

# Yaddo



fall/winter news 2011



## Heart of Darkness Lights Up London

Composer Tarik O'Regan is basking in the glare of critical praise following the world premiere in London of his first stage work, a one-act opera adaptation of Joseph Conrad's masterpiece novella *Heart of Darkness*. The November 1-5 Opera East production at the Royal Opera House featured a multinational cast of eight singers and the 14-piece Ensemble Chroma, which performed on instruments as diverse as the guitar and celesta. O'Regan's score for *Heart of Darkness*, a project nearly 10 years in the making, was partly influenced by ethnographical records made in the Belgian Congo in the 1950s. A large portion of the opera was written at Yaddo. O'Regan's original inspiration, he has said, was one of his favorite films, *Apocalypse Now*, Francis Ford Coppola's take on Conrad's book. The book planted the seed for the opera, which led to a conversation with his friend, the artist, composer, and writer Tom Phillips, who wrote the opera's libretto. This is the first time Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* has been reimaged as an opera. Reviewers called the London production "elegant" and "moving" and noted it was particularly accessible, even for those who do not consider themselves fans of opera. O'Regan, 33, who has twice been in residence at Yaddo, has been singled out by *The Observer* (London) as "one of the most original and eloquent of young composers."

## SAYING YES TO LIFE

### Rick Moody in conversation with Mike Doughty

Mike Doughty is a singer-songwriter of a particularly urban sort, whose compositions, though guitar-based and often not terribly far from the ideal of the busker, are, nonetheless, cross-pollinated by just about everything audible in New York City – punk, jazz, pop, hip hop, soul, experimental music, electronica. He's also a first-rate lyricist, one who could easily be mistaken for a poet with a capital P, and in whom one can see the contours of much that has happened in the last fifteen years at, for example, the Bowery Poetry Club.

It was not exactly a surprise for me, then – as someone who has followed Doughty's work since the 1990s, since the ascendancy of his band Soul Coughing, a hip-hop inflected jazz-funk outfit that served as an alternative to everything grunge – to learn that Doughty has composed a memoir of his time in the limelight thus far, entitled, appropriately, *The Book of Drugs*, coming to you in January from Da Capo. Doughty's life, as chronicled in these pages, is not so much a revelation for its narrative arc (kid makes the big time, starts in with the dope, the band breaks up, kid is redeemed), as it is for the astonishingly vital, energized, and natural voice contained in its pages, one which never once had a ghost writer presiding over it, likewise its acerbic and sometimes lacerating honesty. As if a volume of genuine autobiography weren't enough, Doughty also has a new album out, one that finds him heading back in the direction of a band, albeit with lots of strange electronic noise adorning its lovely rock and roll surface. The new album is called *Yes And Also Yes*, which title Doughty came up with while trying to write a profile for himself on an online dating site, and is released on his own label, Snack Bar/ Megaforce. Available just about everywhere.

Our interview occurred in early September at Mike Doughty's apartment, which is on the *other side* of Prospect Park, Brooklyn, and which has a great many guitars in it.

**RICK MOODY:** I want to start by talking about the memoir. What was the impulse? At what point did the impulse arise?

**MIKE DOUGHTY:** I just felt I had a lot of stories. It wasn't like I had an idea for a book. I had all these stories and I kind of wanted to do something with them. And I guess I wrote

a book because I've always sort of been threatening to write a book (laughs), and finally somebody called me on it. Also, there's an economic impulse, which is that there's not a lot of money in making music anymore. Once you've been putting out records for a long time,

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even people who are super-positive about it are like, Oh, look, it's that guy. Oh, there he goes, he's putting something out! Great! He's doing it! And nobody pays attention to it.

