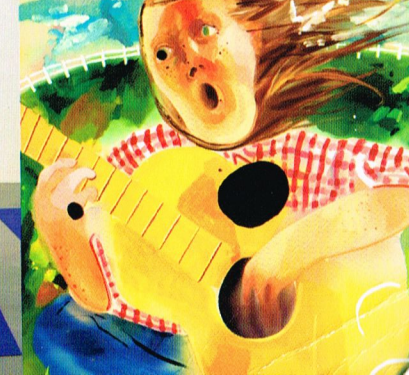
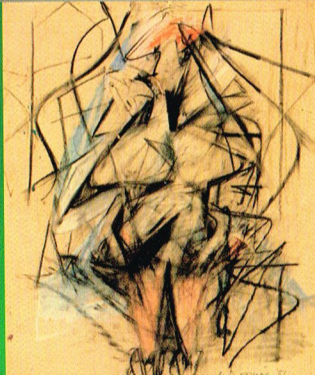
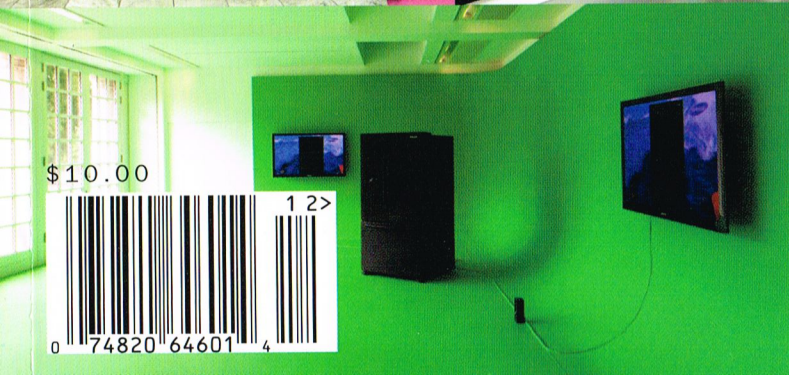
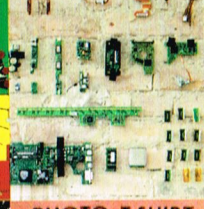
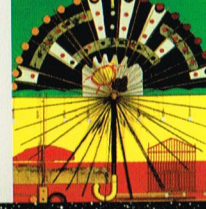
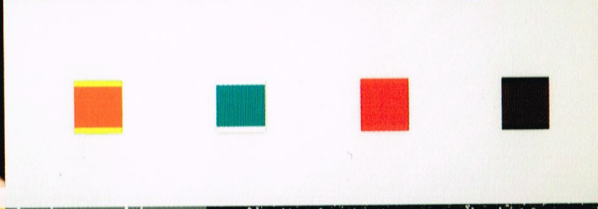
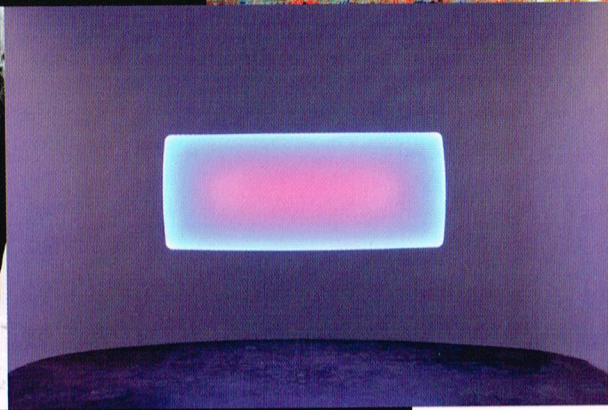


