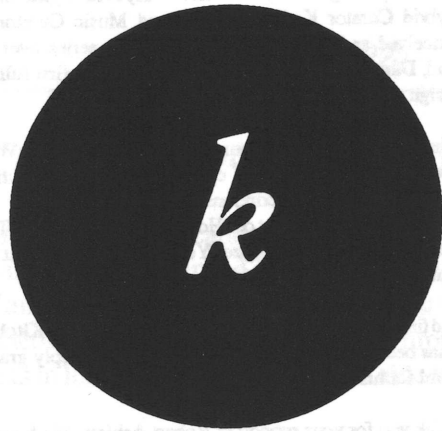


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*The Kitchen Center for Video · Music · Dance  
Performance · Film and Literature*

512 West 19th Street  
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THE KITCHEN

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Welcome to the first of a series of Distance Learning at The Kitchen.

This will be a season of many firsts here at The Kitchen. It marks the official opening of two new series — Hybrid Nights and Tone evenings. Hybrid Curator Kathryn Greene and Music Curator Ben Neill each conceived and developed their respective series over this past season. And, *Dance In Progress* (DIP), will enjoy its first full season under the design and curation of Neil Greenberg.

John Hobbs has designed our first Home Page on the World Wide Web. You may use it to keep an eye on all Kitchen activities, as well as to purchase tickets, subscriptions and Kitchen T-shirts. David Azarch is relieved to announce that our Home Page also contains The Kitchen's first Video Collection Catalogue. You can purchase or rent many of the most significant video works of the past 20 years.

And finally, this year Phillip Bahar launched our first Kitchen subscription. It has been increasingly successful. We are deeply grateful to Jonathan Soard for his visual design and concept.

Thank you for your support of Robert Ashley. We hope to see you back here again very soon.

Lauren Amazeen  
Executive Director

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The Kitchen, Composers' Forum, Inc. and the New School for Social Research  
present

## Through the Distance: Musical Connections

# Empire

Robert Ashley

with Thomas Buckner, Sam Ashley, Jacqueline Humbert

November 18, 1995

### ABOUT THROUGH THE DISTANCE

With the advent of multi-media communication technologies, "all the world's a stage" is more true now than when Shakespeare originally penned it. *Through the Distance: Musical Connections*, a radically innovative performance series, explores current artistic and technological advances which enable multi-site simultaneous performances to occur. Through midi software and interactive keyboard technology, artists in locales across the globe are able to create simultaneous performances from their various sites.

When performers no longer need to share one stage (or even one continent) in order for a live performance to occur, when simultaneity of performance crosses time zones, when instruments are digital and improvisation is computer-driven, long-held assumptions about the essence of performance are challenged.

In this ongoing collaborative series, leading composer-performers at the forefront of this exciting new territory present multi-site simultaneous interactive audio-visual performances. In addition to the performance events, based locally at The Electronic Cafe at The Kitchen, each artist (during the week preceding the performance) participates in an audio and on-line discussion forum which accompanies each event through the New School DIAL program and which allows for discussion of the work and the history and development of the field.

*Special thanks to Chase Manhattan Bank's SMARTS Program for their support of Distance Learning at The Kitchen. And thanks to the Mary Flagler Cary Charitable Trust, the Aaron Copland Fund for Music, and the Virgil Thomson Foundation, Ltd. for their support of music programming at The Kitchen.*

## EMPIRE

### Program Notes

*Empire* is one of the “orbital” anecdotes in the opera, *Atalanta (Acts of God)*. It occurs in that part of the opera that is devoted to the character, Willard, who is taken to represent the narrative element in opera. As such, *Empire* has the form of fanciful, exaggerated story telling in one voice, and that voice is heckled in a way by other voices who have probably heard the story too many times.

*Atalanta (Acts of God)* is built around three characters, Max, Willard and Bud who are taken to represent the three aspects of opera itself (the visual, the narrative and the musical) and who in another meaning are taken to represent the three, “golden apples” of the Atalanta myth (one of the most ancient of European myths). Each of these characters is developed in a separate, “small” opera of 90 minutes or more.

The narrative form throughout *Atalanta (Acts of God)* is the “anecdote”, and in each of the separate, “small” operas there is a central anecdote sung by the character himself — as a form of courtship to the great Atalanta. This central anecdote is “orbited” by other anecdotes, sung by other voices, that can be combined in many ways. Thus, it is intended that different performances of *Atalanta (Acts of God)* can tell radically different stories and, thus, the opera itself can have a kind of mythical existence — no two performances will have been the same and, so, no two audience members from different performances will “understand” the myth to have the same meaning.

