

 **The Kitchen**
40TH ANNIVERSARY

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For Immediate Release

◆ **PERFORMA 11**

The Kitchen and Performa present the New York premiere of Robert Ashley's opera, *That Morning Thing*, Saturday–Monday, November 19–21, 2011

Visual art performance biennial celebrates iconic multi-media artist & composer

New York, NY, October 19, 2011—As part of **Performa 11**, **The Kitchen** and **Performa** will co-present the New York premiere of **Robert Ashley's** legendary opera in three acts, ***That Morning Thing***, on **Saturday** through **Monday, November 19–21**. Created in 1967, *That Morning Thing* features men and women's voices and eight dancers. Curated by Performa's **Mark Beasley**, performances will take place at **8:00 P.M.** each night at The Kitchen (512 West 19th Street) with an additional performance on **Sunday, November 20** at **3:00 P.M.** Tickets are **\$30**.

A pioneer of mixed media musical theater and opera-for-television, Ashley will present *That Morning Thing*, which is split into four parts—three acts plus an epilogue. The first part is *Frogs*, in which a male speaker reads a lecture on language and miscommunication, and is accompanied by a chorus. Next, *Four Ways (or A Cool, Well-Lighted Room)* presents male performers opening and closing brief cases in a rhythm that veils the voices of female performers in conversation. Then, *Purposeful Lady Slow Afternoon* features a woman describing a sexual encounter. Finally, in *She Was a Visitor*, a male speaker repeats the title of the piece while a female chorus chant selected phonemes.

That Morning Thing, evocative of the socio-political climate of the era, was performed only three times in the late 1960s—at the ONCE Festival in Ann Arbor, Michigan, in 1968 and later at the Cross Talk Intermedia Festival in Tokyo, Japan, and the Center for Contemporary Music, Mills College, in Oakland, California. However, the opera acquired its reputation through rumor and the famous recordings of two sections, *Purposeful Lady Slow Afternoon* and *She Was A* in the 1970s. This new staging by the writer/composer himself promises to be the definitive version of the opera.

The cast of 17 performers includes: **John Hagan, "Blue" Gene Tyranny, Imani Uzuri, Fast Forward, Dave Ruder, Aliza Simons, Gelsey Bell, Paul Pinto, Megan Schubert, Amirtha Kidambi, Brian McCorkle, Aaron Siegel, Kimberly Young, Samantha McHale, Madeline Wilcox** and **Samita Sinha**. *That Morning Thing* is directed by **Fast Forward** with lighting by **David Moodey** and sound by **Tom Hamilton**.

That Morning Thing is part of a city-wide celebration of Robert Ashley's work taking place as part of Performa 11, ranging from an educational talk by Robert Ashley at the Performa Hub to re-performances by Varispeed and concerts at Incubator Arts.

About Robert Ashley

Robert Ashley (b. 1930, Ann Arbor, Michigan) is a New York-based composer, opera and theater writer, and director, widely considered the father of opera-for-television and a pioneer in mixed media musical theater. He has composed more than a dozen operas, many of which have toured internationally and appeared on television worldwide. In the 1960s and 70s, Ashley traveled with ONCE, a music-theater ensemble, and the composers' collective Sonic Arts Union. The opera-for-television *Perfect Lives* (1977-83), commissioned by The Kitchen in New York and co-produced with Great Britain's Channel Four, is perhaps his best-known work. Other major operas include *Dust* (1999-01); *Now Eleanor's Idea* (1993); *Atalanta (Acts of God)* (1981-87); *Perfect Lives* (1977-83), and *That Morning Thing* (1968).

About Performa 11

Performa 11 (November 1–21, 2011) is the fourth edition of the internationally acclaimed biennial of new visual art performance presented by Performa, the leading organization dedicated to exploring the critical role of live performance in the history of twentieth-century art and to encouraging new directions in performance for the twenty-first century. For more information: www.performa-arts.org.

Funding Credits

Major support for Performa 11 provided by Toby Devan Lewis; Lambent Foundation; Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts; National Endowment for the Arts; David and Elaine Potter Foundation; Performa Board of Directors; and Performa Producers Circle.

Music programs at The Kitchen are made possible with generous support from The Amphion Foundation, the Mary Flagler Cary Charitable Trust, The Aaron Copland Fund for Music, and with public funds from the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs and the New York State Council on the Arts, a state agency.

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ABOUT THE KITCHEN

The Kitchen is one of New York City's oldest nonprofit performance and exhibition spaces, showing experimental work by innovative artists, both emerging and established. Programs range from dance, music, and theatrical performances to video and media arts exhibitions to literary events, film screenings, and artists' talks. Since its inception in 1971, The Kitchen has been a powerful force in shaping the cultural landscape of this country and has helped launch the careers of many artists who have gone on to worldwide prominence.

Box Office Information:
212.255.5793 ext. 11
Tue-Sat, 2-6pm

The Kitchen
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