## DECEMBER 2011

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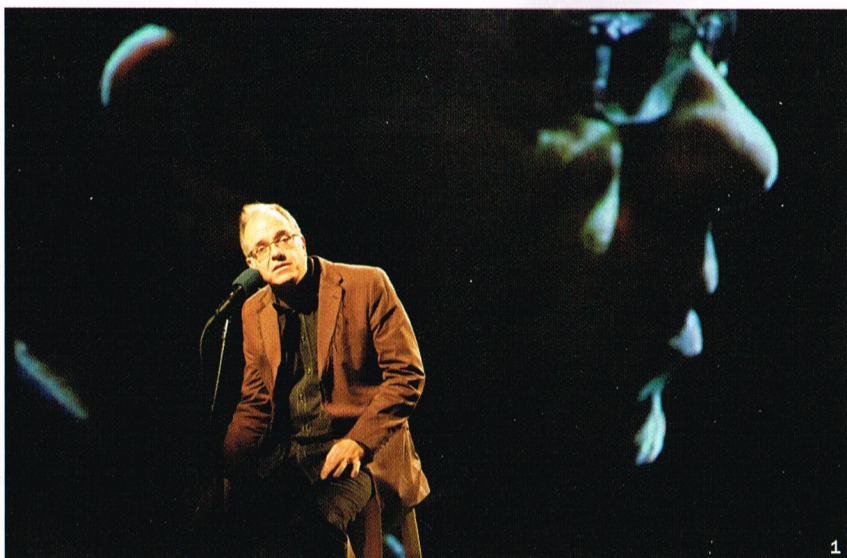


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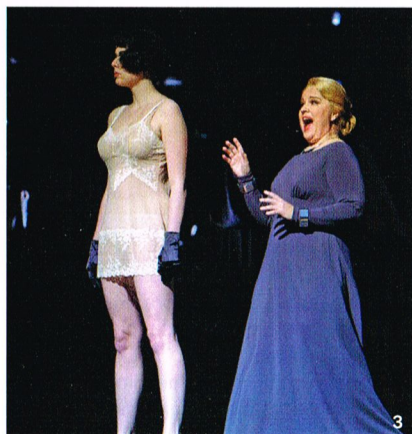


# George Lewis

COMPOSER, PERFORMER, AND EXPERIMENTAL MUSICIAN GEORGE LEWIS IS THE EDWIN H. CASE PROFESSOR OF AMERICAN MUSIC AT COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY IN NEW YORK. HIS LATEST CD IS *LES EXERCICES SPIRITUELS* (TZADIK). (SEE CONTRIBUTORS.)

**1 STEVEN SCHICK** (Park Avenue Armory, New York, February 18) Kurt Schwitters's *Ursonate* (1922–32) is a sound-poetry classic. Steven Schick's highly amplified interpretation during the Tune-In Music Festival, with video montage/collage of giant images of him performed by Shahrokh Yadegari and Ross Karre, evoked a US mass-media demagogue, speaking in tongues.

**2 MUSIC FOR MERCE** (Roulette, SoHo, NY, March 20) One of the final events at the old Roulette space featured performances by Christian Wolff, Takehisa Kosugi, David Behrman, John King, Alvin Curran, Ikue Mori, Marina Rosenfeld, Gordon Mumma, Joan La Barbara, and many others, all to celebrate the release of *Music for Merce* (New World), a ten-CD box set of pieces created by



these incredible composers for the Cunningham company.

**3 JOHN ZORN** (David H. Koch Theater, Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts, March 25) John Zorn's monodrama *La Machine de l'être* (2000) took its title, as John noted, from "a drawing by Antonin Artaud created during his last days in the asylum at Rodez . . . no text, no plot, and no stage directions predetermined whatsoever." In this New York City Opera production, soprano Anu Komsu charged into the music with a sustained fervor that recalled the electroshock therapies Artaud himself underwent in the asylum.

**4 MISHA MENGELBERG** (Le Poisson Rouge, New York, March 31) Misha Mengelberg's Instant Composers Pool exemplifies the legacy of Mengelberg's associations with Fluxus and the famed "Notenkraaker" gang (with Louis Andriessen and others) of the 1970s. Today's ICP functions as much as a family as a band, and you can hear the musicians sonically close ranks around their beloved leader.

**5 OLGA NEUWIRTH AND THE TALEA ENSEMBLE** (Bohemian National Hall, New York, May 24) Olga Neuirth's audacious yet subtle use of timbre always puts me on the edge of my seat, and I loved the Austrian Cultural Forum-sponsored performance of her music by the Talea Ensemble, one of today's hot contemporary



music bands. In the midconcert discussion, she confessed her original intent to become a jazz trumpeter after listening to—who else?—Miles Davis.