**MOODY:** Does that mean that Da Capo came to you and said, Hey, we'll put out a memoir if you write one?

**DOUGHTY:** No, I started working with Jamie Kitman who manages They Might Be Giants and who also is an acclaimed automotive reporter. He said, Why don't we try to do some other stuff? Why don't you try to write a book? And I said, Oh, that's a lovely idea. He was just running by names of publishers,

"I just wanted something with drugs in it...something so that people would walk into the store and go, Drugs! I like drugs!"

and I was like, Don't know, don't know, don't know, who are they? And then I was like, Oh, yeah! I know Ben Shaeffer at Da Capo – he was the bass player in my best friend's band. I just called him up.

**MOODY:** Once you had interest from Da Capo then you began organizing the material? Or was some of it already written down?

**DOUGHTY:** As soon as I was signed I asked: How long does it need to be? And when do you want it? And Ben said, Oh, just do whatever you want, you know, take as long as you want. I said, Great. I'll call you in two years. Or rather, you'll call me in two years and say, Hey, we gave you a bunch of money, did you write the book yet? Then I'll write it. Eighteen months later, he called and started breathing down my neck, so then I wrote it. Took me four months.

**MOODY:** Describe the work process, if you are able.

**DOUGHTY:** I tried to be nonlinear. I just tried to write what I was interested in that day. And then I compiled what I had. And then there were a few connective-tissue type things I had to write. But mostly it was just like, you know, I'll write the story of the meeting with the band where they took away the publishing money, I'll write the story of the Cop and Go on Delancey Street, I'll write the story of robbing a store when I was twelve. And then I kind of put them in order.

**MOODY:** Is it true what Keith Richards said, that one would rather make five more albums than write a memoir?

**DOUGHTY:** Actually, I really dug it! It was really great. I mean, I read *Pnin*, *Nabokov*, while I was writing it, and then, at some point, I was like, hmmm, how much better is this guy than me. You know. And then I decided I really could not think like that.

**MOODY:** You picked an intimidating example.

**DOUGHTY:** But I really loved doing it. In fact, once I turned it in I kept thinking of other stuff I wanted to put in there. And, you know, Ben said, You'll be doing this for the rest of your life – that's what everybody does who writes a memoir.

**MOODY:** How many hours were you putting in a day?

**DOUGHTY:** Oh, four or five hours.

**MOODY:** So it was like: I'll do the book in the morning, and maybe I'll work on something else, or go to the studio or to a gig in the evening?

**DOUGHTY:** It was really hard to sit down and, like, start. Just every day, I'd be like, Well, you know, I should read the *Times*, and I should

do this one thing, and I should call this guy, and then, sort of late in the day, I'd finally be like, All right. Not late in the day, but maybe, 1 p.m. You know, not the, I'm going to get up and make the coffee and eat a hard-boiled egg and start creating litera-chuh.

**MOODY:** Would you write another book? What about fiction?

**DOUGHTY:** I mean, I've thought about fiction, but I don't know the first thing about it. I have an excuse for not being an amazing memoirist. It's a thing you can start at forty and not be the greatest in the world, but, with fiction you got to put in a good twenty years before you're super-great at it. Now if I had an idea...

**MOODY:** Tell me about the title, *The Book of Drugs*. Did you come up with the title before beginning?

**DOUGHTY:** I just wanted something with drugs in it. You know (laughs), basically, I just wanted something so that people would walk into the store (although nobody's going to walk into the store anymore) and go, Drugs! I like drugs!

**MOODY:** So when you began the project, then, you weren't thinking of it necessarily as being the before-and-after drug book?

**DOUGHTY:** Oh, no, I was totally thinking of it being the before-and-after drug book. The only thing was—speaking of a second book – I was like, well, I'll write one that is just about drugs, and then, if that works, I'll write one that is about music. And then I was just asking different friends of mine, like, What should I tell? What are the good

stories? They were all saying music stories. So it became an omnibus. But yeah, initially I was trying to write the drug book, the drug narrative.

**MOODY:** Can you talk a little bit about the differences between songwriting and prose writing?

**DOUGHTY:** Well, um, I sort of, I came up with the way I write songs now kind of when I got sober. Because I couldn't really write for a while. I was writing really terrible things.

