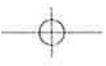




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*This list reflects gifts received as of October 29, 1996.*

Mikel Rouse, The Kitchen and The Interpretations Series  
Present

**DENNIS CLEVELAND**

An Opera By Mikel Rouse  
October 29-November 2, 1996

*Conceived, written and directed by Mikel Rouse*

*Music and Libretto* **Mikel Rouse**  
*Set and Video Design* **John Jesurun**

*Lighting Design/Technical Director:* Tal Yarden  
*Sound Design:* Wayne Lopes  
*Stage Manager:* Gina SanGiovanni  
*Marketing Consultant:* Karissa Krenz

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*Curator* **BEN NEILL**  
*Production Manager* **JOHN RALSTON**  
*Technical Director* **INIGO ELIZALDE**  
*Sound Director* **WAYNE LOPES**

## CAST:

Mikel Rouse: Dennis Cleveland

Guests (Chorus & Soloists)

Napua Davoy, Eric Smith  
Heather Mullen, Levensky Smith  
Katy Sullivan, David Masenheimer  
Andrea Weber, Mark Lambert

Sasha Lazard (Soloist & Chorus)

Audience Members (Soloists)

Chris Freeman  
Peggy Jo Jacobs  
John Margolis  
Rebecca Masternak  
Ryuji Noda  
Mary Beth O'Connor  
Renee Rizzo  
Madeline Safran  
Elle B. Willson

Crew:

Mark Kingsley (Audience Prompter)  
Christina Rae (Audience Prompter)

Bertram Meusburger (Camera)  
Inigo Elizalde (Camera)  
Tim Lynch (Camera)

Lisa Lyons (Intern)  
Laura Caparrotti (Intern)

## MIKEL ROUSE DENNIS CLEVELAND

1. **PRELUDE** *We Deliver*
2. **Confession 1 & 2**
3. **LIFE IN THESE UNITED STATES**
  - "Open Up To Me"
  - "No You Don't"
  - "You Can Go"
4. **Confession 3, 4, & 5**
5. **SOUL TRAIN**
  - Chorus
  - "Power Of Suggestion"
  - Confession 6
  - "Power Of Suggestion" (Reprise w/Chorus)
6. **Confession 7**
7. **BEAUTIFUL MURDERS**
8. **APPARENT MONEY**
  - "L-O-V-E-L-E-S"
  - Confession 8
  - "Money Chant"
9. **WHY ARE YOU HERE TODAY (She Feels Like)**
  - "A Person You're Vulnerable With"
  - "He's Outta There"
10. **Confession 9, 10 & 11**
11. **ALTERED BODIES**
12. **Confession 12 (Group Confession)**
13. **MADISON SQUARE**
  - "Auto Pilot Advice"
  - Confession 13
  - Chorus
  - "Potential Arcade"
  - Confession 14
  - Chorus

**Dennis Cleveland** is a multimedia opera that is set entirely on a television talk show in the late 20th century. It is the second opera in a Trilogy that consists of *Falling Kansas*, an opera based on the events surrounding the murder of the Clutter family in Holcomb, Kansas and inspired by the examination of those events in Truman Capote's *In Cold Blood* and *The End Of Cinematics* a radio opera that explores the nature of corporate entertainment.

The host, Dennis Cleveland, is the catalyst and provocateur of the opera, as well as the vehicle through which the story of the opera is told. The various soloists (placed in the audience) and chorus (guests that appear on stage) are linked together by the talk show host. As befits the current obsession with confessional talk shows, the content of the story evolves through the constant interaction of Dennis Cleveland and his guests. Though the guests appear to be telling their own stories, stories of lost love, obsession, crimes and regrets, what soon becomes clear is that they are telling the story of Dennis Cleveland as well.

*Dennis Cleveland* uses the live tape talk show format as its model while subverting the structure of this format through a series of cleverly disguised motifs. Like the various talk shows that abound worldwide, the audience and the stage become one under constant unrelenting television studio lighting. Live video of audience reactions and the inclusion of actors in the audience as well as trained singers and soloists complete a staging that offers a new way of looking at opera. Perhaps not since the 1937 premiere of Marc Blitzstein's *The Cradle Will Rock* has the line between stage and audience been so blurred.

