THE AMERICAN ACADEMY OF ARTS AND LETTERS ANNOUNCES

2015 MUSIC AWARD WINNERS

Sixteen Composers Receive Awards Totaling $205,000

New York, March 3, 2015—The American Academy of Arts and Letters announced today the sixteen recipients of this year's awards in music, which total $205,000. The winners were selected by a committee of Academy members: Joan Tower (chairman), Samuel Adler, Martin Boykan, Mario Davidovsky, Stephen Hartke, Stephen Jaffe, and Aaron Jay Kernis. The awards will be presented at the Academy's annual Ceremonial in May. Candidates for music awards are nominated by the 250 members of the Academy.

Arts and Letters Awards in Music
Four composers will each receive a $10,000 Arts and Letters Award in Music, which honors outstanding artistic achievement and acknowledges the composer who has arrived at his or her own voice. Each will receive an additional $10,000 toward the recording of one work. The winners are Billy Childs, Harold Meltzer, Kevin Puts, and Kurt Rohde.

Walter Hinrichsen Award
Paul Kerekes will receive the Walter Hinrichsen Award for the publication of a work by a gifted composer. This award was established by the C. F. Peters Corporation, music publishers, in 1984.

Benjamin H. Danks Award
Alex Mincek will receive the Benjamin H. Danks Award of $20,000 for a young composer of ensemble music.

Goddard Lieberson Fellowships
Two Goddard Lieberson Fellowships of $15,000, endowed in 1978 by the CBS Foundation, are given to mid-career composers of exceptional gifts. This year they will go to Scott Johnson and David Sanford.

Charles Ives Fellowships
Harmony Ives, the widow of Charles Ives, bequeathed to the Academy the royalties of Charles Ives' music, which has enabled the Academy to give the Ives awards in composition since 1970. Two Charles Ives Fellowships, of $15,000, will be awarded to Jason Eckardt and Erin Gee.

Charles Ives Scholarships
Julia Adolphe, Emily Cooley, Paul Frucht, Max Grafe, Polina Nazaykinskaya, and Christopher Trapani will receive Charles Ives Scholarships of $7500, given to composition students of great promise.

The Academy
The American Academy of Arts and Letters was founded in 1898 to "foster, assist, and sustain an interest in literature, music, and the fine arts." Each year, the Academy honors over 50 composers, artists, architects, and writers with cash awards ranging from $5000 to $100,000. Other activities of the Academy are exhibitions of art, architecture, and manuscripts, and readings of new musicals. It is located in three landmark buildings on Audubon Terrace in New York City.
Twenty-six year old composer Julia Adolphe’s music has been described as “alive with invention” (Alex Ross, The New Yorker) and “colorful, mercurial, deftly orchestrated” (The New York Times). Career highlights include the New York Philharmonic’s premiere of Adolphe’s orchestral work *Dark Sand, Sifting Light* conducted by Alan Gilbert at the inaugural 2014 NY PHIL BIENNIAL and the world concert premiere of Adolphe’s chamber opera, *Sylvia*, at Bargemusic in 2013. ([www.JuliaAdolphe.com](http://www.JuliaAdolphe.com))

Billy Childs received his primary musical training in piano and theory at the USC Community School (now Colburn School), studying with theory with Marienne Uzsler and piano with John Weisenfluh. He went on to attend USC as a composition major, and in 1979 graduated with a bachelor of music in composition, under the tutelage of Robert Linn. Since then, Childs has had an illustrious career in both the jazz and classical genres, working with - among others - Yo-Yo Ma, Renee Fleming, Freddie Hubbard, Sting, Leonard Slatkin, the Ying Quartet, Joshua Bell, and Wynton Marsalis. Mr Childs has received 4 Grammy awards (2 for composition and 2 for arranging) out of 13 nominations, a Doris Duke Performing Artist Award (2013), and a Guggenheim Fellowship (2009).

Emily Cooley (b. 1990) has been commissioned and performed by ensembles including the Cabrillo Festival Orchestra, the Milwaukee Symphony Orchestra, the Sioux City Symphony Orchestra, the Eastern Connecticut Symphony Orchestra, the JACK Quartet, and Music from Copland House. A native of Milwaukee, WI, Emily is a recent graduate of the USC Thornton School of Music and Yale University, where she was awarded the Louis Sudler Prize. Past teachers include Stephen Hartke, Donald Crockett, Andrew Norman, Kathryn Alexander, and John K. Boyle. Emily currently holds the Milton L. Rock Composition Fellowship at the Curtis Institute of Music, where she studies with David Ludwig.

Jason Eckardt (b. 1971) played guitar in jazz and metal bands until, upon first hearing the music of Webern, he immediately devoted himself to composition. Since then, his music has been influenced by his interests in perceptual complexity, the physical and psychological dimensions of performance, political activism, and self-organizing processes in the natural world. He teaches composition at CUNY’s Graduate Center and Brooklyn College and lives in the Catskill Mountains.
Paul Frucht is an emerging American composer whose music has been hailed for its “sense of lyricism, driving pulse, and great urgency” (WQXR). His music has recently received performances, and/or been commissioned, by the Milwaukee Symphony, the San Diego Symphony, the Juilliard Orchestra, the New York City Ballet’s Choreographic Institute, and the pianoSonoma Festival, where he has been composer-in-residence since 2014. Paul is a C.V. Starr Doctoral Fellow at the Juilliard School, studying with Robert Beaser.

