

American Academy of Arts and Letters
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NEWS RELEASE

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TWO NEW MUSICALS WIN 2013 COMPETITION

Natasha, Pierre & The Great Comet of 1812 *The Kid Who Would Be Pope*

New York, February 11, 2013 – The winners of the 2013 Richard Rodgers Awards for Musical Theater were announced today by the American Academy of Arts and Letters, which administers the Rodgers Awards.

The winning musicals are:

Natasha, Pierre & The Great Comet of 1812 by Dave Malloy

The Kid Who Would Be Pope by Tom and Jack Megan

Both shows were awarded studio productions.

Natasha, Pierre & The Great Comet of 1812 is an electro-pop opera based on Book 8 of Tolstoy's *War & Peace*. Lovers are betrayed, society is scandalized and glasses are raised in a raucous Russian dinner club, with no stage; the audience sits in the middle of the action, at tables loaded with vodka and dumplings. Musically the piece veers wildly from indie rock, electronica and jazz noise to Romantic lieder and Russian folk. The studio production award for *Natasha, Pierre & The Great Comet of 1812* will support the production at Ars Nova.

The Kid Who Would Be Pope is a coming-of-age story about an eleven-year-old boy who attempts to become the next Pope so that he can change the rules of the Church and marry his favorite nun. It is a tale of love, obsession, and a young boy's search for miracles.

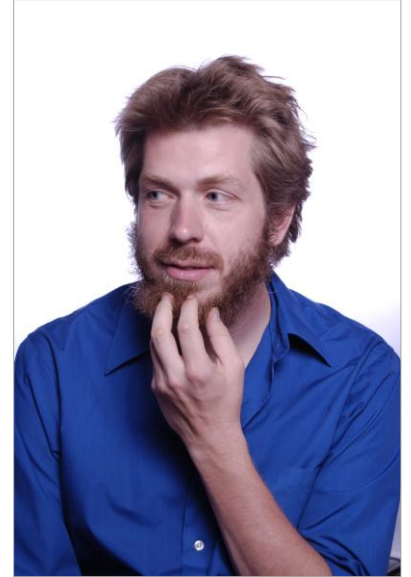
The intent of the Richard Rodgers Award is to nurture talented composers and playwrights by enabling their musicals to be produced in New York City. Former award recipients include Maury Yeston, *Nine*; Jonathan Larson, *Rent*; Julie Taymor and Elliot Goldenthal, *Juan Darien*; Lynn Ahrens and Stephen Flaherty, *Lucky Stiff*; Jeanine Tesori and Brian Crawley, *Violet*; and Scott Frankel, Michael Korie, and Doug Wright, *Grey Gardens*. Since 1980 seventy four works have received Rodgers Awards.

This year's jury included Stephen Sondheim (chair), Lynn Ahrens, Sheldon Harnick, Richard Maltby, Jr., Jeanine Tesori, and John Weidman.

Richard Rodgers, elected to the Academy in 1955, endowed these awards in 1978. The awards provide financial support for productions, studio productions, and staged readings of original musicals, by nonprofit theaters in New York City. The Richard Rodgers Awards are the Academy's only awards for which applications are accepted. **Application forms for the Richard Rodgers Awards may be downloaded from www.artsandletters.org.**

BIOGRAPHIES

DAVE MALLOY has written music for seven full length musicals, including *Natasha, Pierre & The Great Comet of 1812*, an electro-pop opera based on *War & Peace*, for which he was also librettist, orchestrator and performer (Ars Nova; Best of 2012: *NY Times*, *Time Out*, *NY Post*). Other musicals include *Beowulf - A Thousand Years of Baggage* (2011 Edinburgh Herald Angel, 2008 Glickman Award, New Yorker Best of 2009); *Beardo*; *Sandwich*; and *Clown Bible* (“Best Play of the Year,” “Best Music,” *East Bay Express* 2007). He is also one of the co-creator/performers of *Three Pianos*, a drunken romp through Schubert’s *Winterreise* (Ontological-Hysteric Theater, New York Theater Workshop, American Repertory Theater; Special Citation OBIE Award), and the composer for the Brooklyn based ensemble Banana Bag & Bodice. Other notable shows include (*The 99-cent*) *Miss Saigon*, a shoe-string adaptation complete with a toy helicopter on a zip line, and pieces with Hoi Polloi, Witness Relocation, Clubbed Thumb, and Shotgun Players. Other awards include a 2009 Jonathan Larson Grant and the 2009-11 NEA/TCG Career Development Program for Theatre Designers. He was the 2011 composer-in-residence at Ars Nova, and has been a Guest Professor in devised music theater at Princeton University and Vassar College. He lives in Brooklyn.



JACK MEGAN (Book, Music, Lyrics) Over the past twenty years, Jack has co-written and composed several musicals including *A Crease In The Clock*, *Monopoly*, and *The Duchess of Pleasant Hill*. *The Kid Who Would Be Pope*, a collaboration with his brother Tom, was a Next Link production at the 2011 New York Musical Theater Festival and was awarded the 2012 American Harmony Prize. Jack is Director of The Office for The Arts at Harvard University, which oversees and supports the activities of 3,000 student artists and faculty. Previously he served as director of development of the Santa Fe Chamber Music Festival and was Executive Director of the Longy School of Music in Cambridge.

TOM MEGAN (Book, Music, Lyrics) has created and collaborated on many original musicals including *A Vision*, *Jack*, *Sea Change*, *A Town Called Civility*, and *Surviving Ophelia*. His work has been seen at the New York Musical Theatre Festival, Playwrights Horizon, the Eugene O’Neill National Music Theater Conference, New Tuner’s Theatre in Chicago, Sacred Fools Theatre in West Hollywood, and Boston Music Theatre Project. Excerpts from *A Vision*, his musical about W.B. Yeats were presented at the Irish Repertory Theater’s “Yeats Project” in 2009. He is recipient of the Yip Harburg Award, several ASCAP awards, a grant from the National Institute for Musical Theater and along with his brother Jack, the 2012 American Harmony Prize. Tom is a graduate of the NYU Graduate Musical Theatre Program and a member of the Dramatists Guild.



Jack Megan and Tom Megan.
Photo credit: Joshua Lavine

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.” Election to the Academy is considered the highest formal recognition of artistic merit in this country. The Academy is currently comprised of 250 of America’s leading voices in the fields of Art, Architecture, Literature, and Music. The Academy presents exhibitions of art, architecture, and manuscripts; and readings and performances of new musicals throughout the year, and is located in three landmark buildings designed by McKim, Mead & White, Cass Gilbert, and Charles Pratt Huntington on Audubon Terrace at 155 Street and Broadway, New York City.