



Precious Up for Five Spirit Awards

Precious: Based on the Novel Push by Sapphire, a film based on a book by Yaddo author **Sapphire** and executive produced by **Lisa Cortes**, a Member of The Corporation of Yaddo, is nominated for five 2010 Film Independent Spirit Awards.

Scoring five nods tied *Precious* for the most nominations for the 2010 awards. A big winner on the film festival circuit this year, beginning with both the grand jury prize and audience award at Sundance in January, the film is in the running for Spirit

Awards in the following categories: best feature, best director (Lee Daniels), best first screenplay (Geoffrey Fletcher), best female lead (newcomer Gabourey Sidibe), and best supporting female (Mo'Nique).

Precious, which came out in wide release in November, stars Sidibe as an obese Harlem teenage mother struggling to overcome seemingly impossible odds. Mo'Nique plays her abusive mother. Both have received wide praise for their work in the emotionally charged story.

Winners of the 2010 Film Independent Spirit Awards will be announced at a ceremony to be held in Los Angeles on March 5, two days before the Oscars.



Five Artists Elected to Membership

Yaddo is pleased to announce the addition of five new artist Members to The Corporation of Yaddo: (pictured above, from left) composers **Sebastian Currier**, **Anne LeBaron**, and **Stewart Wallace**, and writers **Elizabeth Gaffney** and **Andrew Solomon**.

Currier won one of the music world's most prestigious prizes in 2007, taking home the Grawemeyer Award in Musical Composition for *Static*, a chamber work featured the prior year in concerts in New York City and Saratoga Springs jointly presented by Yaddo and Music from Copland House, for which the piece was commissioned. His music has been performed worldwide in major cities such as Paris, Rome, Berlin, Munich, Frankfurt,

Tokyo, Beijing, Moscow, London, and Toronto. Among his other honors are a Berlin Prize, a Rome Prize, a Guggenheim Fellowship, and several awards from the American Academy of Arts and Letters. His works have been performed by Anne-Sophie Mutter, the Cassatt Quartet, the National Symphony Orchestra in Washington, the Leipzig Gewandhaus Orchestra, American Composers Orchestra, Frankfurt Radio Orchestra, EOS Orchestra, and the San Francisco Symphony. Currier has taught at The Juilliard School and Columbia University.

LeBaron is widely known for her work in instrumental, electronic, and performance realms, and is an accomplished harpist recognized for her pioneering methods of developing extended techniques and electronic enhancements for the harp. Her compositions have earned numerous

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Yaddo at the Movies

IF YOUR HOLIDAY PLANS include some movie time, there's no shortage of offerings with a Yaddo connection, including *Precious* (see story at left), and these two films:

Fantastic Mr. Fox ... Yaddo filmmaker **Noah Baumbach** (*Margot* and *The Wedding*, *The Squid and the Whale*) teamed with director Wes Anderson to write the screenplay for this stop motion animated film based on Roald Dahl's classic children's book about a very clever fox. It features the voices of George Clooney, Meryl Streep, Jason Schwartzman, and Bill Murray.

Up in the Air ... Oscar winner George Clooney stars in this dramatic comedy, based on the novel by Yaddo author **Walter Kirn**. Clooney is a corporate downsizing expert who travels the



country firing people. But his cherished life on the road is threatened when his company grounds him just as his life appears to be falling into perfect harmony. **PRODUCTION NOTE:** With the exception of the featured professional actors, every person fired onscreen in this film is not an actor but someone recently laid off in real life who was encouraged to react to their onscreen firing in the manner they wished they would have used in their own life.

