



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Black Cowboys, Korean Percussion Music and The Band Among Subjects of 51st ASCAP Foundation Deems Taylor/Virgil Thomson Award-Winning Music Books, Articles, Liner Notes and Broadcasts

NEW YORK, Oct. 10, 2019 -- Recently named winners of the 51st annual **ASCAP Foundation Deems Taylor/Virgil Thomson Awards** for outstanding print, broadcast, liner notes and new media coverage of music span a broad range of musical subjects, including black cowboys, the Korean percussion genre samul nori, The Band, the New York City Opera, classical composer Vincent Persichetti and drummer Laura Davis-Chanin's experiences with Blondie and David Bowie in the 1970s.

Established in 1967 to honor the memory of composer, critic and commentator Deems Taylor, who died in 1966 after a distinguished career that included six years as President of ASCAP (American Society of Composers, Authors and Publishers), The ASCAP Foundation Deems Taylor/Virgil Thomson Awards are made possible by the generous support of the Virgil Thomson Foundation. Virgil Thomson (1896 – 1989) was one of the leading American composers and critics of the 20th century, and a former member of the ASCAP Board of Directors.

The 2019 ASCAP Foundation Deems Taylor/Virgil Thomson Award recipients are as follows:

The Virgil Thomson Award for Outstanding Music Criticism in the concert music field was presented to **Heidi Waleson** for her book, *Mad Scenes and Exit Arias: The Death of the New York City Opera and the Future of Opera in America*, published by Metropolitan Books, a division of Henry Holt. The book is a wide-ranging narrative history of how and why the New York City Opera went bankrupt and what it means for the future of the arts. Waleson has been the opera critic for *The Wall Street Journal* for over 25 years.

The Virgil Thomson Award for Outstanding Music Criticism in the pop music field recognizes **David Fricke** for his liner notes for *Music from Big Pink – 50th Anniversary* box set published by Universal Music Group. Regarded as one of the most influential albums of all time, the 50th Anniversary box set of The

Band's 1968 classic includes a four-page essay by Fricke setting the scene for the historic recording session and offering insights into the recording's continuing significance.

The ASCAP Foundation Paul Williams "Loved the Liner Notes" Award for pop music honors multi-instrumentalist **Dom Flemons** for his work on the liner notes for his recording, *Black Cowboys*, released by Smithsonian Folkways Recordings. Flemons illustrates the complex cultural exchange that happened on the frontier in the 40-page liner notes booklet, reminding us that the American West was a much more diverse environment than old Western films would have us believe. This award was established in 2016 and is funded by **The ASCAP Foundation President Paul Williams**.

The Timothy White Award for Outstanding Music Biography in the pop music field recognizes **Maxine Gordon** for her book, *Sophisticated Giant: The Life and Legacy of Dexter Gordon* published by University of California Press. Written by Gordon's widow, the book is an in-depth look at the life and legacy of tenor saxophonist Dexter Gordon (1923-1990), one of the major innovators of modern jazz.

The Nicolas Slonimsky Award for Outstanding Musical Biography in the concert music field was presented to **Andrea Olmstead** for her work, *Vincent Persichetti: Grazioso, Grit and Gold* published by Rowman & Littlefield. The book is the first critical biography of this esteemed American composer. It weaves a captivating narrative of Persichetti from his early life and musical training, starting with his early career in Philadelphia during the 1920s and '30s through his teaching at Juilliard and death in 1987. The book sheds light on Persichetti's personal and professional life, the multiple forces that shaped his musical development and his influence on the modern American composition scene.

Dynamic Korea and Rhythmic Form by **Katherine In-Young Lee**, published by Wesleyan University Press, received **The Béla Bartók Award for Outstanding Ethnomusicology**. The book explores how a percussion genre from South Korea (*samul nori*) became a global music genre. In it, Lee contends that rhythm-based forms serve as a critical site for cross-cultural musical encounters.

The Deems Taylor/Virgil Thomson Radio Broadcast/Internet Award honors **Laurence Maslon**, the host and producer of "Broadway to Main Street," a radio program where the greatest songs of the Broadway stage meet popular culture in America. It is broadcast on the NPR-affiliate station WPPB-FM on Long Island's East End and is supported in part by the Ira and Leonore Gershwin Trusts Philanthropic Fund.

The Deems Taylor/Virgil Thomson Broadcast/Internet Award recognizes **Pablo Salazar**, creator and producer of *Living American*, a weekly program on SiriusXM radio featuring music composed by Americans (including new American citizens) that reflects the times we live in. Each program is curated and hosted by a leading player in 21st century classical music, including concert composers, conductors and performers.

The Deems Taylor/Virgil Thomson Book Award was presented to:

- **Laura Davis-Chanin** for her book *The Girl in the Back: A Female Drummer's Life with Bowie, Blondie, and the '70s Rock Scene*, published by Backbeat Books.

Deems Taylor/Virgil Thomson Awards for Articles include:

- **Tom Piazza** for his article "Living in the Present with John Prine," published in *The Oxford American*.
- **Danielle Ward-Griffin** for her article "As Seen on TV: Putting the NBC Opera on Stage" in the *Journal of the American Musicological Society*, published by the University of California Press.

The ASCAP Foundation Deems Taylor/Virgil Thomson Awards **Judging Panel** for 2019 was comprised of ASCAP members **Kathryn Alexander, Paul Moravec, Terry Radigan** and **Matthew Shipp**. **Jim Steinblatt** provided professional guidance and advice.

About The ASCAP Foundation

Founded in 1975, The ASCAP Foundation is a charitable organization dedicated to supporting American music creators and encouraging their development through music education and talent development programs. Included in these are songwriting workshops, grants, scholarships, awards, recognition and community outreach programs for songwriters, composers and lyricists. The ASCAP Foundation is supported by contributions from ASCAP members and from music lovers throughout the United States. www.ascapfoundation.org

About the Virgil Thomson Foundation

The purpose of the Virgil Thomson Foundation is to further and promote the performance, preservation, dissemination and public appreciation of serious music in general and the music and writings of Virgil Thomson in particular. <http://www.virgilthomson.org>

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