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## **SARAH CAHILL, NICOLE MITCHELL, JIM STALEY TO RECEIVE CHAMPION OF NEW MUSIC AWARD**

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The American Composers Forum (ACF) Board of Directors has voted to present its 2018 Champion of New Music award to three outstanding recipients: pianist, writer, producer **Sarah Cahill**; flutist, composer, educator **Nicole Mitchell**; and **Jim Staley**, founder of the iconic new music venue Roulette in Brooklyn, NY, at public ceremonies this year.

The Champion of New Music Award was established by the ACF Board of Directors in 2005 as a national mark of recognition to honor individuals or ensembles that have made a significant contribution to the work and livelihoods of contemporary composers. "Living composers are one of our greatest cultural assets", says John Nuechterlein, ACF President and CEO, "and we want to be sure and thank those who are tireless in their support and promotion of new work. Especially exciting this year is the opportunity to recognize three extraordinary people who have contributed in distinctive and different ways to the field of creative expression."

### **The awards will be presented at three events in the coming months:**

- The award to **Sarah Cahill** will be given on **Sunday, July 22, 2018** during her recital at Old First Concerts in San Francisco, CA.
- The award to **Nicole Mitchell** will be given on **Thursday, August 30, 2018** during her performance in the Jay Pritzker Pavilion as part of the Chicago Jazz Festival.
- The award to **Jim Staley** will be given at a future date and time to be determined.

### **Recipients of the award last year included:**

- Charles Amirkhanian (Other Minds Festival, San Francisco)
- Donald Nally and The Crossing (Philadelphia)
- The International Alliance for Women in Music

### **Previous winners include:**

- Gilbert Kalish, Nicole Paiement, Alex Ross, and Robert Spano (2016);
- American Composers Orchestra, Claire Chase, and Michael Morgan (2015);
- Marin Alsop, Frances Richard, and Steven Schick (2014)

## About the 2018 Champion of New Music Award Winners

**Sarah Cahill**, recently called “a sterling pianist and an intrepid illuminator of the classical avant-garde” by *The New York Times*, has commissioned, premiered, and recorded numerous compositions for solo piano. Composers who have dedicated works to her include John Adams, Terry Riley, Frederic Rzewski, Pauline Oliveros, Julia Wolfe, Yoko Ono, and Evan Ziporyn, and she has also premiered pieces by Lou Harrison, Ingram Marshall, Toshi Ichiyanagi, George Lewis, Leo Ornstein, and many others.



Recent appearances include a concert at San Quentin of the music Henry Cowell wrote while incarcerated there, four performances at the San Francisco Symphony’s Soundbox, a residency at the Noguchi Museum, and concerts at Le Poisson Rouge and the Italian Academy in New York. She performs as a duo with violinist Kate Stenberg and has performed chamber music with the Alexander String Quartet, New Century Chamber Orchestra, the Left Coast Chamber Ensemble, and many other chamber groups. Performance highlights for the 2017-18 season include the Interlochen Arts Festival, Mendocino Music Festival, the Cleveland Museum of Art, concerts in Tokyo and Fukuoka, Terry Riley’s Sri Moonshine series, and New Music Miami.

Cahill has been featured on more than twenty albums on the New Albion, CRI, New World, Other Minds, Tzadik, Albany, Cold Blue, Pinna, Artifact, and Irritable Hedgehog labels. Her four-CD box set, *Eighty Trips Around the Sun: Music by and for Terry Riley*, was released in 2017 on the Irritable Hedgehog label and features Riley’s solo and four-hand works (with Regina Myers and Samuel Carl Adams) and eight world premiere recordings of commissioned works in honor of his 80th birthday.

Cahill’s radio show, *Revolutions Per Minute*, can be heard every Sunday evening from 8 to 10 pm on KALW, 91.7 FM in San Francisco. She is on the faculty of the San Francisco Conservatory, and curates a monthly series of new music concerts at the new Berkeley Art Museum.

For more information, visit [www.sarahcahill.com](http://www.sarahcahill.com).