*Empire* is just one of the dozens of stories in the myth of the opera. (A complete performance of *Atalanta (Acts of God)* takes three evenings and totals about nine hours of music. It was last performed in London as part of the Camden Festival in 1987.)

*Empire* purports to be the story of the invention of tomato soup. It is set in the years of the Great Depression and its main characters are the “tramps” or “hobos” — the “extra men” — who rode the railroads seeking their fortunes (or simply their existence) wherever they landed. It is peopled by the homeless and the hungry. When I composed the piece it was in a spirit of humor (and admiration of these people), and I could hardly imagine that it would become as applicable to today as it is.

## ABOUT THE PERFORMERS

Born in Ann Arbor, Michigan in 1930 ROBERT ASHLEY was educated at the University of Michigan and the Manhattan School of Music. At the University of Michigan, he worked at the Speech Research Laboratories (psycho-acoustics and cultural speech patterns), and was employed as a Research Assistant in Acoustics at the Architectural Research Laboratory.

During the 1960s, Ashley organized the ONCE Festival, the annual festival of contemporary performing arts in Ann Arbor which, from 1961 to 1969, presented most of the decade's pioneers of the performing arts. He directed the highly influential ONCE Group, a music-theater ensemble that toured the United States from 1964 to 1969. In 1969, Ashley was appointed Director of the Center for Contemporary Music at Mills College (Oakland, California), where he organized the first public-access music and media facility. From 1966 to 1976 he toured throughout the United States and Europe with the Sonic Arts Union, the composers' collective that included David Behrman, Alvin Lucier and Gordon Mumma.

With the support of the Rockefeller and Ford Foundations, Ashley produced and directed, *Music with Roots in the Aether: video portraits of composers and their music*, a 14-hour television opera/documentary about the work and ideas of seven American composers, which premiered at the Festival d'Automne à Paris in 1976 and has since been shown worldwide in over 100 television broadcasts and closed-circuit installations.

The Kitchen (New York) commissioned *Perfect Lives* in 1980, an opera for television in seven half-hour episodes. The opera was co-produced with Great Britain's arts network, Channel Four, in August 1983. First broadcast in Great Britain in April 1984, *Perfect Lives* has since been seen on television in Austria, Germany, Spain and the United States and has been shown at film and video festivals around the world. It is widely considered to be the precursor of “music-television.”

Staged versions of the operas *Perfect Lives*, *Atalanta (Acts of God)*, and the tetralogy, *Now Eleanor's Idea*, have toured throughout Europe, Asia and the United States.



**THOMAS BUCKNER** ("An extraordinary baritone, a leading vocalist in any 20th century idiom!" The Village Voice) has won a special niche as a leading performer and producer of avant-garde music. A baritone with a wide range of experience in a variety of genres, he is best known for his work with contemporary composers and improvisers.

In association with Robert Ashley, he has performed as a lead singer in the opera, *Atalanta (Acts of God)*, which toured throughout Europe and the United States, and was recorded on Lovely Music, Ltd. He currently tours with *eL/Aficionado* (which was written for him by Ashley), *Improvement*, which was recently released on Nonesuch/Elektra, *Foreign Experiences* and *Now Eleanor's Idea*. These four operas were premiered at the Avignon Festival and presented at the Strasbourg Music Festival, the Next Wave Festival in New York and at Site Santa Fe. Buckner has worked regularly with the composer Roscoe Mitchell, first in the trio, *Space*, and currently with the *Roscoe Mitchell New Chamber Ensemble*, which recently released the critically acclaimed CD, *Pilgrimage*, on Lovely Music. He appeared singing his own compositions at the Asian Contemporary Music Festival in South Korea, and at the "Other Minds" Festival in San Francisco.

Buckner's two recent solo CDs on Lovely Music, *Full Spectrum Voice* and *Sign of the Times*, both feature works commissioned especially for him. His performances have also been recorded on 1750 Arch, Musical Heritage, Black Saint, Nonesuch/Elektra, Mode and New World.

Recent performances include Mahler's *Songs of a Wayfarer* with the Philippine Philharmonic Orchestra and the world premiere of Francisco Feliciano's opera *Ashen Wings* in Manila. He is a member of the improvising quartet, *Act of Finding*, who have just released a CD on O.O. Discs.

In Berkeley, California, where he resided from 1967-83, Buckner founded 1750 Arch Concerts, which presented over 100 events a year for eight years, and 1750 Arch Records, which released over 50 record albums. He was vocal soloist and co-director of the 23-piece Arch Ensemble, which performed and recorded the work of 20th Century masters and premiered many works by American composers. Since 1989, he has curated the World Music Institute's "Interpretations" series in New York.

