

NEWS RELEASE

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AMERICAN ACADEMY OF ARTS AND LETTERS ANNOUNCES 2008 MUSIC AWARD WINNERS

Fifteen Composers Receive Awards Totaling \$165,000

New York, March 5, 2008 -- The American Academy of Arts and Letters announced today the fifteen recipients of this year's awards in music, which total \$165,000. The winners were selected by a committee of Academy members: Robert Beaser (chairman), Martin Bresnick, John Harbison, Shulamit Ran, Gunther Schuller, and Yehudi Wyner. 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.

Academy Awards in Music

Four composers will each receive a \$7500 Academy 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 \$7500 toward the recording of one work. The winners are **Virko Baley, Donal Fox, Pablo Ortiz, and Anna Weesner.**

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 **James Matheson and Stephen Andrew Taylor.**

Walter Hinrichsen Award

James Mobberley 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.

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 music since 1970. Two Charles Ives Fellowships, of \$15,000 each, will be awarded to **Kati Agócs and Kay Rhie.**

Charles Ives Scholarships

Timothy Andres, Jacob Bancks, Ted Hearne, Andrew McPherson, John Christian Orfe, and Kate Soper will receive Charles Ives Scholarships of \$7500, given to composition students of great promise.

American Academy of Arts and Letters

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 \$2,500 to \$75,000. Other activities of the Academy are exhibitions of art, architecture, and manuscripts; publications on the Academy's history and events; publications on the Academy's history and readings and performances of new musicals. The Academy is located in two landmark buildings, designed by McKim, Mead & White and by Cass Gilbert, on Audubon Terrace at 155th Street and Broadway.

Biographies of 2008 Award Winners in Music

Kati Agócs (Charles Ives Fellowship) was born in Windsor, Canada, of Hungarian and American background. She holds D.M.A. and M.M. degrees from The Juilliard School, and is an alumna of the Aspen Music School, Pearson College of the Pacific, and Sarah Lawrence College, all of which she attended on full scholarship. Awards include a Leonard Bernstein Composer Fellowship (Tanglewood Music Center), Fulbright Fellowship, Charles Ives Scholarship (American Academy of Arts and Letters), Jacob K. Javits Fellowship, Presser Foundation Award, and honors from ASCAP (Morton Gould Young Composer Awards). Principal composition teachers are Milton Babbitt, Robert Beaser, and George Tsontakis. She has also worked with Joan Tower, John Harbison, Michael Gandolfi, Christopher Rouse, and James McMillan during summer festivals. She has taught composition and theory for two years at the School of Music, Memorial University of Newfoundland, the largest conservatory in Atlantic Canada.

Timothy Andres (Charles Ives Scholarship) is a M.M. student at Yale University, and received his B.A. from Yale, where his principal composition teachers include Ingram Marshall and Aaron Jay Kernis. He has attended the Tanglewood Music Center, the Norfolk Contemporary Festival, and the Bowdoin Summer Festival, the Aspen Music School, and the Boston University Tanglewood Institute. His honors include an ASCAP Leonard Bernstein Composition Fellowship, two ASCAP Morton Gould Young Composers' Awards, and a BMI Student Composers' Award. He has been commissioned to write a chamber orchestra work for the Los Angeles Philharmonic, to be conducted by John Adams in May 2009.

Virko Baley (Academy Award), composer, conductor, pianist and writer -- born in Ukraine in 1938, but has spent most of his creative life in the United States -- is the recipient of the 1996 Shevchenko Prize for Music, awarded by the Ukrainian government. He is also the Petro Jacyk Distinguished Research Fellow at the Ukrainian Research Institute for the academic year 2006/2007 to continue work on his opera "Red Earth (Hunger)." In 2007 he was awarded a GRAMMY as recording producer for TNC Recordings for Best Instrumental Performance with Orchestra. He is an author of many articles on Ukrainian music, including many entries for GROVE. Shirley Fleming, reviewing a concert of his music in the *New York Post* called his music "vibrant, dramatic, communicative, much of it framed by extra-musical allusions that place it in a solid context." According to *Village Voice* critic Kyle Gann, the New York premiere of *Violin Concerto No. 1, quasi una fantasia* was full of "sonic images memorable enough to take home." Virko Baley is currently Distinguished Professor of Music, Composer-in-Residence and co-director of NEON, an annual composers' conference at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas.

