumble into the Desert and begin to move in circles, around and around and around- sensuous circles- music up, percussion. sand. heat. camels. idolatry. gold. jewelry. strange twisting images. gyrating bodies. arms. legs. twisted images. dung.



—Chorus. slow movments around, across, and through the Desert. scene ends with frozen tableau of Chorus
pawing at Sam C's feet as they lay on the Desert floor—

it's been quite a long time...haven't been home in ages. i'm a nervous wreck. what do ya
think we're gonna do. what do ya think. oh, i'm a nervous wreck...we've been roaming in the
Desert...and here we are right out here in the middle...can't help but be in the middle...we
start that way don't we...

we do start that way...we start right here, right smack in the middle...as if we're in the
middle of something. as if we're smack dab in the middle of something...the wheels are
turnin' and we can't slow down...can't let go and ya can't hold on. ya can't go back and ya
can't stand still...if the thunder don't catch us, the lightnin' will...it's much larger than any of
us...it's as if we're startin' in the middle of something much larger than us...something we're
all contained within...

—as one odd beast, they slowly move toward the Niteclub—

—Sam C. upon the rock. the Chorus frozen in a tableau. up, lights in Niteclub. up, slides of bar room on
Niteclub windows—

i stand before you. i...i...i...i...i am...i...i...i...i am...i am. i am america. i am. i am here. i am
there. i am...i am everywhere. i am in your corners. i am in your crevices. i have penetrated
through your halls. i have passed through your doors. into and out of every house across this
land. i have touched each and every spec of earth. i...am am am am am am am am am...

—Sam C. continues with music accompaniment—

i am a leader

i have led

i will lead

i will lead

with my following

as it should be

let it be

let it be

let it be

i will always whisper

words of wisdom

though i may not be

aware

of my lines

let that be

let that be

let that be

you must believe

in me

in in in in

you must believe

in in in in

me

you must believe

in in in in

me

your education is hind sight
 it is in the rear which is behind.
 the closer to the future
 we come
 the further from education
 and our past our past
 our past
 as into this our present
 oh give unto me these your daily debts
 oh give unto me these your only arrears
 oh give unto me these she... she... she...
 —from the corner of his eye, Sam C. notices the Holy Ghost as she gets
 up and leaves the sepulchre—
 has such a nice tight behind
 i would like to see her
 naked to her ankles standing in sand.



—Chorus and Sam C. frozen. heads of Chorus turn as one toward the Holy Ghost—
 hello, i'm Lucy Van Sickle. i will be playing the Holy Ghost tonite.
 —the Holy Ghost wraps herself in an iridescent tafetta cocoon and is hoisted 12' above the ground, stage right,
 opposite Zed—
 —Chorus. the fisher vignette. Chorus reels out neon lines attached to their lifepacks. a church-like chant—
 we must pay attention to the lines
 both those to come
 and these that led
 lines
 are our only means of communication
 they end when they feel an ending
 and begin on the red
 where they should.

—Sam C—

i am i am i am i i am i am i i am the way...

—Chorus. padda cake, padda cake, jazz rhythm/ negro spiritual. Chorus takes sacrament—
he is the way...way...way...way...
yay, he is the way...way...way...way...
yay i can't find my way...way...way...way...
whaaay...i'm not lost, but i am confused...
yay, yay, yay...

—Sam C. prays over them. the Chorus brays soto voce—

when you're confused you must bray. you've gotta bray when you're confused, you must
bray. don't bite. just bray. bray. bray.
let us bow and bray.
bray like a lamb. bray like little lambs.

—Choral member. parody of sexual crisis. Chorus continues braying—

master, master, i am suffering. there is a struggle. i'm in pain. i'm suffering. it was in
childhood. it came to me. in the middle of a stark nite. in silence. it came to me. i was in the
middle of childhood. it was a stark nite. there was a terrible silence. and it came to me. oh i
am suffering. it is a struggle. yes, i am in pain.