For many years **SAM ASHLEY** has been developing an approach to theater/performance which incorporates (he thinks) "shamanic" mystical experience. He has created and performed several original pieces that derive from this theme. He has toured various solo pieces (including *Seeing Things* and *How To Make Things Go Away*) in the USA and abroad. In addition, he has been singing professionally for over 12 years with principal roles in 5 contemporary operas by Robert Ashley.

Sam Ashley has been composing and performing electronic music for more than 15 years, both solo and collaboratively. He has done various kinds of consulting and project work and has designed digital audio signal processing systems. And he sometimes works in video. One video/multimedia project, *Tarzan in the World Capital of Civilization*, uses audio and film source material he recorded/shot on an expedition to the jungles of the Amazon and Orinoco rivers.

**JACQUELINE HUMBERT** is a recording, performance and visual artist as well as a designer for film, television and live performing arts. Her costumes, sets and visual environments for performance, often in collaboration with leading television and film directors, composers, choreographers and artists, have been seen on stages and in broadcasts throughout Europe and North America, notably, Robert Ashley's *Perfect Lives*, a television opera, and *Atalanta (Acts of God)*, in which she also performed as the *Odalisque*. Her original performance works, in collaboration with composer David Rosenboom, *J. Jasmine...My New Music* and *Daytime Viewing*, have been recorded and released on records and cassettes.

Through her custom design business, Avant-Garter Fashions, she has produced creations for San Francisco based artists, DanceArt Company, Zaccho SF Dance Theater, MaFish Co., the Oberlin Dance Collective, and Alonzo King's, *Lines*. She designed costumes for the Oakland Ballet's production of choreographer, Emily Keeler's work, *The Awakening*, and is continuing work with the company on a new ballet of Thornton Wilder's *Our Town*.

Ms. Humbert developed the leading role of *Linda* in Robert Ashley's opera, *Improvement (Don Leaves Linda)*, part of a four-opera set, *Now Eleanor's Idea*. A CD recording of this opera has recently been released by Elektra/Nonesuch Records. She is also a principal in the other three operas of the quartet, *eL/Aficionado*, *Foreign Experiences*, and *Now Eleanor's Idea*, for which she is also costume and set designer. Ms Humbert studied visual and performing arts at the University of Michigan and York University, Toronto. She currently resides in Southern California.



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*This list reflects gifts received as of November 14, 1995.*

# THE KITCHEN CABINET

The Kitchen greatly appreciates the enthusiasm and support offered by our Kitchen Cabinet. Your efforts allow us to continue serving as a laboratory for the arts, inviting artists to push the barriers which traditionally confine them and create exciting collaborations and innovative experiences. Please contribute as generously as you can.

- \$100 +
  - Advance notice for all Kitchen performances
  - Acknowledgment in all Kitchen playbills (with your permission)
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- \$250 +
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  - 2 invitations to a private, post-performance reception with the artists
  - All of the above
  
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- \$2,500 +
  - Signed Philip Glass/Annie Liebowitz poster
  - 2 invitations to a performance and reception with a noted Kitchen artist in a private home
  - Invitations to all private, post-performance receptions with the artists
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- \$5,000 +
  - A second complimentary pass for the 1995/96 Season (9/95 - 7/96)
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To join The Kitchen Cabinet,  
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## ABOUT COMPOSERS' FORUM, INC.

Founded in 1935 as a program of the WPA Federal Artist Project, Composers' Forum's first concert was presented on October 30, 1935. The format of the early concerts included a question and answer period, led by a noted moderator, after the compositions were performed. This format became a model for many organizations. Many of America's finest composers have found a forum for their work in the Composers' Forum concert series. Muhal Richard Abrams, Robert Ashley, Milton Babbitt, John Cage, Elliott Carter, Ornette Coleman, Aaron Copland, Henry Cowell, Morton Feldman, Lou Harrison, Amina Claudine Myers, Conlon Nancarrow, Pauline Oliveros, Ruth Crawford Seeger, Edgard Varèse and La Monte Young are a few of those who have been presented by the Forum during their lifetime.

Now in its 60th year, Composers' Forum remains an advocate for authentic music making. We are committed to presenting and supporting composers whose diversity of style and approach reflects present reality. Our New Music/New Composers readings provide a forum for composers seeking exposure to audiences and performers. For established composers, we offer the chance to showcase new directions in a series known for bringing to New York City innovative and adventurous musical projects from around the world.

