

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

March 9, 2012 New York, NY

Robert Ashley's opera:
The Old Man Lives in Concrete
Roulette, Wednesday –Saturday, April 25–28, 2012.
A different opera every night!

Performing Artservices, Inc., in association with Mutable Music's Interpretations series and Roulette, is pleased to present Robert Ashley's opera *The Old Man Lives in Concrete* – in a newly configured production, running from April 25 through April 28, 2012.

The production features the extraordinary group of singers who have interpreted Ashley librettos for nearly three decades: SAM ASHLEY, THOMAS BUCKNER, JACQUELINE HUMBERT, and JOAN LA BARBARA, and TOM HAMILTON, who processes and mixes the voices and the orchestra.

Robert Ashley has written eight new *Portraits* (long songs or arias) and many new *Incidents* (short songs) to make this an entirely NEW PRODUCTION of *The Old Man Lives in Concrete*. Each performance at Roulette will feature two *Portraits* – songs about ordinary people who did extraordinary, outrageous, or dangerous things for which they will never be, and don't wish to be, recognized – alternating with the shorter *Incidents* – brief, disjointed thoughts or memories – and with the "old man's" *Observations* – sung by ROBERT ASHLEY himself.

Ashley says that his preoccupation has been to divorce the orchestra from its traditional – and secondary – role of supporting the singers. This third version of *Concrete* will feature a complex sound environment, and what Ashley is calling "audio frames" – smaller, individualized sound settings for each of the singers, all controlled by Tom Hamilton at the sound mixing console.

Robert Ashley has been praised for bringing opera into the media age with multi-layered, accelerated scores whose rhythms are natural to our times. Through the exploration of stream-of-consciousness poetry, rigorous rhythmic storytelling, and unusual narrative forms, Ashley has invented a new kind of opera ensemble and an innovative vocal and orchestral vocabulary. The *Old Man Lives in Concrete* brilliantly displays the composer's idiosyncratic voice and his compelling preoccupation with American vernacular speech and the states of mind of ordinary people.

"The characters I'm interested in are marginal, because everybody is marginal compared to the stereotypes we see in the media. I am interested in their profoundly good qualities. They just happen to be ordinary people who are spiritually divine." – Robert Ashley

Concrete was first presented January 2007 at La Mama ETC. The opera was reconfigured in 2009, again at La Mama, as *Made Out of Concrete*, featuring a new character – the old man himself, or the *Observer*.

PERFORMANCE INFO

Robert Ashley's opera, *The Old Man Lives in Concrete*

New production produced by Performing Artservices, Inc., presented by Mutable Music's "Interpretations" series, and Roulette Intermedium.

DATES

Wednesday, April 25, 2012 at 8 p.m.

Thursday, April 26, 2012 at 8 p.m.

Friday, April 27, 2012 at 8 p.m.

Saturday, April 28, 2012 at 8 p.m.

LOCATION

Roulette, 509 Atlantic Avenue, Brooklyn, NY (the corner of Atlantic and Third Avenues)

TICKET INFORMATION

Adult: \$20.00

Members: \$15.00

Students with ID: \$15.00

Seniors 65 and over: \$15.00

Free for "All Access Members"

Online tickets and information: www.roulette.org

Phone: 917-267-0363

CREDITS

Music and libretto: ROBERT ASHLEY

Singers: ROBERT ASHLEY, SAM ASHLEY, THOMAS BUCKNER,
JACQUELINE HUMBERT, JOAN LA BARBARA

Electronic orchestra: ROBERT ASHLEY

Mixing and live electronics: TOM HAMILTON

Lighting: DAVID MOODEY

For more information on Robert Ashley and these performances, visit:
www.robertashley.org, www.roulette.org and www.interpretations.info.

PRESS CONTACTS

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ABOUT THE ARTISTS:

Robert Ashley is known for his work in new forms of opera. In the 1960s, Ashley organized Ann Arbor's legendary ONCE Festival and directed the ONCE Group. During the 1970s, he directed the Center for Contemporary Music at Mills College, toured with the Sonic Arts Union, and produced and directed the 14-hour opera for television, *Music with Roots in the Aether*. His *Perfect Lives*, an opera for television produced with The Kitchen, is widely considered the precursor of "music-television." *Perfect Lives*, *Atalanta (Acts of God)* and the monumental tetralogy *Now Eleanor's Idea* have toured throughout Europe, Asia and the United States. He wrote *Balseros* for Florida Grand Opera, *Dust* for premiere at the Kanagawa Arts Foundation in Yokohama, and *Celestial Excursions* for the Berlin Festival. His latest opera, *Made Out of Concrete*, was premiered at La MaMa E.T.C. in 2009 and will be reprised at Roulette in April 2012. Kyle Gann's biography of Ashley is forthcoming from the University of Illinois Press.