Jacob Bancks (Charles Ives Scholarship) will have his music performed this season by the Millennium Chamber Players, the South Dakota Symphony, the New York Youth Symphony, the Annapolis Symphony, and eighth blackbird. Recent commissions include the International Double Reed Society, the Hanson Institute for American Music, and the Commission Project. His prizes include a BMI Student Composer Award, a Century Fellowship (University of Chicago), the Howard Hanson Orchestral Prize (Eastman), and a grant from the Foundation for Contemporary Arts. He has studied with Shulamit Ran, Carlos Sanchez-Gutierrez, Ricardo Zohn-Muldoon, and Augusta Read Thomas. He is a Ph.D. student at the University of Chicago, and earned his M.M. degree from Eastman School of Music.

Donal Fox (Academy Award) is internationally acclaimed as composer, pianist, and improviser in both jazz and classical music. His numerous awards include a Guggenheim fellowship in music composition and a fellowship from the Bogliasco Foundation. He served as the first African-American composer-in-residence with the St. Louis Symphony from 1991 to 1992. Mr. Fox premiered his Monk and Bach Project at Jazz at Lincoln Center, his orchestra piece, *Hear De Lambs A-Cyrin*, commissioned by the Albany Symphony Orchestra for The Spiritual Project, and the world premiere of *Peace Out, My Brother* at Carnegie Recital Hall. He has been Composer-in-Residence at Oberpfalzer Kunstlerhaus (Germany), Tyrone Guthrie Centre (Ireland), Djerassi Resident Artist Program, Liguria Study Center, Tanglewood Contemporary Music Festival, among others. Mr. Fox has recorded as composer and pianist for New World Records, Evidence Records, Music & Arts, Passin' Thru Records, Yamaha's Original Artist Series, and Wergo Records. His works are published by Margun Music, G. Schirmer and Leonellis Music.

Ted Hearne (Charles Ives Scholarship) is a Master of Music student at Yale School of Music, earned his Bachelor of Music degree from Manhattan School of Music, and has also studied at the Royal College of Music in London. His principal teachers include Martin Bresnick, Aaron Jay Kernis, Julia Wolfe, William Mival, Nils Vigeland, and Robert Lombardo. He has been commissioned by the Chicago Youth Symphony and Chicago Children's Choir, Bang on a Can, New Music Collective, Nomos String Trio, Third Coast Percussion, and Newspeak Ensemble.

James Matheson (Lieberson Fellowship) won a Guggenheim Foundation Fellowship, and his music has been programmed by the Chicago, Seattle and Albany Symphony Orchestras, American Composers Orchestra, Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center, Orchestra 2001 (Philadelphia), LA's *Monday Evening Concerts* Series, the San Francisco Contemporary Music Players and the Pittsburgh New Music Ensemble. In December 2007, the Los Angeles Philharmonic presented the West Coast Premiere of Matheson's *Songs of Desire, Love and Loss*, which was commissioned by Carnegie Hall and premiered in October, 2004 as part of Dawn Upshaw's Perspectives series. In February 2008, Antares presented the world premiere of *The Anatomy of Melancholy* at the Ravinia Festival and will include the work on their 2008 national tour. Upcoming projects include a piano quintet commissioned by the Cheswaty Foundation for the Borromeo String Quartet and pianist Judith Gordon, a quartet commissioned by Winsor Music, and a new work for Sequitur.

Andrew McPherson (Charles Ives Scholarship) is a Ph.D. candidate at University of Pennsylvania, and earned an S.B. in Music, an M.Eng., and an S.B. in Electrical Engineering from M.I.T. A double major in music and electrical engineering, he graduated Phi Beta Kappa and was awarded the 2004 Sudler Prize in the Arts. He subsequently worked in Barry Vercoe's computer music group at the Media Lab. He has attended the Tanglewood and Bowdoin summer festivals. His principal composition teachers are Peter Child, John Harbison, James Primosch, Jay Reise, Anna Weesner, and Maurice Wright.

James Mobberley (Walter Hinrichsen Award) is Curators' Professor of Music at the Conservatory of Music of the University of Missouri-Kansas City. His awards include the Rome Prize, the Guggenheim Foundation, and the 2001 Van Cliburn Composers Invitational. Commissions have come from the Koussevitzky Foundation (Library of Congress), the Fromm Foundation at Harvard University, Chamber Music America, the St. Louis Symphony, the Kansas City Symphony, Meet the Composer, the Barlow Foundation, Music From China, and the Cleveland Chamber Symphony. He has appeared as Guest Composer with the Taiwan National Symphony, the American Composers Orchestra, the Composers Forum at Wellesley College, and over 40 colleges and universities around the world. His music has received a thousand performances on five continents, and appeared on two dozen recordings.