**6 MATANA ROBERTS AND MUHAL RICHARD ABRAMS** (Community Church of New York, September 23) Well attended but rarely reviewed in major New York media is the ongoing concert series of the New York chapter of the Association for the Advancement of Creative Musicians. A highlight of this year's lineup was an evening of open improvisation by a quartet led by pianist-composer and AACM cofounder Muhal Richard Abrams, preceded by an extraordinarily introspective piece by saxophonist-composer Matana Roberts, featuring sudden, unexpected juxtapositions and interjections alongside subtle sonic signaling. It came as no surprise to me that I was totally surprised by what happened onstage.

**7 KAIJA SAARIAHO, JEAN-BAPTISTE BARRIÈRE, CAMILLA HOITENGA, AND MARGARET LENG TAN** (Roulette, Brooklyn, NY, September 15) Considering Roulette's humble origins in trombonist Jim Staley's Tribeca loft, the new four-hundred-seat space on Brooklyn's Atlantic Avenue prompts celebration. One of the first concerts offered innovative Finnish composer Kaija Saariaho's early work *Noa Noa*, 1992, performed by virtuoso flutist Camilla Hoitenga with subtly textured

**1.** Steven Schick performing Kurt Schwitters's *Ursonate*, 1922–32, during the Tune-In Music Festival, Park Avenue Armory, New York, February 18, 2011. Photo: James Ewing. **3.** The New York City Opera rehearsing John Zorn's *La Machine de l'être*, 2000, David H. Koch Theater, Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts, New York, March 23, 2011. Anu Komsu (right) and Carolyn Rossett. Photo: Richard Perry/*New York Times*. **4.** Misha Mengelberg and the Instant Composers Pool Orchestra, *Le Poisson Rouge*, New York, March 31, 2011. Photo: Peter Gannushkin. **7.** Margaret Leng Tan performing works by John Cage, *Roulette*, Brooklyn, NY, September 15, 2011.

interactive video by Saariaho's spouse, Jean-Baptiste Barrière, followed by a lively performance of John Cage by Margaret Leng Tan, who handles the prepared piano every bit as deftly as its toy cousin.

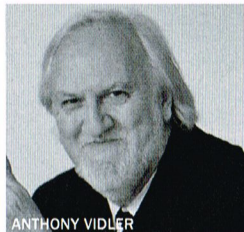
**8 ANTHONY BRAXTON** (Roulette, Brooklyn, NY, October 5–8) A highlight of Roulette's weekend of Braxton performances was the world premiere of two acts from his opera *Trillium J*. This was Afrofuturism *après la lettre*; Braxton's portrayals of intergalactic imperialism have more in common with Doris Lessing than with Sun Ra, and the thirty-five-piece orchestra undergirded the work of twelve amazing singers who portrayed characters with endlessly morphing identities.

**9 TYSHAWN SOREY, OBLIQUE-1** (Pi Recordings) Despite the title, this brand-new recording by this young and widely admired percussionist, pianist, and trombonist gives it to you straight. Any peaks Sorey may have reached so far are merely prologue.

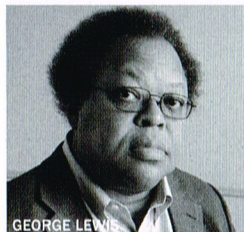
**10 BURKHARD STANGL, HOMMAGE À MOI** (Loewenhertz) Burkhard is part of what he jokingly calls "the Third Viennese School," along with sound artist Christof Kurzmann and video artist Billy Roisz. His *Hommage à moi* comprises a five-hundred-page compilation of his texts, three CDs, and a DVD of video by collaborators such as Roisz and Martin Arnold. If you're going to pay homage to yourself, this is how you want to do it. □



SVETLANA ALPERS



ANTHONY VIDLER



GEORGE LEWIS



MAI ABU ELDAHAB



LYNNE COOKE



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ARIELLA AZOULAY

SVETLANA ALPERS is professor emerita in the History of Art Department at the University of California, Berkeley, and a visiting scholar at New York University's Department of Fine Arts. Among the books she has written are *The Art of Describing: Dutch Art in the Seventeenth Century* (University of Chicago Press, 1983) and *The Vexations of Art: Velázquez and Others* (Yale University Press, 2005); she is currently at work on a book titled *Roof Life*. In 2007, she collaborated with James Hyde and Barney Kulok on a series of photographic prints, *Painting Then for Now: Fragments of Tiepolo at the Ca' Dolfin*. Here, Alpers shares the book she took to be the best of 2011.