—Sam C. the charade continues—

oh my son, you must not take hold of this...thing. do not place it in your hand. do not touch
this thing eversogently because it will grow, and you must not permit this thing to grow, for it
surely will, it surely will, it surely will overtake you. oh my son do not let these feelings rise.
these feelings, they will only cause you pain and suffering.



—Choral judas pulls Sam C. aside as troupe performs crazy anites which suggest betrayl, behind his back—
i need to speak wit you. i need to speak. you never know what they're gonna do. what they're
gonna do. what they're gonna do. you never know what. what. what they're gonna do. what
they're gonna do. what they're gonna do. what what what what they're gonna do. never know
what they're gonna do. never know what they're gonna do. never know. never know. you
never know what they're gonna do. you never know what they're gonna do. you never know
what they're gonna do. you never know what, what, what, what they're gonna do. what,

what, what, you never know...what what... what... they're gonna do...what...what are they gonna do what?????

—Sam C. subtle utterances and movements by the Holy Ghost—

multiplicity is our first characteristic, unity our last. the performance is happening within me. i feel it in the pipes. i feel it in the vents. in the silent whisperings.

—Sam C. the gospel. this is a prayer. Choral backdrop. each Choral member recites something personal: eenie meenie meinee mo; the pledge of allegiance; doxology; hey batter batter batter; etc. up slides on 'three screens'- gothic cathedral stained glass—

it is the relationship we have with ourselves. and it is with this relationship with ourselves we enter the relationship we have with our parents. and it is the relationship one has with their father, who art in heaven hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. and it is the relationship one has with their mother, oh mother hail, full of grace, the lord is with thee, blessed art thou among women and blessed is the fruit of thy womb. and it is the relationship one has with their siblings. and it is the relationship one has with their friends. and it is the relationship one has with their lovers. and it is the relationship one has with their work, for with the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou returnest unto the ground, for dust thou art and unto dust shalt thou return. and it is the relationship one has with their community. and it is the relationship that community has with other communities, and it is this relationship amongst communities that forms these united states of america. and it is the relationship these united states of america have with other nations. and it is this relationship amongst nations that forms this earth and it is this relationship, the relationship this earth has with the universe.



—slides end. everyone frozen. music up—

—old Zed wakes, pulls himself from the sandpile, picks up microphone and begins crooning. from their frozen positions, the Chorus in unison, grooves side to side as Zed moves behind them. Zed wears an orange turtle neck top, a pair of valentine's day boxer shorts emblazoned with hearts, a pair of orange socks and purple sneakers—

i got sardine breath, you know the rest,
and you know what i'm talkin about.
i got sardine breath, you know the rest, and i know you know what i'm talkin about.
yeah, i got sardine breath, you know the rest,
and i know you know what i'm talkin about.
cause i got me sardine breath, you know the rest, and i know you know what i'm talkin about. i gots sardine breath, you know the rest, i know you know what i'm talking about. i got sardine breath, and you know the rest, i know you know what i'm a talkin about. (2X)



Sam C. [Zed] pulls a beach chair from sandpile, which he sits on for remainder of part one. puts an american flag baseball cap on along with walkman. he's ready—
wherein we come full circle to the relationship we have with ourselves... [don't listen to him. take your umbrella. you don't need a weatherman to know which way the wind blows]...and it is from this relationship we have with ourselves we discover...[i could be out on the street. yeah, i could be out on the street now]...we discover it is the relationship we have within, for it is from this relationship within wherein.

—Zed—

just one small quirk in the chain of events and you could be out on the street. how do ya think i'm here in this sand pile, huh. answer me that. somewhere along the line i could have changed the direction things were taking.

—interaction between Sam C. and [Zed] Sam C. is surrounded by the Chorus—

we come full circle, yes to the relationship we have with ourselves, and it is from this relationship we have with ourselves wherein we discover that from this relationship we have with ourselves we are really in.

—overlap on *him* by Zed and Chorus—

[an insulated world. living in an insulated world. can't get out and ya can't get in. there's no where to go. just to stay here. just sit right here on this pile of sand. at least it's mine]...we are really in a relationship with...him...

—Chorus sings as they move toward the sepulchre, *three blind mice*—

hymn...hymn...hymn...