**Nicole M. Mitchell** is an award-winning creative flutist, composer, bandleader and educator. Having emerged from Chicago’s innovative music scene in the late ‘90s, Mitchell’s music celebrates contemporary African American culture. Mitchell composes for contemporary ensembles of varied instrumentation and size, while incorporating improvisation and a wide aesthetic expression.



The former first woman president of Chicago’s Association for the Advancement of Creative Musicians (AACM), Mitchell celebrates endless possibility by “creating visionary worlds through music that bridge the familiar with the unknown.” Mitchell works to raise respect for the improvised flute, to contribute her original voice to the jazz legacy, and to continue the bold and exciting directions that the AACM has charted for decades.

As a composer, she has been commissioned by the French Ministry of Culture, the Chicago Museum of Contemporary Art, Art Institute of Chicago, the Stone, the French American Jazz Exchange, Chamber Music America, the Chicago Jazz Festival, International Contemporary Ensemble (ICE), and the Chicago Sinfonietta. As a flutist, she has developed a unique improvisational language and has been repeatedly awarded “Top Flutist of the Year” by *Downbeat* Magazine Critics Poll and the Jazz Journalists Association (2010-2017).

Mitchell's newest work with her Chicago-based *Black Earth Ensemble* explores intercultural collaborations utilizing improvisation. *Bamako\*Chicago, featuring Malian kora master, Ballake Sissoko*, made its American debut at Chicago's Hyde Park Jazz Festival in September 2017. Her project *Mandorla Awakening* (FPE 2017), was cited the #1 jazz album in the *New York Times*. Black Earth Ensemble is celebrating its 20th Anniversary in 2018. Mitchell is a recipient of the Herb Alpert Award (2011) and the Doris Duke Artist Award (2012). Mitchell is a Professor of Music at University of California, Irvine, where she is a core faculty member of PhD program in Integrated Composition, Improvisation and Technology. She is endorsed by Powell Flutes.

**Jim Staley** is co-founder and director of Roulette Intermedium, Inc. (a.k.a. Roulette), which was founded in 1978. Staley and co-founder David Weinstein began the Roulette Concert Series in Staley's loft on West Broadway in New York City during fall of 1980. The series continues to this day, though performances now take place in a 400-seat theater in downtown Brooklyn. Roulette presents composers of experimental new music, avant garde jazz, experimental dance, new media, and some spoken work. Staley has been awarded The Susan E. Kennedy Award for his support of artists' work as well as the ASCAP-Victor Herbert Award.



Jim Staley is also a trombonist and improvising musician. He received a BS in Music Ed, BM, and a MM from University of Illinois, working with Robert Grey, Morgan Powell, Salvatore Martirano, Ben Johnston, Arnold Jacobs, and Ed Kleinhammer. He has released numerous albums and has performed on many other record releases, several of them with Tone Road Ramblers, John Zorn, and Elliott Sharp. Long-time collaborators include Sam Bennett, Bill Frisell, Fred Frith, Shelley Hirsch, Wayne Horvitz, Ikue Mori, Zeena Parkins, Elliott Sharp, Davey Williams, John Zorn as well as choreographers Pooh Kaye, Debra Loewen, and Sally Silvers.

Staley has been a member of the Tone Road Ramblers, a new music ensemble formed in 1981. He was a member of US Army Bands from 1970-73, serving with 6<sup>th</sup> Army Band, SF, CA, and 298<sup>th</sup> in Berlin, Germany, where he performed with Slide Hampton's big band. There, he was introduced to experimental new music by James Fulkerson and other DAAD fellows at the time, to free improvisation through Barry Guy, Paul Rutherford, and the FMP association. Staley continues to perform with the Tone Road Ramblers, John Zorn, and other collaborators.

### **About the American Composers Forum**

The American Composers Forum is committed to supporting composers and developing new markets for their music. Through granting, commissioning, and performance programs, ACF provides composers at all stages of their careers with valuable resources for professional and artistic development. By linking communities with composers and performers, ACF fosters a demand for new music, enriches communities, and helps develop the next generation of composers, musicians, and music patrons.

*Photo credits: Photo of Sarah Cahill by Christine Alicino; photo of Nicole Mitchel by Kristi Sutton Elias; and photo of Jim Staley by Doron Sadjay.*