

COMPOSER JAMES MATHESON WINS \$200,000 CHARLES IVES AWARD

New York, December 6, 2011 – James Matheson has won the Charles Ives Living, and will receive \$200,000 over the two-year period of the award, beginning July 2012. The announcement was made by J. D. McClatchy, president of the Academy: “James Matheson joins a distinguished line of winners of the Ives Living, each of them adding to American music more of the exuberance and distinction that Charles Ives himself exemplified.” Although the Charles Ives Living winner agrees to forgo all salaried employment during the award period, there is no restriction on accepting composition commissions.

James Matheson responded, “Two years devoted exclusively to composition is a luxury almost beyond my ability to imagine. My deepest thanks go to the Academy – and to the ghosts of Charles and Harmony Ives – for making possible this astonishing gift of time.”

SELECTION PROCESS

The selection committee – John Corigliano (chairman), Martin Bresnick, John Harbison, Stephen Hartke, and Tania León – studied scores and recordings over a six-month period to arrive at their choice of James Matheson.

Nominations for the Academy’s awards come from the 250 members of the Academy—painters, sculptors, architects, writers, and composers; no other nominations or applications are accepted, with the exception of the Richard Rodgers Awards for Musical Theater. Academy members are not eligible to receive monetary awards.

JURY COMMENTS

John Corigliano: “James Matheson is one of today’s brightest lights. The Ives Living will help him create even greater works.”

John Harbison: “James Matheson’s music has for many years been a model of independence, strength, and resolute directness. He is a deserving and distinguished recipient of the Ives Living, and we anticipate many fine pieces blooming during this free time.”

Martin Bresnick: “James Matheson is a composer of significant accomplishment and even greater imaginative potential. He is an ideal Ives Living winner – independent, industrious, and poised for a major contribution to American music.”

Tania León: “His music has deep passion; there is vibrancy in his voice, an urgency of expression.”

Steven Stucky, also a member of the Academy: “James Matheson’s music never wallows in the sentimental, never panders, never takes it easy. It has muscle – both intellectual and kinetic – it has passion, and it has integrity. Matheson takes chances; he doesn’t settle for the routine. His gritty, gutsy ardor and eloquent gravity make me think (approvingly) of Sibelius.”

PURPOSE

The purpose of the Ives Living is to free a promising American composer from the need to devote his or her time to any employment other than music composition. It is the Academy's intent to provide through this award an income sufficient to ensure that freedom for a period of two years.

BIOGRAPHY OF JAMES MATHESON

James Matheson was born in 1970 in Des Moines, Iowa, and now lives in Brooklyn, New York. He became the Director of the Los Angeles Philharmonic's Composer Fellowship Program in September of 2009. He has received the Goddard Lieberson Fellowship (2008) and the Hinrichsen Award (2002) from the American Academy of Arts and Letters. He was also the recipient of a Guggenheim Foundation Fellowship in 2000. From 2005–2007, Matheson was Executive Director of the MATA Festival of New Music in New York. His music has been performed by the New York and Los Angeles Philharmonics, the Chicago and Albany Symphony Orchestras, the 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. His *Violin Concerto*, co-commissioned by the Chicago Symphony Orchestra and the Los Angeles Philharmonic, will receive its world premiere by the CSO later this month. His web address is <http://www.jamesmatheson.com>. His photograph is available upon request.

HISTORY

The Charles Ives Living was inaugurated in 1998 with the selection of Martin Bresnick. Chen Yi was the second winner in 2001, Stephen Hartke was the third winner, in 2004, and George Tsontakis followed in 2007.

OTHER CHARLES IVES AWARDS

Harmony Ives, the widow of Charles Ives, left to the Academy the royalties from her husband's music to establish a fund for prizes in music composition. Since 1970 the Academy has given 230 Ives scholarships, and since 1983, 31 Ives fellowships. These awards continue to be given annually.

THE AMERICAN ACADEMY OF ARTS AND LETTERS

The American Academy of Arts and Letters, chartered by Congress, was established in 1898 to "foster, assist, and sustain an interest in literature, music, and the fine arts." Founding members included William Merritt Chase, Kenyon Cox, Daniel Chester French, Childe Hassam, Henry James, Edward MacDowell, Theodore Roosevelt, Elihu Vedder, and Woodrow Wilson. Each year the Academy gives away just under \$1 million 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 113-year-old organization is located in three landmark buildings designed by McKim, Mead & White, Cass Gilbert, and Charles Pratt Huntington, on Audubon Terrace at 155th Street and Broadway, New York City.