**MOODY:** Ten years ago, now?

**DOUGHTY:** Eleven years ago, 2000. I took the spiritual part of the 12-step thing very seriously, so I'd write prayers. Because I couldn't pray. So I would just sort of write, you know, sometimes extremely sincere, sometimes super sarcastic prayers. And then, eventually as I started to write guitar parts, I went back to the notebook and started plucking things out. In general, though, guitar parts suggest something melodic, the melody's got a few words to it, you know, and then I'll grab the notebook – and I'm talking about phrases. Or, you know, a couple of words. And they suggest something, and you sort of throw them all together. Then, when you need a record, you really kind of focus on making all these pieces into something. That's what I've been doing for, like, eleven years.

**MOODY:** And how does this compare to the agony of prose writing?

**DOUGHTY:** It's harder to begin, with the prose. Because the music, you can just, like, pick up a guitar and think about something else, and then ten minutes later, you're writing something without even noticing it. You know what? This is a very weird question. How is prose writing different from songwriting? What's the difference between swimming and climbing Mount Everest? It was really scary writing the prose, very scary. You have to try not to make a song about something. Let it be what it wants to be. Which is super New Age-y, but you know, you work for the song, as opposed to trying to get it to do what you want. I always get into this situation where I write something way too vulnerable. Then, you know, I try and throw it away and unfortunately (laughs) it just has to be there: it is there. It belongs to the song.

**MOODY:** Can you talk a bit, if you're willing to, about the effect of sobriety on writing? Is it the case, for example, that the memoir had to come in a period of sobriety, as opposed to something you might have written back when you were still using?

**DOUGHTY:** Oh, yeah! I mean... the obvious answer is that I didn't have a story back then.

I mean, the story is a clichéd rise and fall, and then the story of the band. If I was still getting high and I had a story, could I write it? Probably not. I mean, just ability-wise. The thing that makes me so angry about the songs that I wrote when I was high is that they're not done. There are like lines in there that are fudged. There's some words in there, and I'll figure it out later. But then I never figured it out, and it ended up on the record. **MOODY:** Are you willing to give an example of such a thing?

**DOUGHTY:** Um, I'm not. Well... there's a song called "Fully Retractable," which is almost such a good song! But then, like, one line of every verse is just like, And muuhs mum muh muh... you know, just mumbled.

**MOODY:** So what's been the effect of increased sobriety on the composition of songs?

**DOUGHTY:** They're better. I like everything that I write. Pretty much everything I've made since I got sober, I listen to, or I look at, and that's what I meant to say, that is done. It is perfect for what it is, you know? It's not like, Oh, why did I do that? Part of it was just that there was so much compromise being in Soul Coughing, so much compromise that I was just like, Man, this is not a good idea, a lot of the time. So I have no idea what that music would've been like, if I had made it what I wanted it to be. So it might just be coincidence that I started liking what I was writing better sober than wasted.

**MOODY:** Can we talk a little about how Soul Coughing's depicted in the book?

**DOUGHTY:** Absolutely.

**MOODY:** I admire your solo work without reservation, but I knew you first as a member of Soul Coughing. And to this day, I like Soul Coughing. So I'm interested in how you approach writing about that period? I mean, it's sort of a kind of jostling awake for a Soul Coughing fan to read this book.

**DOUGHTY:** Like you didn't suspect any of this stuff?

**MOODY:** Call me naïve.

**DOUGHTY:** Who would suspect any of this stuff?

**MOODY:** I mean, the rabid fan of a band has delusional partial ownership of the band.

**DOUGHTY:** Yes! Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah.

**MOODY:** And what happens in that process of delusional partial ownership is the projection of ideas onto the material, and onto the narrative of the band.

