

# ARTFORUM

December 2007

Music **BEST OF 2007**

## Alex Waterman

ALEX WATERMAN IS A WRITER AND MUSICIAN. IN 2007, HE CURATED "AGAPÈ" AT MIGUEL ABREU GALLERY AND CO-CURATED "BETWEEN THOUGHT AND SOUND: GRAPHIC NOTATION IN CONTEMPORARY MUSIC" AT THE KITCHEN, BOTH IN NEW YORK.



3. Cover art for Alasdair Gray's *Some Gray Stuff* (Decemberism, 2007).  
6. Ensemble rehearsing Christopher Fox's *Brief Musical Tribute to Harold Pinter, After the Manner of His Later Work* (2006–2007) for Rational Rec's monthly event *New Rational Music*, Bethnal Green Working Men's Club, London, 2007. 8. Charles Curtis performing during "Agapè," Miguel Abreu Gallery, New York, 2007.



**1** Robert Ashley, *Concrete*, La MaMa E.T.C., New York This year's appearance of Ashley's autobiographical opera was a departure in more ways than one. The superb cast sang the stories of people from his past. Ashley's work continues to transport us to another plane of the American experience.

**2** Walter Marchetti, *Utopia andata e ritorno* (Alga Marghen, 2006) This year's summer monsoon season in New York would have felt incomplete without this timelessly fresh record by Marchetti. The first CD fuses recordings of a piano recital and a rainstorm; the second features the same piece replayed backward. As the heat and irritation rose, I would take a musical journey away and back again.

**3** Alasdair Gray, *Some Gray Stuff* (Decemberism) A treasure of an album by the Scottish poet and author of the epic Glaswegian novel *Lanark: A Life in Four Books*. Gray here reads from selected stories and poems, his voice a resonant tenor, his wit piercing but humane.

**4** David Tudor, *Rainforest IV*, performed by Composers Inside Electronics, The Kitchen, New York A two-day program of performance and installation in September included this continually evolving work by Tudor. The players included some of his old collaborators and some new faces, including Phil Edelstein, John Driscoll, Stephen Vitiello, and Matt Rogalsky. Interaction between audience and musicians was often marked by conversation and laughter, making for a playful and spirited event.

**5** Anthony Coleman The past year belonged to one of the hardest-working men in New York show business, whose work possesses an extraordinary intimacy and urgency. Coleman's latest orchestral and ensemble pieces, which he performed around New York this past year, is music that shakes and seduces.

**6** *New Rational Music*, Rational Rec, Bethnal Green Working Men's Club, London This monthly event, curated by Russell Martin, Matthew Shlomowitz, and Cecilia Wee, highlights avant-garde and experimental music but also features readings, performances, and a fair amount of booze. The name comes from Rational Recreation, a late-nineteenth-century attempt to civilize the English working class via Working Men's Clubs.

**7** Issue Project Room, The Old American Can Factory, Brooklyn, New York Suzanne Fiol wanted to make a space for music, performance, and readings in a spirit of love and commitment, and created one of the warmest and best-sounding venues in New York.

**8** Charles Curtis Curtis is one of the great cellists, and his performances of Morton Feldman, Alvin Lucier, and La Monte Young's music have been among my favorites. This summer I included him in "Agapè" at Miguel Abreu Gallery in New York—he performed Eliane Radigue's solo cello piece, *Naldjoriak*, and completely transported the room.

**9** Thomas Meadowcroft, *Ezra Jack Plot* One of the Berlin-based Australian composer's finest ensemble works received its New York premiere at Carnegie Hall in November. Written for Kammerensemble Neue Musik Berlin, Meadowcroft's piece is closely and cleverly linked to a sequence of video stills showing illustrations from Ezra Jack Keats's children's book *The Snowy Day*.

**10** *Lovely Music* ([www.lovely.com](http://www.lovely.com)) Where else can you one-stop-shop for recordings by Eliane Radigue, Alvin Lucier, Annea Lockwood, and many others? Almost all of my top ten most-listened-to discs of the past year were put out by Mimi Johnson's label. □