

Roscoe Mitchell: Sound and Vision

Tomorrow!

Co-sponsor New Music Circle

presents

ROSCOE MITCHELL / DAMON SMITH

WEASEL WALTER / SANDY EWEN

Saturday, October 14th, 2023

8pm Xavier Hall (SLU Campus)

newmusiccircle.org



Additional co-sponsors: Center for the Humanities
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Friday, October 13, 2023 - 3:00 P.M.
Pillsbury Theatre, 560 Music Center

WUSTL MUSIC

Program

- Introduction by Paul Steinbeck (associate professor of music)
- Performance by Roscoe Mitchell (Darius Milhaud Chair Emeritus of Composition, Mills College): Roscoe Mitchell: Sound and Vision
- Discussion with Roscoe Mitchell and Christopher Douthitt (lecturer in electronic music)
- Q&A with the audience

Roscoe Mitchell




Roscoe Mitchell is considered one of the key figures in avant-garde jazz, integrating influences from everywhere—world music, funk, rock, classical—to create music that is at once beautiful and complex. He has been involved with the Association for the Advancement of Creative Musicians (AACM), a Chicago-based nonprofit organization founded in the mid-1960s to advance new creative music. Mitchell has performed on more than 85 recordings and written in excess of 250 compositions in the jazz and classical realms. He continues to pass down his musical knowledge of composition and improvisation, both in educational and performance settings.

Mitchell first played saxophone and clarinet as a teenager in Chicago, Illinois, and while stationed in Germany with the U.S. Army, he played in a military band. While overseas, he met and played with saxophonists Albert Ayler and Rubin Cooper in military parades and jam sessions. Returning to Chicago in 1961, he performed with a group of Wilson Junior College students who included bassist Malachi Favors and saxophonists Joseph Jarman, Henry Threadgill, and Anthony Braxton. Mitchell also began studying with pianist/composer Muhal Richard Abrams and joined Abrams' new Experimental Band, a group that explored extended forms of composition and improvisation.

In 1965, Mitchell became an inaugural member of the AACM, and his sextet became the first AACM group to record. This group eventually turned into the Art Ensemble of Chicago, including Favors and Jarman, and Lester Bowie on trumpet. Without a drummer, all the band members would share timekeeping duties, using makeshift percussion instruments ranging from found objects to toys. Even after they recruited percussionist Don Moye, they all continued to contribute to the beat. The Art Ensemble of Chicago took Europe by storm in the late 1960s with its fiery performances, unusual instrumentation, and African-inspired clothing and face-paint.

After the group's return to the U.S. in the early 1970s, Mitchell continued working with the Art Ensemble and members of the AACM, but also created other groups for his restless musical output. He established the Creative Arts Collective in 1974, and as an outgrowth of that, the Sound Ensemble. Mitchell also began releasing more albums as a leader and experimenting with finding new ways to make music, such as learning the tradition of circular breathing and working with computers in improvisation. In the 1990s, he began collaborating with such classical composers as Pauline Oliveros and Thomas Buckner.

In his educational work, he has proposed studying composition and improvisation in tandem, to think like a composer when improvising, what Mitchell has called "composition in real time." Mitchell has taught at institutions such as the University of Illinois, the University of Wisconsin-Madison, California Institute of the Arts, and for the past decade served as the Darius Milhaud Chair of Composition at Mills College in Oakland, California.




The artist received numerous grants from the National Endowment for the Arts (for both performance and composition) and is the recipient of many honors, including a NAACP Image Award and many *DownBeat* poll awards.

Christopher Douthitt is a composer and music scholar based in St. Louis. His creative work finds connections between twenty-first century classical music, interactive sound art, and experimental song. His research explores the perception of space in audio recordings as well as the music of avant-garde songwriter Scott Walker. Prior to joining the faculty at Washington University in St. Louis as Lecturer in Electronic Music, he studied music composition at Princeton University and Mills College, and he worked on the editorial team at *Music Theory Spectrum*. He was Director of the Princeton Laptop Orchestra (PLOrk) in 2020-21 and Associate Director in 2018-2019. An active guitarist, vocalist, and electronic musician, Douthitt fronts the avant-song trio the Anaglyphs.

First performing in 2006, the **Princeton Laptop Orchestra**, or PLOrk, takes the traditional model of the orchestra and reinvents it for the 21st century. Each laptopist performs with a laptop and custom designed hemispherical speaker that emulates the way traditional orchestral instruments cast their sound in space. Wireless networking and video augment the familiar role of the conductor, suggesting unprecedented ways of organizing large ensembles.

The ensemble members from 2020-21 who contributed performances to this project with Roscoe Mitchell were Liam Elliot, Abbie Minard, Yue Qiao, Jeff Snyder, and Matt Wang. Wendy Nelson shot all of the video and still images, and Nelson and Mitchell engineered Mitchell's recordings. Christopher Douthitt produced, edited, and mixed the recording and video.





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KA BAIRD / BRAIN TRANSPLANT
FRIDAY, FEB 16 | SCHLAFLY TAP ROOM (UPSTAIRS)

ELLIOTT SHARP
FRIDAY, MAR 22 | 560 MUSIC CENTER (WUSTL)

WILLIAM PARKER, GERALD CLEAVER + AVA MENDOZA
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SOUND + VIDEO COLLABORATIONS:
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DOORS 7PM / CONCERTS 8PM | NEWMUSICCIRCLE.ORG



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