**DOUGHTY:** This thing happened to me the other day. I saw Bill Cunningham (fashion photographer) running around, which just thrilled me, because I loved that movie

(*Bill Cunningham, New York*), and he's so awesome. I saw him, like, making a beeline somewhere with his blue coat on, and I was like, I'm going to get my picture with Bill Cunningham! It was just like (snaps finger) the mission, so I headed straight over to him, and I was like, "Hey, Bill, can I take a picture with you?" And he was like, "I'm working." And I just realized, like, fuck, I just did what everybody does to me. Which is like, you're not a person. And here's another example: I was at a rest stop on tour, just like standing outside or something, and this guy comes up to me and says, "You know, I bumped into you at the same rest stop ten years ago, it's really weird." And then he just walked away. I mean, it was just like he was talking to a Coke machine.

**MOODY:** In a way it shouldn't be revelatory that there was internal tension and a lot of struggle in Soul Coughing. There always is. I mean, look at Keith Richards's book. Even two guys who've been playing together for fifty years, and who have accomplished a great many things, it's possible that even they kind of hate each other.

**DOUGHTY:** But there is something about Soul Coughing which is unique. All the guys were like ten years older than me. I was like twenty-three, and I had a bunch of ideas, and they took part in it because they had nothing better to do, and maybe it's another thirty bucks a week, or whatever it was. And suddenly, we got a record deal. So there's one level on which they're getting to that point where they're like, I may not be able to be an artist for a living. Like in your early thirties, when you're worried something's not going to happen. So there was a lot of pride involved in it for them. I mean, can you

**"One of the writers is like, 'Oh, yeah, I really like listening to Andrea Bocelli,' and the composer goes (Russian accent): 'Excuse me, excuse me: to me, this is not a singer.' He just went off."**

imagine being with a twenty-three-year-old kid who is more talented than you.

**MOODY:** And then you were stuck with them for five years.

**DOUGHTY:** Yeah, I was stuck with them for five years. Sometimes I'd think, What if I just fired them and made a record with the Dust Brothers? Because it could have happened. I mean, one thing that's got to be said is that I always chose the most fucked up person to work with. The most fucked up situation to be in. And I look back on it, and it's not like I mistakenly went that direction, it's like:

Healthy, healthy, healthy, fucked up. And I always chose fucked up.

**MOODY:** I want to talk a little about the new album. Is there any way that the composition of these newer songs is related to the memoir-writing experience?

**DOUGHTY:** I don't think so. Well, but the thing is that I don't really know what the songs are about until a couple of years later, after I've been playing them for a while. Because it's just about the sonics of the words, at first. There's a story going on, and there's a silhouette to the song, but that doesn't always mean that I know what I'm writing about. So maybe, on that first song ("Na Na Nothing"), there's a very specific, go to hell ex-girlfriend theme, but that might not even be what it's about.

**MOODY:** This album seems to be more of a return to the band ideal.

**DOUGHTY:** The idea was to be more of a rock record. There are three songs in the middle: "Have At It," "Strike The Motion," and "Makelloser Man." That was what the album was supposed to sound like. And Marty Beller played drums, and it was going to be a marked departure. But that's not how it worked out. I've been writing a lot more stuff electronically, just because I became able to. I can use the computer now. So I just started putting sounds on there, and so some of the songs changed as a result. They became hybrids.

**MOODY:** One last topic. Can you talk about your recent Yaddo experience a bit?

**DOUGHTY:** Yaddo is a great place for listening to records. I'm usually a subway-iPod-on-shuffle kind of guy. And so I spent a lot of time just sitting in this super awesome cabin they gave me with the fire going,

listening to Sublime Frequencies radio collages. Which are amazing. I did a lot of listening. And obviously I did a bunch of writing. I wrote twenty-one songs. I looked up and I had written twenty-one songs! And I thought I'd written like five.