—lights dim way down. Sam C. in prayer. up, on 'three screens.' sequence of a man walking down a long shadowy hallway, finally opening a door as he turns to the camera. it is Zed—

father, dear father. how angry i seem to get at the drop of a hat. and you, oh my dear... you get it...you get the first punch thrown. and yet i have no arms to reach out. i cannot seem to stretch my hands...it's our presence...i look in the mirror and see...in the pane of glass, barely visible...gestures, furrows etched, the wrinkled brow, there's something in the eyes.

—end slide sequence—

i'm looking for...you. i've been looking for you. i've gotta find you. you... have been on my mind. i've been looking for you. i can't seem to find you. where are you. i have looked everywhere...i've looked over there. i just need to speak with you. i need you to hear what i have to say...i've got stains on my hands.

—Zed. the Chorus gets up, they walk in a circle, then sit down—

just wanderin' around. you're just wanderin' around. everyone is. just wanderin around. you have, what, an hour and a half to waste here, and you're doin just that, just wanderin' around. hell i've died. i've died, and i've been born. while you all are looking i've already died and i've been born again. i've been here and i'll be here again and again. i've got enough cells in my pocket to last a lifetime.

—Sam C. moves toward sandpile—

ahhh, i gotta talk to you. i gotta tell you something. i gotta tell you something. i know things. i know things, but i wanna know if i'm right. i just wanna know if i'm right. i can feel these things. i know where they are. they...are deep...deep. they're...they're...they're deep, deep inside. these things that are in there... hey...are...they are more than me. these things that are in there are...are...i...i...i...



—Zed—

i don't want nothin' from nobody. it's what people want from themselves that counts...(j'ne veux rien de personne. c'est c' que les gens veulent d'eux-mêmes qui compent.)

—Choral member—

that's a lousy line buddy

—Sam C. and [Zed]—

i don't know. i just feel coursing through me. i know i have something to do. i know there is something i must do. i know i am being called upon for something. just what is it. what do you want of me?

[ain't involved. i ain't involved no more. hell, i'm everywhere and i'm nowhere. ah ha ha ha ha. now that's a good line, buddy. i created this]

(j' ne suis pas impliqué. je ne suis plus impliqué. que diable, j' suis partout et j' suis nulle part. ah ha ha ha ha. et voilà: c'est un bon maxime, mon ami. j'ai créé ça)

—Sam C—

so there is an order...and what is my mission. what are my orders, sir. what are my orders?...my order...to do. in order to do what? my responsibility, what is my responsibility? what must i do? what is the necessity...the necessity of this...

—Choral member—

so whatya think? huh, think you're makin a break thru? how, how, how ya doin? think you're makin a break thru? think ya gotta break thru somewhere, huh? think, think, think you're gonna make a break thru?



—Zed—

but i left it a long time ago. left it to the likes of you, claimin' a bigger stake in this thing then i ever woulda wanted. i'm content with this here sandpile. sure wouldn't want the weight a the whole shabang restin' on my shoulders. nah, i left it a long time ago, to the likes of you. it's your business now. pay homage to your gods. erect those edifices, where you pray and count your change. and don't forget to keep a count a your change... no, no, you do what you need. but leave me out of it.

(mais j'ai quitté ça il ya longtemp. j' l'ai laissé au gens comme toi, réclayant de pieu de cette chose plus grand que que je ne jamais voulu. je suis content ici même avec cette tas de sable çà. j' ne veule pas le shabang entier pesant sur mes épaules sûrement. nah! j' le quitté il y a longtemps, à les gens comme toi. c'est à toi maintenant. payez l'hommage à tes dieux, édifiant tes endoits, où tu pries, et comptes ta monnaie. n'oubliez pas de garder tes monnaies. fais ce qu'il t' faut. me laisses-moi l'a dehors.)

—Sam C. [Zed] and {Chorus}—

i am a leader. i must lead. i have led. i have a following. through me, your work is done... [you've taken it upon yourself to build that city upon the hill]...i do what i do for you...[when you see your father walking down the path]...(expectant look by Sam C.)...[cut the line]...but you need me to fulfill your business...[cut him down]...here...to make it grow, to help it spread and flourish...[ain't it good enough just to be]...here...[it's hard enough]...

