



LEGENDARY COMPOSER AND IMPROVISER MUHAL RICHARD ABRAMS

A concert of improvised duets with special guest Roscoe Mitchell

Friday, February 27, 2009 8:00 pm

MUSICIANS

Muhal Richard Abrams, piano

Roscoe Mitchell, saxophone


This is a concert of improvised duets.

There are no titled pieces.

There will be one intermission.

Muhal Richard Abrams is widely recognized as one of the most influential artists in the area of contemporary improvised music. A renowned and much respected teacher, Abrams has been the guiding spirit behind the legendary Association for the Advancement of Creative Musicians (AACM) since its formation in Chicago more than 40 years ago. AACM has inexorably become the source of some of the most innovative musical approaches of the last half-century, spreading its influence into every musical corner of America and beyond, and nurturing the international careers not only of legendary pioneers like the Art Ensemble of Chicago, but also of such musical innovators as Anthony Braxton, Leroy Jenkins, George Lewis, Amina Claudine Myers, Wadada Leo Smith, and Henry Threadgill, among many others.

"I always felt that you need to be about the work you need to do, and that's to find out about yourself. That's pretty much a full-time job. You pay close attention to others, but the work that you have to do for yourself is the most difficult. I seem to move forward every time I reflect on the fact that I don't know enough. If you feel you have something, it's very important to get that out and develop it." —Muhal Richard Abrams



"As bandleader, composer, mentor, organizer, and life-long experimenter, there are few, if any, living jazz musicians who can compare with Abrams' level and degree of import."

—Matthew Sumera, *One Final Note*

Beyond his signature work with associates from AACM, Abrams' music has been performed by the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, the Kronos Quartet, the Detroit Symphony Orchestra, the Brooklyn Philharmonic Orchestra, and the distinguished piano duo of Ursula Oppens and Frederic Rzewski. He has received commissions from the McKim Fund of the Library of Congress, New Music America, and the Kitchen Center and Bang on a Can Festival, both in New York. In 1990, Abrams was the first recipient of the prestigious international jazz award, the JAZZPAR Prize, presented by the Danish Jazz Center in Copenhagen. His catalogue of recordings is extensive, and his musical affiliations are a "who's who" of the jazz world, including Max Roach, Dexter Gordon, and Sonny Stitt.

Abrams has taught privately for many years, as well as leading jazz composition and improvisation classes at the Banff Centre in Canada, Columbia University in New York City, the New England Conservatory of Music in Boston, and the BMI Jazz Composers Workshop. In addition to being the co-founder of the AACM, he is the founder of the AACM School of Music and president of the AACM New York Chapter. Abrams is currently the Jean Macduff Vaux Composer-in-Residence at Mills College.

The Vaux family has established The Jean Macduff Vaux Composer-in-Residence Fund at Mills College in memory of Jean Macduff Vaux (Class of 1933). The endowed fund is used by the Music Department to invite distinguished composers to teach at Mills in residencies which culminate with concerts of their works. The Mills College Music Department is very grateful for the vision and generosity of the Vaux family.

Roscoe Mitchell's innovation as a solo performer, role in the resurrection of long-neglected woodwind instruments of extreme register, and reassertion of the composer into what has traditionally been an improvisational form have placed him at the forefront of the international music community for more than four decades. A leader of avant-garde jazz and contemporary music, Mitchell is a founding member of the renowned Art Ensemble of Chicago, the Association for the Advancement of Creative Musicians, and Trio Space.

Beginning his distinguished career in Chicago in the '60s, Mitchell is the founder (or founding member) of numerous ensembles and collectives, including the Roscoe Mitchell Sextet, the Roscoe Mitchell Quartet, the Sound Ensemble, and the Note Factory. He is the recipient of many honors, such as Jazz Personality of the Year (Madison, Wisconsin), Madison Music Legend (*Madison Magazine*), Honorary Citizen (Atlanta, Georgia), the Outstanding Service to Jazz Education Award (National Association of Jazz Educators), and an Image Award (National Association for the Advancement of Colored People).



Highly prolific, Mitchell has recorded more than 85 albums and written more than 250 compositions. In 2003, he was selected as artist-in-residence for the Chicago Jazz Festival, and in 2004, he received a commission from the City of Munich to compose three works, which premiered at the Symposium on Improvised Music. In 2006, he premiered two compositions, *White Tiger Disguise* and *Far Side*, at the prestigious Merkin Concert Hall.

Mitchell has received numerous grants and awards from organizations such as the National Endowment for the Arts, Arts Midwest Jazz Masters, Michigan State University, the Wisconsin Arts Board, and the Institut de Recherche et Coordination Acoustique/Musique in Paris. He has taught at the University of Illinois, the University of Wisconsin-Madison, the California Institute of the Arts, the AACM School of Music, and the Creative Music Studio, while holding workshops and residencies worldwide.

In 2007, Mitchell was appointed to the Darius Milhaud Chair in Composition at Mills College.