Sam Ashley has devoted his life to the development of an experimental, non-religious mysticism, one rooted in a "find out for yourself" attitude (in direct opposition to so many traditions). He has been a modern-day witch doctor for more than 40 years. For more than 30 years he has used this in the creation of music and art. His artistic work can range from symbolic representations of shamanic phenomena to magic actions presented on stage directly for an audience, and is usually about hallucination, luck and coincidence. It frequently features the use of authentic spirit possession. Almost all of Sam's pieces relate to trance in some way. He offers simple windows onto things that occur in-between the "real world" and whatever transcends it. Sam usually works solo, but occasionally he collaborates with well-known and not-so-well-known geniuses. His contributions to Robert Ashley's operas include performing his spirit possession dance piece *Seeing Things* within *Atalanta* (e.g. at the Hebbel Theater), creating (musically and technically) the two-voice version of *Foreign Experiences*, studio work and singing.

For over forty years, baritone **Thomas Buckner** has been active as a singer and producer of new and experimental composed and improvised music. He has performed throughout North America, Europe, Asia and in Africa. Long-term collaborators include Roscoe Mitchell, Robert Ashley, Annea Lockwood, David Wessel, Tom Hamilton, Earl Howard, Joseph Kubera, Petr Kotik, Matthias Kaul, Bun-Ching Lam and Wadada Leo Smith. In the seventies he founded 1750 Arch Concerts in Berkeley, California where he produced over 100 concerts a year, the 23-piece Arch Ensemble for Experimental Music, and 1750 Arch Records. In the 1980s, he began touring with Roscoe Mitchell and Gerald Oshita in the group "Space", performing in major festivals in Europe and the US. He returned to New York, where he became a member of Robert Ashley's opera company, and founded the Interpretations concert series for new and experimental music and the Mutable Music record label. Throughout his career, he has commissioned, performed and recorded new works by emerging and established composers. More information at www.thomasbuckner.com.

Tom Hamilton is an active participant in new music, both as an audio producer/engineer and as a composer/performer of electronic music. Since 1990, Hamilton has been a member of composer Robert Ashley's touring opera ensemble, creating sound processing, electronic orchestration and mixes for recordings and performances. His audio production can be heard in many recordings of New York based artists and ensembles. As a composer, Hamilton's work has most notably developed in forms that lie outside the traditional concert format. He contrasts structure with improvisation and textural electronics with acoustic instruments and voices, often exploring the interaction of simultaneous layers of activity to prompt the use of "present-time listening" on the part of both performer and listener. He is a fellow of the Civitella Ranieri Foundation, and his work has been recognized in the Prix Ars Electronica.

Jacqueline Humbert has worked internationally as an artist, designer and performer since the early 1970s. She is noted for collaborations with leading innovative artists, filmmakers, choreographers and composers, best exemplified by her 25-year contribution to Robert Ashley's music as a principal singer and designer for his ensemble from *Perfect Lives* (1980) through the most recent, *Made Out of Concrete* (2007). She has designed for numerous contemporary dance companies, as well as Oakland Ballet's acclaimed productions of Emily Keeler's works, *The Awakening* and *Our Town*. Collaborative performance works with David Rosenboom include *J. Jasmine: My New Music*, *Daytime Viewing* and, most recently, *Chanteuse*, a collection of "songs" by some of America's leading, avant-garde composers, released on Lovely Music (LCD 4001). *Chanteuse* premiered at the Subtropics Festival in Miami (2002), followed by performances in New York and Los Angeles. She recently premiered *Mue, First Mélopée*, a production of the French company Coopérative 326, at the Avignon Festival in summer 2005 and toured extensively in 2006. In 2011 she worked with La Comedie de Caen, performing in *Le recours aux forêts* and *Sagesses des abeilles*. Ms. Humbert lives in Hollywood.

Joan La Barbara – composer / performer / sound artist – explores the human voice as a multi-faceted instrument, expanding traditional boundaries in composition, using a unique vocabulary of experimental and extended vocal techniques – multiphonics, circular singing, ululation and glottal clicks – that have become her "signature sounds." Awards include a 2008 American Music Center Letter of Distinction, a Guggenheim Fellowship in Music Composition, DAAD Artist-in-Residency in Berlin, seven NEA grants and numerous commissions for concert, theater and radio works. La Barbara has created sound scores for film, video and dance and produced twelve recordings of her own works, including *Voice Is the Original Instrument*, a double CD of her historical compositions for Lovely Music. *73 Poems*, her collaboration with text-artist Kenneth Goldsmith, was included in "The American Century Part II: SoundWorks" at the Whitney Museum of American Art. *Messa di Voce*, an interactive media performance work created in collaboration with Jaap Blonk, Golan Levin and Zachary Lieberman, premiered to acclaim at Ars Electronica 2003. La Barbara teaches composition at NYU and is working on a new opera.