

ARTFORUM

DECEMBER 2014

INTERNATIONAL



BEST
OF
2014





George Lewis

COMPOSER, PERFORMER, AND EXPERIMENTAL MUSICIAN GEORGE LEWIS IS EDWIN H. CAGE PROFESSOR OF AMERICAN MUSIC AT COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY IN NEW YORK. HIS LATEST CD, WITH THE MONASH ART ENSEMBLE, IS *NOXIS* (JAZZHEAD, 2014).

1 STEVEN SCHICK (Miller Theatre,

Columbia University, New York, January 30 and February 1) Not once during Schick's journey through some of the most complex music for percussion ever written did a single page of music appear. Instead, as if preparing an intimate dinner for close friends, Schick ushered listeners into a banquet of memory.

2 TERRY ADKINS, AT OSIRIS (Stedie Museum in Harlem, New York,

November 13, 2013) In full masked regalia, the Lane Wolf Recital Corps, with its founder Adkins as the Reconstruction-era African American senator Blanche Bruce, insinuated through an overflow crowd into the Studio Museum's performance space to create a carnivalesque celebration with recitations from Osirian texts, a signature "activation" of the sculptures of the much-missed Adkins, who passed away last February.



3 PAMELA Z. BAGGAGE ALLOWANCE

(Dorothy Usher Bryan Gallery, Bowling Green State University, Ohio) Critical theorist Fred Moten says of the role of voice in black resistance to slavery, "if the commodity could speak it would have intrinsic value, it would be infused with a certain spirit." Pamela Z, whose arresting video tableaux vivants interact with her voice and body movements, now creates visual objects that speak up, including a piece that brings to mind how one slave packed herself into a trunk and shipped herself to freedom.



4 STEAN DOUGLAS, LUANDA-KINSHASA

(David Zwirner Gallery, New York) This six-hour film loop expands the territory of Douglas's 1997 installation *Worm-champs*. Serving as visual and sonic avatars of Miles Davis's experimental funk of the 1970s, the musicians in the film become situated embodiments of history, memory, and irony.

5 IAN PACE (St. Hilda's College, University of Oxford, UK, February 23)

I spent the better part of a day and evening listening to Pace work his extraordinary magic on British composer Michael Finney's five-and-a-half-hour magnum opus for piano, *The History of Photography in Sound (1999–2001)*. Perhaps the best guide to the full-spectrum dominance of this work is Pace's own three-hundred-page text on it, a concordance that complements the music just as Stuart Gilbert's accompanied *Glyses*.

6 JEAN-BAPTISTE BARRIÈRE, THE GARDEN OF DREAMS/LE JARDIN DES SONGES

(Maison Française, Columbia University, New York, and Musée Gadagne, Lyon, March 24–29) Simultaneously in New York, in Lyon, and online, visitors to Barrière's installation used "dream stations" to record accounts of their dreams, which were remixed and transformed into a collective reverie by a computer system that also transduced viewers' movements into sound and image.

7 OSTRAVA DAYS IN NEW YORK: CELEBRATING CHRISTIAN WOLFF'S EIGHTIETH BIRTHDAY (Roulette, New York, March 26)

In 2005, the New York-based Czech composer and flutist Petr Kotik founded Ostrava Days, a three-week institute and festival of experimental music. One of the founding New York School composers and a frequent visitor to Ostrava, in the Czech Republic, Wolff beamed as one of his groundbreaking indeterminate works,

For Six or Seven Players (1955), was performed by members of Ostrava's bands and Kotik's own S.E.M. Ensemble.

8 FRED FRITH AND EVAN PARKER

(Festival International de Musique Actuelle de Victoriaville, Quebec, May 17) The Quebecois term *musique actuelle* is the most evocative name I know for experimental improvised music. Perfectly exemplifying this not just, the Victoriaville festival keyed its thirtieth year with a duo of guitarist Frith and saxophonist Parker, who took the audience and each other on a telepathic journey of discovery and wonder.

9 VS. INTERPRETATION SYMPOSIUM AND FESTIVAL (Prague, July 16–20)

This inspiration of the adventurous Agate Foundation brought together an international array of composers, computer scientists, cultural theorists, architects, new-media and sound artists, theologians, and, of course, musical improvisers, in concerts, workshops, and lectures around critical improvisation studies, a field that encompasses such integral practices as philosopher/clarinetist David Rothenberg's interspecies music-making among people, whales, and birds.

10 TOMORROW IS THE QUESTION: NEW DIRECTIONS IN EXPERIMENTAL MUSIC STUDIES, ED. BENJAMIN PEDRIT

(University of Michigan Press) Perkut's first book, *Experimentation Otherwise: The New York Avant-Garde and Its Limits*, posed fundamental challenges to the historiography of experimental music—a challenge broadened in this anthology's discussions of African-American Fluxus artist Benjamin Patterson, Cuba's Grupo de Experimentación Sonora del ICAIC, and the Balinese musical avant-garde's resistance to orientalization and cultural imperialism. □

1. Steven Schick. Photo: Bill Dean. 2. Tony Adkins and the Lane Wall Ruckal'Craps performing at the Studio Museum in Harlem, New York, November 13, 2013. Photo: W3-Regain.com. 3. Stean Douglas, *Luanda-Kinshasa*, 2013, digital-video-projection, color, sound, 6 hours 1 minute, loop. 4. Stean Douglas, *Luanda-Kinshasa*, 2013, digital-video-projection, color, sound, 6 hours 1 minute, loop. 5. Hilda interacting with Jean-Baptiste Barrière's *Garden of Dreams*, 2014, Maison Française, Columbia University, New York.