Ultimately, the narrative is derived from the libretto, which follows Dennis Cleveland through a myriad of encounters chronicling the promise of salvation through popular culture. Many of the ideas explored in *Dennis Cleveland* are inspired by the concepts addressed in *Voltaire's Bastards* (New York: Random House Inc., 1992) by John Ralston Saul, particularly the late 20th century phenomenon of television

ritual as a replacement of ceremony previously associated with religion. Thus, the ritual is enforced in real time as the opera progresses and it soon becomes apparent that the audience exists in Dennis Cleveland's future: that of the ultimate voyeur, the T.V. talk show host.

-1996 Mikel Rouse

**MIKEL ROUSE** was born in 1957 in St. Louis, Missouri. He attended the Kansas City Art Institute and the Conservatory of Music at the University of Missouri at Kansas City. Rouse moved to New York City in 1979, where he studied African and other World Musics and began his study of the Schillinger Method of Composition.

Upon moving to New York, Mr. Rouse formed his contemporary chamber ensemble, Mikel Rouse Broken Consort, consisting of keyboard, electric guitar/bass, woodwinds, and percussion. With Broken Consort, Rouse has produced numerous recordings including *Soul Menu* (1993), *A Lincoln Portrait* (1988), *A Walk In The Woods* (1985), which appeared on the New York Times list of the ten best records of 1985; and *Jade Tiger* (1984).

Additional recordings span a variety of genres including pop: *Etudes* (1980), *Set The Timer* (1985), *Social Responsibility* (1987), and *Against All Flags* (1988), which was the New York Times Pop Album of the week upon release; electronic: *Colorado Suite* (1984), and *Quorum* (1984), the first piece of its kind for sequencer. This music was used for Ulysses Dove's *Vespers* and presented by *The Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater* from 1987 to the present. In the spring of 1995 a film of this work, directed by David Hinton, aired on PBS's *Great Performances* "Dance in America" and won 2 Emmy Awards.

In 1989 Rouse began work on the opera *Failing Kansas* (1994), inspired by Truman Capote's *In Cold Blood*, which premiered at The Kitchen. This led to an emerging art form he calls Counterpoetry, which involves the use of multiple unpitched voices in counterpoint. Other works that explore this technique include *Living Inside Design* (1994), a collection of extended spoken songs and *Autorequiem* (1994), for strings, percussion, and voices.

Most recently Rouse has completed the opera *Dennis Cleveland* (1995) which explores the late 20th century phenomenon of television ritual as a replacement of ceremony previously associated with religion. The opera, which takes place on the set of a television talk show, premiered in New York in 1996.

Other works include *Book One*, a book nine of string quartets and *Two Paradoxes Resolved*, a piano suite. Rouse has received numerous awards from Meet The Composer, including a commission from the Meet The Composer/Reader's Digest Commissioning Program for a new radio opera, The New York State Council on the Arts and ASCAP. In 1994 he was nominated for the CalArts Alpert Award in the Arts. He currently resides in New York City.

**John Jesurun** has written and directed 20 plays including *Deep Sleep* at La Mama (1986 Obie Award), *Everything that Rises Must Converge*, *Shatterhand Massacree* as well as 50 episodes of his highly acclaimed serial play *Chang in A Void Moon*. His company has toured extensively in Europe and the United States. He has received fellowships from the Guggenheim and Rockefeller Foundations, the National Endowment for the Arts, and the Foundation for Contemporary Performance Arts. His *Faust-The Imperial Hotel* premiered this month at the Neumarkt Theater in Zurich. His 1995 music video for Jeff Buckley was nominated for an MTV Award. Future projects include texts for a new piece by

choreographer Molissa Fenley at the Joyce Theater this January and two new episodes of *Chang in a Void Moon* at the Kitchen in April. His plays have been published by Performing Arts Journal, Theater Communications Group, and the Yale Theater Magazine. He is a 1996 recipient of the MacArthur Foundation Fellowship.

### Produced by Mikel Rouse

Music and Libretto © 1996 Mikel Rouse  
Published by Club Soda Music (ASCAP)

The CD of *Dennis Cleveland* is available on New World Records (80506-2)

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Mr. Cleveland's Wardrobe by Agnes B.

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Special thanks to Ben Neill and Bernadette Speach for their support in the realization of this performance and to Karen Greenberg and Mark Kingsley of Greenberg Kingsley/NYC for their ideas and support.

*Dennis Cleveland* is respectfully dedicated to Robert Ashley who has often noted that the future of American Opera is television.

In Memory of Ulysses Dove

**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.*