**MOODY:** And what about being around all those serious writers?

**DOUGHTY:** The heartbreaking experience for me was the first day home from Yaddo, and you wake up, and it's like, Oh, I'm going to make myself cereal and sit in my living

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ABOVE: Beverly McIver in the documentary *Raising Renee* (Photo: West City Films, Inc.)

life, believing that audiences would be interested in this dramatic caretaking story. There is “no dressing up for the camera” in *Raising Renee*, and audiences seem to respond to its candor and authenticity. “It was very, very loose, partly because we really didn’t think anything would come of it,” says McIver, deploying her trademark belly-laugh. “None of us really thought that it would be on HBO.”

## THE PROMISE

### Raising Renee and Finding Freedom

By Gail Gregg

**K**atrina and Spencer Trask intuitively understood how daily life can thwart the creative process with its constant demands, emotional challenges, unrelenting pressures. Yaddo was their attempt to provide a respite from such responsibilities – and from those quotidian to-do lists, which seem to magically repopulate overnight.

For painter Beverly McIver, 48, Yaddo has proved even more important as a haven than for the typical artist lucky enough to work in its nurturing cocoon. On February 22, a national audience of television viewers will be able to see why, when HBO premieres a documentary about the challenges McIver faced when her mother died prematurely, leaving McIver’s developmentally disabled sister Renee in her care.

“I’m a caretaker. In my life I take care of my cat, Renee, my cousin Sharon, my dad. The list goes on,” McIver says. “When I’m at Yaddo, Yaddo takes care of me. That’s completely priceless.”

McIver, a seven-time Yaddo resident artist, met filmmaker Jeanne Jordan at another residency – Harvard’s Radcliffe Institute – in 2002. As their friendship developed during their year in Cambridge, Jordan began to think that there was a film

in McIver’s dramatic narrative paintings of African American women in whiteface and blackface, work that she says “consistently examines racial, gender, social and occupational identity.”

But before the project took off, McIver’s life hit a major speed-bump. Years earlier, McIver’s mother had secured her pledge to take care of Renee if something should happen to her. McIver simply could not have imagined that this moment would come so early. As she once told a local newspaper: “All of a sudden, that promise I’d made was due – way ahead of schedule.”

McIver’s mother, Ethel, and Renee had recently flown to New York to celebrate her first solo show in the nation’s art capital, at Kent Gallery. *New York Times* critic Roberta Smith had praised her work as “...energetically painted with a bawdy faux-Expressionism,” with “a physical robustness that ameliorates the volatile mix of racist presumption and personal strengths that they explore.” Grants and fellowships were flowing in; she had a coveted assistant professorship at Arizona State University; and McIver’s decades of dedication to her work seemed to be coming to fruition.

Then came the diagnosis that her mother was suffering from pancreatic cancer and had only three months to live. Suddenly McIver was faced both with the loss of her mother, who had raised three daughters on a housekeeper’s salary – and a future of caring for Renee.

Jordan and her husband, cinematographer Steven Ascher, began documenting this new

charm of the film derives from McIver’s winning honesty about the feelings of shame, anger and guilt experienced by siblings of disabled family members. “You get leftovers,” she says. “The disabled person is always the priority of the parent.” And as the documentary has traveled the festival circuit, McIver has found that these issues resonate with many audience members. “One of the things that’s really beautiful is that people come up to me and say, ‘I know exactly how you feel. I never felt I could say it out loud; I felt guilty for having those thoughts.’”

Viewers meet Renee as a friendly middle-aged woman who has devoted herself to two endearing pursuits: making woven potholders that she proudly sells for \$1.50 (less than the cost of the materials) – and phoning the local radio station each morning with a list of family members and friends with birthdays that day. “She’s nice – NOW!” McIver confesses to the camera. But as a child, Renee could be aggressive and difficult – and McIver and her younger sister Roni had to learn to take a backseat to her rages and needs.