John Christian Orfe (Charles Ives Scholarship) earned fellowships from the U.S. Department of Education, the Otto Eckstein Family, and the Tanglewood Music Center, a Morton Gould Award and eight Standard Awards from ASCAP, and the William Schuman and Boudleaux Bryant prizes from BMI. He has been commissioned by the Music Institute of Chicago, the Evansville Philharmonic Orchestra, the Lila Muni Gamelan Ensemble, Alarm Will Sound, and Duo Montagnard. He is a D.M.A. candidate at the Yale School of Music, earned his M.M.A and M.M. from Yale, a B.M. from Eastman School of Music and a B.A. from University of Rochester.

Pablo Ortiz (Academy Award) teaches composition at the University of California, Davis. He has received commissions and fellowships from the Fromm and Guggenheim foundations, and a Charles Ives Fellowship from the American Academy of Arts and Letters. He has written two chamber operas, *Parodia* and *Una voz en el viento*, for the Centro Experimental Teatro Colon in Buenos Aires. Other honors include a Koussevitzky Foundation commission, a grant from Fideicomiso para la cultura Mexico-US to write bilingual children's songs, and a commission by the Gerbode Foundation to write a piece for Chanticleer and the San Francisco Contemporary Music Players. A new CD, *Oscuro*, including this and other works has been released by Albany Records. Another CD, including his collaborations with Finnish cellist Anssi Karttunen, has just been released on the Petals label in Finland. His works include chamber and solo music, vocal, orchestral, and electronic compositions, and music for plays and films.

Kay Rhie (Charles Ives Fellowship) is a Korean-American composer from Los Angeles, now living in Ithaca, New York. Performers of her music have included California EAR Unit, LA Chamber Singers, the Festival Chamber Orchestra, and the Cornell University Glee Club. She has received awards and commissions from the Ojai Music Festival, Brave New Works and the Tanglewood Music Festival. She has won fellowships at are Tanglewood Music Center, Banff Centre for the Arts, Bennington Chamber Music Conference of the East, and Aspen Music Festival. She earned her Bachelor's and Master's degree from UCLA and is expected to receive her doctoral degree from Cornell University this spring. Her teachers include Steven Stucky, Roberto Sierra, Paul Chihara, Ian Krouse, David Lefkowitz from Cornell and UCLA. She has also worked with John Harbison, Colin Matthews, Samuel Adler, Stephen Hartke, Donald Crockett, and Syd Hodkinson.

Kate Soper (Charles Ives Scholarship) is a D.M.A. student at Columbia University, earned her B.M. in composition from Rice University, and studied composition at the Aspen Music School. She has been a fellow at The Tanglewood Music Center, Wellesley Composers Conference, and Yale Summer School of Music at Norfolk, and was a participant at Ostrava Days, Czech Republic. Her principal teachers are Fred Lerdahl, Mario Davidovsky, and Fabien Levy.

Stephen Andrew Taylor (Lieberson Fellowship) composes music that explores boundaries between art and science. His first orchestra commission, *Unapproachable Light*—inspired by images from the Hubble Space Telescope and the New Testament—was premiered by the American Composers Orchestra in 1996 in Carnegie Hall. Other works include the chamber quartet *Quark Shadows*, commissioned by the Chicago Symphony; and *Seven Memorials*, a 32-minute cycle for piano inspired by the work of Maya Lin and featured at Tanglewood in 2006. Excerpts from a new opera based on a novella by Ursula K. Le Guin have been performed recently by the New York City Opera and American Opera Projects. 2008 will see performances in Washington DC, Holland, Serbia, Toronto, and the Bali Arts Festival. His music has won awards from the Conservatoire Américain de Fontainebleau, the Debussy Trio, the Howard Foundation, the College Band Directors National Association, the New York State Federation of Music Clubs, the Illinois Arts Council, the American Music Center, and ASCAP.

Anna Weesner (Academy Award) has been commissioned and performed by Dawn Upshaw, Richard Goode, Gilbert Kalish, Judith Kellock, Scott Kluksdahl, the Cassatt Quartet, the Cypress Quartet, Mary Nessinger, Jeanne Golan, Music at the Anthology, Network for New Music, the American Composers Orchestra, the St. Luke's Chamber Ensemble, and Metamorphosen. Awards include the 2006 Award for Excellence in the Arts from the Virginia Center for the Creative Arts, a 2003 Pew Fellowship, ASCAP's Young Composer Award and the Lakond Fellowship from the American Academy of Arts and Letters. She has been in residence at the MacDowell Colony, Blue Mountain Center, Fondation Royaumont in France, the Virginia Center, and was a visiting artist at the American Academy in Rome. Current projects include a new piano trio for the group Open End and a new work for viola and piano to be premiered by violist Melia Watras. She lives in Philadelphia, where she teaches at the University of Pennsylvania.