Composers' Forum is funded by the National Endowment for the Arts, New York State Council on the Arts, NYC Department of Cultural Affairs, ASCAP, BMI, Mary Flagler Cary Charitable Trust, Consolidated Edison, The Aaron Copland Fund for Music, The Ann & Gordon Getty Foundation, The Jerome Foundation, The Joyce Mertz-Gilmore Foundation, and the Friends of Composers' Forum. Additional funding is provided from the Meet the Composer Fund with support from the Mary Flagler Cary Charitable Trust, the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs, and the New York State Council on the Arts.

## ABOUT THE NEW SCHOOL'S DISTANCE INSTRUCTION FOR ADULT LEARNING (DIAL) PROGRAM

The New School for Social Research joins The Electronic Cafe at The Kitchen and Composers' Forum, Inc. in presenting *Through the Distance: Musical Connections*. This innovative program takes advantage of technology that makes it possible to present simultaneous, interactive multi-site musical performances.

Leading composers-performers at the forefront of exploring this exciting new territory collaborate in a series of interactive audio-visual events which include: live concerts at The Kitchen and distant venues in Santa Monica, Tokyo and Amsterdam; an opportunity to meet the artists through live teleconferencing before each concert; and an on-line asynchronous discussion forum in the week following each event. A World Wide Web home page will capture highlights of the series. (<http://dialnsa.edu/home/musicafe.html>)

The teleconferencing and on-line discussion components of this series are part of the New School's Distance Instruction for Adult Learning (DIAL) Program. DIAL offers a wide range of courses from the New School's regular curriculum to students across the country and around the world. Through asynchronous computer conferencing, students and instructors participate in courses at times and places convenient to them.

If you would like to participate in the teleconferencing and/or on-line discussion forums as part of this series, please call the DIAL office at (212) 229-5880.

## ABOUT THE ELECTRONIC CAFE INTERNATIONAL™

Sherrie Rabinowitz and Kit Galloway pioneered the Electronic Cafe™ and telecommunicative arts in 1977 with the "Satellite Arts Project," a collaboration with NASA, which has a mixed media, multi-screen, multi-location event exploring virtual space. In 1980 they produced the "Hole In Space" installation, which put Lincoln Center on the West Side of Los Angeles. Over a period of three days, people in Los Angeles encountered people in New York on a life-sized, giant screen and vice versa (a virtual street corner). In 1984, Rabinowitz and Galloway first introduced the Electronic Cafe™ as part of the Los Angeles Olympic Arts Festival, connecting five culturally diverse communities and the Museum of Contemporary Art in a multi-media and computer network. They have facilitated an ever-increasing global network of Cafes, and regularly host an eclectic range of telecommunicative events, including music events and interactive dance, Telepoetics, Virtual Reality study groups, and their annual Global New Year's Eve Telebration. The Kitchen joined this international network in 1994.



**THE KITCHEN GRATEFULLY ACKNOWLEDGES THE SUPPORT OF THE FOLLOWING CONTRIBUTORS:**

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*The use of cameras, video and audio recording devices, and any other recording devices is expressly prohibited during the performance.  
 The Kitchen would like to thank Jennifer Tipton for her gift of the first floor repertory light plot.*

**THE KITCHEN'S  
 WORLD WIDE WEB HOME PAGE**

<http://www.panix.com/kitchen>

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*The Kitchen Wish List*

The Kitchen is looking for generous individuals to contribute to its efforts in presenting emerging contemporary artforms. The Kitchen is unable to purchase many items which would greatly enhance our facilities and allow us to continue presenting high-quality productions. To this extent, we ask for your assistance in collecting the following materials:

- |                          |                             |                           |
|--------------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------------|
| theatrical supplies      | volt meter                  | washing machine           |
| theatre seats            | photocopier                 | dryer                     |
| handtruck                | IBM or Macintosh computers  | poster frames             |
| van or other vehicle     | computer software           | carpeting/rugs            |
| pianos/synthesizers      | video/audio equipment       | spiral staircase          |
| light fixtures/bulbs     | video/audio tapes           | a marquee or banner       |
| fluorescent tubes        | DAT machines/tapes          | new sidewalk              |
| upright vacuum           | CD players                  | trees for front sidewalk  |
| paint                    | cassette decks              | office furniture/supplies |
| power and hand tools     | industrial cappuccino maker | kitchen supplies          |
| nuts, bolts, nails, etc. | oven                        | jars of pennies           |

If you are able to donate any of these items, please contact  
 Josie Caporuscio at 212.255.5793

Of course, cash donations are also greatly appreciated.

All contributions, both donated items and cash, are tax deductible to the fullest extent of the law.

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