Architectural historian and critic ANTHONY VIDLER is dean and professor of the Irwin S. Chanin School of Architecture of the Cooper Union in New York. He is the author of numerous books, including *The Architectural Uncanny: Essays in the Modern Unhomely* and *Histories of the Immediate Present: Inventing Architectural Modernism* (both MIT Press; 1992 and 2008, respectively), and the curator of several exhibitions, including, this past year, "Notes from the Archive: James Frazer Stirling, Architect and Teacher" for the Canadian Center for Architecture in Montreal and the Yale Center for British Art in New Haven. For this "Best of 2011" issue, Vidler discusses the book he felt was the year's most significant. PHOTO: C. VALERIE BENNETT

Composer, performer, and experimental musician GEORGE LEWIS is the Edwin H. Case Professor of American Music at Columbia University in New York. Since the late 1970s, the work of this 2002 MacArthur Fellow has been central to the development of interactive computer music and improvised sound. The author of *A Power Stronger Than Itself: The AACM and American Experimental Music* (University of Chicago Press, 2008), he is currently editing the first two volumes of *The Oxford Handbook of Critical Improvisation Studies* for Oxford University Press. In these pages, Lewis picks ten highlights of the year in music.

MAI ABU ELDAHAB is the director of Objectif Exhibitions in Antwerp, Belgium, where she has, most recently, curated solo shows by Hassan Khan, Michael Portnoy, Norma Jeane and Tim Etchells, and Patricia Esquivias and is now preparing an exhibition (which opens next month) with the Dutch artist and filmmaker Barbara Visser. This year she has been involved with several books for Sternberg Press, including *From Berkeley to Berkeley* and *Circular Facts*, as well as a collection of short stories by Khan and a monograph on the work of Chris Evans (both forthcoming). In this issue, Abu Eldahab gives her top ten art picks of 2011.

Chief curator and deputy director of the Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía in Madrid and, from 1991 to 2009, curator of Dia Art Foundation in New York, LYNNE COOKE has organized numerous exhibitions worldwide, including the 1991 Carnegie International in Pittsburgh and the 1996 Sydney Biennial. Last year, she curated the major traveling retrospective of the work of Blinky Palermo and co-organized "Alighiero Boetti: Game Plan," which is currently on view at the Reina Sofía. For our year-end issue, Cooke offers her selection of the standout project of the year. PHOTO: TIMOTHY GREENFIELD-SANDERS

CUAUHTÉMOC MEDINA is a researcher at the Instituto de Investigaciones Estéticas of the Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México (UNAM) in Mexico City. In 2009, he curated the Mexican pavilion at the 53rd Venice Biennale, and he is now curator of Manifesta 9, which will be mounted in Genk, Belgium, next June. As an agent of the Red Specter group, he contributed to the most recent iteration of "Fetiches Críticos" (Critical Fetishes), which opened last month at the Museo de la Ciudad de México. In these pages, Medina joins eleven other curators, artists, art historians, and critics to count off his top ten of 2011.

Director of the Photo-Lexic International Research Group at the Minerva Center at Tel Aviv University, ARIELLA AZOULAY has curated numerous exhibitions, including, in November, "From Palestine to Israel: A Photographic Record of Destruction and State Formation, 1947–1950," for London's A. M. Qattan Foundation. She is the author of *The Civil Contract of Photography* (Zone, 2008) and *The Civil Imagination: A Political Ontology of Photography*, forthcoming from Verso in 2012. Here, Azoulay considers new forms of civic action and demonstration in the wake of worldwide protests this past year. PHOTO: MIKI KRATSMAN

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 E-mail: advertising@artforum.com, generalinfo@artforum.com,  
 letters@artforum.com

**California**  
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 Tel and Fax (323) 667-1229  
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**France, Germany, Austria, and Belgium**  
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