{here, here} ...[it's hard enough just to be]

—{Choral members and [Zed]}—

{everywhere around us people are holding on to nothing when there's nothing left to lose...some are willing to play with time, others are committed...too much liberty is emptiness}....without me where are you...

[i let the sink run to keep me company. yeah, i let the sink run, to keep me company]

—Sam C—

don't you care. don't you want me to do well in life, huh?

—Zed—

yer wastin yer time. wastin yer time. you're fritterin it away. fritterin it away, boy.

—Sam C—

ahh, i know you love me. still, i'm afraid of you and i do what i do and i act the ways in which i act to protect myself. i am afraid. in fear i walk.

—Zed—

ain't nothin to be afraid of. things just is, boy, i been tryin to tell you that. things just is. there's an order but there ain't no one in charge. and there ain't no plan per se. it's always the beginning and it's always the end, cause we're always right smack in the middle.

—Sam C—

oh my, old man i want you here, right here. i want you in my corner lookin over my shoulder. i wanna feel you. i want you right here. yeah. you were that shadowy figure that came to me in the middle of the nite.

i did not know you but i loved you. i love you more than i know and i love you more than i am willing to express...i'm just afraid...yes, i'm afraid. i walk with fear upon the cold pavement of the city streets aimed in a direction going...

—{Choral member} while remaining members, soft refrain, 'one two tthree four' throughout section—

{one two three two three four, one two three four..... i think you need a vacation. take a vacation. you'll feel better when you come back. you'll be a new person. i think you should go away. you need to relax. it's time for you to take a vacation. take a vacation}

—Zed leaves sandpile and moves into Niteclub. he breaks character with references to Desert Storm. the war began opening nite of *Summation*—

shadows in the Desert. time slowly ticking away. clasped by fear and hatred, licking the dry white sand, they flock. an inexorable silence upon a vast and endless landscape, waiting. i've been preparing for this for over six months. i went into the Desert. i walked amongst the rocks. i moved across the white sand, sat upon the ground- the sunrises, the sunsets, the wind...his, this could be the beginning of the end of the world.



—Sam C—

reach deep inside. grasp at this world. i barely touch its skin, old man. old man... resent...
resentment. i resent you. i just resent you... him...

—{Chorus}—

{because he helps...because he gives to you...what you need...because he is...
you...can't...spurn the one...you can't spurn the ones who...spurn the ones who...you can't
spurn the ones who...spurn the ones who...give...can't spurn... ake it. you just can't take it. if
you can't take it then you oughta get outta, you oughta get outta, you oughta get outta- the
kitchen boy}

—Sam C—

god i can't stand you, you got an answer for everything.

—Zed at audience and Sam C. Chorus begins wrapping Sam C. in black gauze—

wants me to be perfect. you wanna take my faults away. you want me to be without faults.
well i am without faults, cause these faults ain't with me all the time. and it don't matter
anyhow, cause these faults are mine and i'm better for havin' 'em. i can't get rid of 'em but i
can try an tickle 'em, try an understan' 'em. i can feel 'em. i can play with 'em. they can be
mine. all mine. cause they are mine. these are my faults and i lay 'em out to you so you'll
know what they look like. and it's me. i come with faults. they ain't attractive, they're
misshapen, strange, difficult to grasp, ornery little fuckers, but they come with me. and
they're mine, all mine.

(t' veux qu' j' sois parfait. t' veux me laver de mes fautes. alors, j' suis sans fautes, parce que
ses fautes n' sont pas avec moi tous le temp. et c'importe pas quand même parce qu' elles
sont les miennes et j' suis mieux pour les avoir. j' n' peux pas m'en débarrasser mais j' peux
essayer les titiller, essayer les comprendre. j' peux les sentir, peux jouer avec eux. elles
peuvent être les miennes. complètement les miennes. parce qu' elles sont les miennes. ce sont
mes fautes et j' les expose en plein jour qu' tu les saches. et voilà, c'est moi. je viens avec
mes fautes. elles n' sont pas belles, elles sont petites salopes obstinée, mais elles viennent
avec moi. elles sont à moi, complètement à moi.)

