

BEAUTY/NOISE



ROSCOE MITCHELL AND JOSEPH JARMAN LIBERATE THE FORD AMPHITHEATRE

BY GREG BURK

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Roscoe Mitchell (Photo by Joseph Blough)

Freedom Now

Back in the mid-'60s, when history's most extreme music was exploding out of the fission between sound exploration and civil rights activism, the lines between jazz and philosophy got kind of blurred. And **Roscoe Mitchell** and **Joseph Jarman**, as members of the Art Ensemble of Chicago and the community-minded Association for the Advancement of Creative Musicians, were right there messing with the borders. The result was music that embraced African-American roots, walked and talked freedom, and looked at art as a way of life.

Especially after the passing of Art Ensemble members Lester Bowie (1999) and Malachi Favors (2004), the visit of Mitchell and Jarman for a concert of duo and solo performances ranks as an event. I spoke briefly by phone with each multi-instrumentalist; the professorial Mitchell lives in Wisconsin, the windy-voiced Jarman in Brooklyn.

What do people say when they come up to you after a show?

MITCHELL: Some people say they *need* the music.

Is there any event in your career that you see as particularly significant?

MITCHELL: I don't feel like I've arrived at any point yet. I look forward each day to try to learn something. Now it just seems like the time is going by so rapidly that you just don't want to waste a moment.

JARMAN: I've had the great joy of having the opportunity to go all over the planet Earth and share. From about 1990, most of my music has been Buddhist-oriented. Years ago I came out to L.A. frequently, because I'm a member of the Higashi Honganji Buddhist temple there. I've been out there several times just to perform for them.

How does it feel to look back and know you were involved in the creation of something that had continuity?

MITCHELL: That's a good feeling. [*He chuckles.*] It's a great, great feeling.

How do you prepare for a performance?

MITCHELL: I try to realize that each day is different, and I try to find that flow.

JARMAN: I think about where I am and what resources I would be able to communicate with. I have a little list already of new compositions that I'll be able to perform for the first time in California. Different music has been coming through to me for quite a while, and a lot of lyrics as well. Everything is being sent to me now. I used to think that I did it, but I don't do it anymore. Forces throughout the universe have been helping me and telling me what to play and what to say. I don't have to worry anymore or be nervous or tired or anything. I've been quite ill, and performance time comes, *boom*— I have all the energy and the power.

Roscoe Mitchell and Joseph Jarman, introduced by poet Kamau Daáood, play the John Anson Ford Amphitheatre, Sun., Oct. 8, 7 p.m.; check www.sassas.org or (888) 464-2468. The Art Ensemble of Chicago's latest album is the double live *Non-Cognitive Aspects of the City (Pi)*.