Cited as “subtle and inventive” by the New York Times, Erin Gee’s compositions have been awarded a Guggenheim Fellowship, a Radcliffe Fellowship, and the 2008 Rome Prize, and she has had premieres of her work at the Zurich Opera House with her opera SLEEP, the Radio Symphony Orchestra Vienna, the American Composers Orchestra and the Los Angeles Philharmonic New Music Group under Esa-Pekka Salonen.

Max Grafe’s music has recently been performed by the New York Philharmonic, Quince Contemporary Vocal Ensemble, and newEar Contemporary Chamber Ensemble, and will soon be featured in performances by the New York City Ballet’s Choreographic Institute, the New Juilliard Ensemble, the Chelsea Symphony, and FLUX Quartet. Mr. Grafe is pursuing a Doctor of Musical Arts degree at the Juilliard School, where he also received a Master of Music degree in 2011.

Composer Scott Johnson has played a leading role in the evolving relationship between the classical inheritance and our contemporary vernacular, incorporating rock-derived musical materials and instruments into his scores, and introducing an innovative method of instrumental writing based on the transcription of sampled speech. Commissioning ensembles include Alarm Will Sound, the Kronos Quartet, and the Bang On A Can All-Stars. Awards include a Koussevitsky commission and a Guggenheim Fellowship.
Paul Kerekes is a pianist and composer from Northport, NY. His music has been described as “striking” (WQXR), “highly eloquent” (New Haven Advocate), and able to create “an almost tactile picture” (The New York Times). He has had the privilege of hearing his pieces performed by many outstanding ensembles, some of which include the American Composers Orchestra, Da Capo Chamber Players, and Dinosaur Annex, in such venues as Merkin Hall, The DiMenna Center, and Symphony Space.

A 2010 recording devoted to music of Harold Meltzer (b. 1966), on Naxos, was named one of the discs of the year in The New York Times and Fanfare Magazine. He has been awarded the Rome Prize, the Barlow Prize, a Guggenheim Fellowship, and the Charles Ives Fellowship from the AAAL. Recent commissions include works for the Los Angeles Philharmonic, the Pittsburgh Symphony, Orpheus Chamber Orchestra, and the Library of Congress.

Alex Mincek is a New York-based composer and performer. He is a recent recipient of a Guggenheim Fellowship (2012) and an Alpert Award in the Arts (2013). His music has also been recognized through commissions and awards from other arts institutions such as the French Ministry of Culture, the National Foundation for Advancement in the Arts, Radio France, the Barlow Endowment, the Orpheus Chamber Orchestra, and the American Composers Orchestra, among others. Mincek is currently the saxophonist and artistic director of the Wet Ink Ensemble.

Born in Togliatti, an industrial city on the Volga River in Russia, Polina Nazaykinskaya is a graduate of the Yale School of Music. Currently Polina is pursuing her Doctorate Degree in Composition at the Graduate Center, City University of New York and studying with Professor Tania León. She has won numerous awards and has had performances by ensembles including the Minnesota Orchestra, the Russian National Orchestra, the Hermitage Orchestra and Chorus, and the Yale Philharmonia Orchestra.

Winner of numerous prestigious awards, including the 2012 Pulitzer Prize for his debut opera Silent Night, Kevin Puts’s orchestral works have been commissioned, performed, and recorded by leading orchestras, ensembles, and soloists throughout the world. He is currently a member of the composition department at the Peabody Institute as well as the Director of the Minnesota Orchestra Composer’s Institute. His newest opera, The Manchurian Candidate, will have its world premiere in March 2015.
Violist and composer **Kurt Rohde** is a recipient of the Rome Prize, the Berlin Prize, a Guggenheim Fellowship, the Lydian String Quartet Commission Prize, and has received commission awards from the Barlow, Fromm, Hanson, and Koussevitzky Foundations. A Professor at UC Davis, Rohde was a Fellow at the Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Studies in 2012–13. He plays with the Left Coast Chamber Ensemble, and serves as their artistic advisor.

Director of the contemporary big band the Pittsburgh Collective, composer **David Sanford's** works have been performed by the Boston Modern Orchestra Project, the Berkeley Symphony Orchestra, the Cabrillo Festival Orchestra, and the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center. His honors include the Rome Prize and fellowships from the Guggenheim Foundation and the Radcliffe Institute. He is the Elizabeth T. Kennan Professor of Music at Mount Holyoke College.

**Christopher Trapani** (1980, New Orleans) earned a Bachelor’s degree from Harvard, then spent his twenties overseas in London, Paris, and Istanbul. Since 2010, he is a doctoral fellow at Columbia University. Christopher is the winner of the 2007 Gaudeamus Prize, the Julius F. Ježek Prize, and awards from ASCAP and BMI. Current projects a commission for orchestra and electronics (IRCAM) for Festival Présences 2015. For more information: [www.christophertrapani.com](http://www.christophertrapani.com).