Even as an adult, Renee has a way of diverting attention from her siblings to herself. At the opening of McIver’s Kent Gallery solo show, *Art in America* critic Raphael Rubinstein stopped by to see her new work. Renee asked him if he’d like to buy a potholder, which he obligingly took and held up to McIver’s paintings to compare color and pattern. McIver

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room alone (laughs). There's not a bunch of people talking about really interesting shit. There's no air of gravitas. It's kind of embarrassing to say that I'm into that, but I guess I'm into that, I guess everybody's into that. No more having people from every discipline talking about stuff that's super-interesting. I met one woman there who did an animated video for me. And I just had this amazing time talking to this Russian composer. We're just sitting at dinner one night, and one of the writers is like, 'Oh, yeah, I really like listening to Andrea Bocelli,' and the composer goes (Russian accent): "Excuse me, excuse me: to me, this is not a singer." He just went off. He was living at that stone tower (on the Yaddo grounds), so later he threw a party in the space, and I made a mixtape, and we were dancing, and he was like, I don't know how to dance. And I said, Just clap on the two and the four. He said, "What's the two and the four?"

**YOU CAN READ AN EXTENDED VERSION**

of this interview on our web site at [www.yaddo.org](http://www.yaddo.org). This essay originally appeared in *The Rumpus*, an online magazine focused on culture, and is gratefully republished here with permission from the magazine and the author. Rick Moody's newest novel is *The Four Fingers of Death*. He has a new solo album out, called *The Darkness is Good*, released on Dainty Rubbish Records. Moody also plays music with The Wingdale Community Singers, whose recently released album is called *Spirit Duplicator*. Both Moody and Doughty are former Yaddo residents. Moody also is a Member of The Corporation of Yaddo.

laughingly confesses that she was terrified that Renee's potholder would end up on the magazine cover, rather than her own work.

Renee moved to Arizona to live with Mclver in 2004, and they slowly settled into a new routine that found Renee at home alone much of the time. In 2007, Mclver was offered a professorship at her alma mater, North Carolina Central University. Located in Durham, just an hour from Greensboro, the NCCU offer would allow Mclver the support of other family members – and would reunite Renee with family and friends.

The sisters lived together in Durham for three years, until Mclver heard about an independent living facility for disabled adults opening in Greensboro. Mclver and Renee toured the spanking new apartments, and Renee began to take an interest in having her own home. By luck, their sister Roni works as assistant principal at the school across the street, and would be able to check in on Renee. And cousin Sharon is a neighbor at the same complex. The filmmakers depict this turning point in both their lives with much sensitivity. (A warning to the audience: get your handkerchief ready for the scene in which friends and family throw Renee the equivalent of a bridal shower to help furnish her first apartment – and for Renee's summation of her new situation at the end of the film.)

Mclver acknowledges that the transition was hard on both of them: "But I really enjoy living by myself. It was the best thing for her – and for me. She got her independence and a community." And Renee remains a fixture in Mclver's life; they speak by phone every day and see each other several weekends a month.

At the moment, Mclver is busy preparing new work for a 2012 show at Betty Cunningham Gallery in New York. And in December the North Carolina Museum of Art in Raleigh will open *Reflections: Portraits by Beverly Mclver*, an exhibit that will feature 30 paintings from the past decade – a decade of work that Baltimore *City Paper* critic Deborah McLeod once characterized as one of "love and loss, disorientation, uncertainty, powerlessness and guilt."

"I'm currently working on a couple of paintings," Mclver says of her most recent pictures. "One is of my cousin Sharon – who had bypass surgery this summer and almost died." Her four-panel storyboard painting Sharon's Pain documents "how devastated I felt to see her in that condition." And, once again, Mclver is fantasizing about escaping her caretaking burdens for several weeks of intense work at Yaddo. "I usually get a new direction at Yaddo," she says. "I have no idea what I'm going to paint while I'm there. I just get in there and do it, live with all my demons. It's nothing for me to go there and make 10 paintings in a month."