—Sam C. and {Chorus}. up missile slides which look like a church spire, on 'three screens'. at 'cloak' Sam is
fully wrapped. tableau **Freeze**...the sepulchre is turned and Sam C. is placed inside. a muslin tunic with outline
of amerika is draped over and a license plate nailed to it—

if i could only trust him. 'do not forsake me for i am the way'.....{come on you're making a
fool of yourself. you gotta perform in front of these people. look at you. get up. you can't let
them see you like this. groveling. come on get up. stand up. you've gotta do your big
number}...in order to what...do what. in order to what. what must i do. oh, for i have sinned
before thee. yes, i have been merciless in my actions toward you. my anger...i have worn this
anger as a cloak...as a cloak of fear...oh...oh...oh...oh, i can't stand this...i hate you. alright,
there i've said it. now i am going to topple you. i am going to turn your world upon itself. i
am taking over. i am taking over. and in my image create an edifice. i know exactly what i
have to do. i will erect an edifice in my name everywhere the world over, for i am the way. to
get anywhere they, they will have to go through my doors. they will have to go through me.
yeeeeeeeess...i've got plenty of images i'm carting around.

—off slides—

—Choral member. up slides of sarcophagus on Niteclub windows—

fuck dat shit, man. dat's all i can say. fuck dat shit. 'ts'gettin' on my nerves... he's been talkin'
this shit since anno domini. always tryin' to get me to do what i don't wanna...i ain't prayin'
to and i ain't dyin' for no white man. offerin' us some kinda salvation. all's we got's is stale

crackers. an now he wants we should build him some kinda immortal edifice. fuck dat shit man. fuck dat shit.

—Chorus sings around sepulchre—

he's gone now...and nothin's gonna bring him back...he's gone...nothin's gonna bring him back...gone...gone. gone. gone...ain't nothin's gonna bring him back...

—Choral member. Chorus continues soto voce—

i just want you to know. we're different. yes, we're very different and well, well i just want you to know that...i...i can't live like you expect. i don't think it's appropriate anymore. i think we need new images. i, i, i just wanted you to know, maybe if you come back it'll be different. i don't know. i just don't know.

—Choral member—

the man can't be, can't always be lookin for somethin, some kinda hidden meaning. i just don't know.

—Choral member—

well we've got ourselves.

—Choral member—

that has meaning for me.

—the band strikes up, the Chorus goes into a dance and song. vaudeville meets transylvanian gypsy jews, once in yiddish, and once in english—

monday nothing, tuesday nothing, wednesday and thursday nothing, friday for a change, a little more nothing, saturday, once more nothing.

-BREAK-

(the Choral tummler tells a joke)

amerika nothing, soviets nothing, israel and iraq nothing, mooses, mohammed and christ almighty, all religions just more nothing.

-BREAK-

(the Choral juggler)

george bush nothing, gorbachov nothing, castro an' khadafi nothing, sadaam hussein is less than a nothing, shimon p'rez, another nothing.

-BREAK-

(the Choral chanteuse sings a song)

poetry nothing, theatre nothing, quodlibet and this piece nothing, city theatre public theatre all a bunch a nothing, nothing nothing nothing. nothing nothing, no thing nothing, this thing and that thing, nothing, everything and something a whole lotta nothing. nothing nothing nothing.

—off slides. Choral member, spoken rather matter of factly and quietly. long slow fade on lights—
i sure hope there's no meaning. everything just is. just is. it just is.

—Holy Ghost—

(birthing sounds)

—Zed—

there's nothin' out there...just the wind whippin' up the sand.

—Holy Ghost—

(birthing sounds)

—Zed—

nothin' ... 'cept the wind whippin' up the sand.

—Holy Ghost—

(birthing sounds)

—Zed—

nothin' out there...just the wind...the wind...whippin' up the sand.

—Blackout—