



**THE AMERICAN ACADEMY OF ARTS AND LETTERS ANNOUNCES  
YEHUDI WYNER ELECTED PRESIDENT**

New York, NY, February 11, 2015 – The Pulitzer Prize-winning composer Yehudi Wyner has been elected to a three-year term as president of the American Academy of Arts and Letters, succeeding the architect Henry N. Cobb. Mr. Wyner was inducted into the 250-member organization in 1999 and has served on its award juries and board of directors.

“Surprise, astonishment, disbelief, and finally delight were my reactions to being elected president of the Academy,” said Mr. Wyner. “This institution, which I revere, stands as a beacon in our society, embracing high accomplishment in the arts, glorifying works of the imagination and spirit. Membership is an honor, but the primary function of the Academy is to seek out and recognize promising creators and to advance their work with awards and prizes. To be able to serve the Academy is an incomparable gift as well as a sober responsibility.”

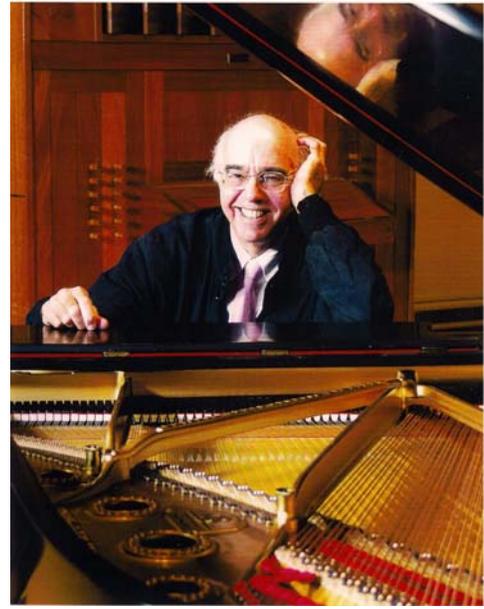


Photo: Michael Lovett.

Mr. Wyner has created a diverse body of over 100 works for orchestra, chamber ensemble, solo performers, theater music, and liturgical services. He has received commissions from Carnegie Hall, the Boston Symphony, BBC Philharmonic, the National Endowment for the Arts, and the Santa Fe Chamber Music Festival. He has served on the faculties of Yale, Harvard, Cornell, Brandeis University, and the Tanglewood Music Center.

In addition to composing and teaching, Mr. Wyner has performed as a solo pianist and chamber musician, directed two opera companies, and conducted ensembles in a wide range of repertory. Since 1968, he has been keyboard artist for the Bach Aria Group.

His honors include the 2006 Pulitzer Prize in Music for his piano concerto "Chiavi in mano," two Guggenheim Fellowships, and a 2005 Grammy for "The Mirror."

Born in Western Canada, Mr. Wyner grew up in New York City. His father, Lazar Weiner, was the preeminent composer of Yiddish Art Song and notable creator of liturgical music for the modern synagogue. Trained early as a pianist and composer, Mr. Wyner studied at Juilliard, Yale, and Harvard (his teachers included Paul Hindemith and Walter Piston). He won the Rome Prize in Composition in 1953.

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The American Academy of Arts and Letters was established in 1898 to “foster, assist, and sustain an interest in literature, music, and the fine arts,” and is chartered by Congress. Each year, the Academy gives over one million dollars in awards to artists, architects, writers, and composers. It presents exhibitions of art, architecture, and manuscripts, and subsidizes readings and performances of new musicals. The 117-year-old organization is located in three landmark buildings on Audubon Terrace.