**GAIL GREGG** is an artist and writer based in New York City who also has spent time at Yaddo. Gregg is a Director and Mclver is a Member of The Corporation of Yaddo. *Reflections: Portraits by Beverly Mclver* opens December 11 at the North Carolina Museum of Art and will be up through June 24, 2012. The museum also will screen *Raising Renee*, parts of which were filmed at Yaddo. For more information about the documentary, and a list of where it is being shown, visit the film's web site at [http://westcityfilms.com/raising\\_renee.html](http://westcityfilms.com/raising_renee.html).



**Yaddo Welcomes Doug Wright**

We are pleased to announce that playwright, screenwriter, librettist, and director Doug Wright has been elected a Member of The Corporation of Yaddo.

In 2004, Wright was awarded the Pulitzer Prize, a Tony Award for Best Play, the Drama Desk Award, a GLAAD Media Award, an Outer Critics Circle Award, a Drama League Award, and a Lucille

Lortel Award for his play *I Am My Own Wife*. He received Tony and Drama Desk nominations for his book for the Broadway musical *Grey Gardens* and, earlier in his career, an Obie Award for outstanding

achievement in playwriting and the Kesselring Award for Best New American Play for *Quills*. He went on to write the screenplay adaptation for *Quills*, which was named Best Picture by the National Board of Review, nominated for three Academy Awards, and earned Wright the Paul Selvin Award from the Writer's Guild of America and a Golden Globe nomination.

For Director Rob Marshall, Wright penned the television special *Tony Bennett: An American Classic*, which received seven Emmy Awards. His directing credits include *Kiki and Herb: Pardon Our Appearance* in Washington D.C., Philadelphia, and London, and his own adaptation of August Strindberg's *Creditors* at the La Jolla Playhouse. Wright's acting credits include the films *Little Manhattan* and *Two Lovers* and the television show *Law and Order*. His most recent Broadway credit was *The Little Mermaid* for the Walt Disney Company.

Wright lives in New York City with his partner, singer/songwriter David Clement.



# Yaddo

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## In Memoriam



**A**t its annual meeting in September, the membership of The Corporation of Yaddo paid tribute to former Yaddo President Michael G. Sundell by dedicating a memorial stone bench in his honor.

The bench, which sits beneath a majestic Norway Spruce a short distance from the Yaddo Mansion terrace, offers visiting artists a quiet sanctuary and a sweeping view of the estate. Yaddo Board of Directors Chair

**ABOVE:** Donald S. Rice, left, and Peter C. Gould at a recent ceremony dedicating a bench to Michael G. Sundell (Photo by Lynn Farenell)

Peter C. Gould led the memorial service and introduced Donald S. Rice, former Chair and a close friend of Sundell's, who delivered the following remarks at the ceremony:

*Michael – I think you would approve of this bench:*

- *It commands a view of a place special to you*
- *It is a sturdy memorial to your inspired leadership here*
- *It is a modest but compelling*

*statement*

- *It will be a destination and enjoyed by all who come here forever*

*We thank you for your understanding and inspired interpretation of Yaddo's mission – for your passion in preserving, protecting and defending the creative process and the sanctity and privacy of the artists.*

*You embraced change – but not too much.*

*You were willing to innovate – but not too quickly.*

*You and Nina loved Yaddo and Yaddo loves you both.*

*You have left a wonderful legacy for which we are all deeply grateful.*

Sundell, who served as Yaddo's president from 1992 to 2000, died in September, 2010.

Yaddo affectionately recalls the members of our community who passed away in recent months: figurative artist Byron Burford (1973, 1974, 1979, 1980), of Iowa City, Iowa; visual artist and assistant professor of painting and drawing at California State University/Long Beach Linda Adair Day (1988, 1989, 1991, 2003), of San Pedro, California; master painter and teacher Janet Shafner (1977), of New London, Connecticut; and watercolor painter and former National Academy Museum & School president and teacher Susan Shatter (1995, 1997, 2001, 2002), of New York, New York.

Our thoughts are with their families and friends.