Times Lists Its Picks

Several titles by Yaddo writers made the cut for *The New York Times Book Review* "100 Notable Books of 2009," released just in time to inspire holiday shoppers. And a book about a Yaddo writer – Blake Bailey's biography of **John Cheever**, *Cheever: A Life*, also is among the featured works. Yaddo authors and books on the list (including two by and about Yaddo artists – Gooch on Flannery O'Connor and Sklenicka on Raymond Carver):

Fiction and Poetry

Paul Auster/*Invisible*

Robert Cohen/*Amateur Barbarians*

Mary Gaitskill/*Don't Cry: Stories*

Jonathan Lethem/*Chronic City*

Jay McInerney/*How It Ended: New and Collected Stories*

Philipp Meyer/*American Rust*

Lorrie Moore/*A Gate at the Stairs*

Jayne Anne Phillips/*Lark and Termites*

Mary Robison/*One D.O.A., One on the Way*

Joanna Scott/*Follow Me*

Wells Tower/*Everything Ravaged, Everything Burned*

Kate Walbert/*A Short History of Women*

Nonfiction

Brad Gooch/*Flannery: A Life of Flannery O'Connor*

Walter Kirm/*Lost in the Meritocracy: The Undereducation of an Overachiever*

Carol Sklenicka/*Raymond Carver: A Writer's Life*

Opera Projects on Tap for 2010

Two long-in-the-making and highly anticipated operas by Yaddo composers, including one with a libretto by a Yaddo writer, are set to hit the stage next spring.

In early May, Seattle Opera will present the world premiere of *Amelia*, a new work, partially written at Yaddo, that is a collaborative project of composer **Daron Hagen** and poet and writer **Gardner McFall**. *Amelia* is the company's first commissioned work in more than 25 years.

Hagen has set to music an intensely personal libretto by McFall, and a story by Stephen Wadsworth, who also will direct

the production. *Amelia*'s title character is a woman in her late 30s who is expecting her first child. Amelia is still traumatized by the death of her father, a Navy pilot lost in Vietnam in the mid-1960s. The opera spans a 30-year period, interweaving one woman's emotional journey, the American experience in Vietnam, and elements of the Daedalus and Icarus myth. McFall's



CAPTION: Kendra Johnson, Daron Hagen, and Gardner McFall at a workshop in Seattle for the new opera *Amelia*.

poetry collection *The Pilot's Daughter* is a memoir about her own father's loss in Vietnam.

A first-of-its-kind \$500,000 grant from The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation will help two other American opera companies mount productions of *Amelia* following the opera's Seattle premiere.

Jorge Martin's opera *Before Night Falls*, based on the highly acclaimed 1993 memoir of the late Cuban writer Reinaldo Arenas, will receive its world premiere at the 2010 Fort Worth Opera Festival in Texas in late May and early June.

Martin has said the project, first suggested to him more than 10 years ago by an English professor, did not immediately appeal to him. He thought the story – with a vast cast of characters, numerous vignettes, multiple layers of complex issues, censorship, political persecution, homosexuality, life in exile, and the debilitating pain of AIDS – was an epic too large to put on stage. But the idea grew on him and inspired him to write his first full-scale opera, which some critics already are saying could be his breakthrough work. In addition to the music, Martin wrote the libretto with Dolores M. Koch.

Reinaldo Arenas was born into extreme poverty and joined Fidel Castro's uprising as a teen. As he matures, Arenas comes

to realize that Castro is not interested in a free Cuba, as he himself is. He begins a quiet revolution of his own through his writing and becomes a target of the dictator's wrath.

New MacArthur Fellows

In October, two Yaddo artists – poet **Heather McHugh** and painter **Rackstraw Downes** – were among 24 creative professionals awarded 2009 MacArthur Fellowships from The John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation.

The MacArthur Fellowship is a five-year grant to individuals who show exceptional creativity in their work and the prospect for more in the future. It is a "no strings attached" award designed to provide recipients with the flexibility to pursue their creative activities in the absence of specific obligations or reporting requirements. Individuals cannot apply; they must be nominated. Each fellow receives a \$500,000 stipend paid in installments over five years.

McHugh, 61, received a B.A. (1970) from Harvard University and an M.A. (1972) from the University of Denver. Her books of poetry include *A World of Difference* (1981), *Hinge and Sign: Poems, 1968-1993* (1994), *The Father of the Predicaments* (2001), *Eyeshot* (2003) and *Upgraded to Serious* (2009), among others. From 1999 to 2006, she was Chancellor of the Academy of American Poets, and she has served as a visiting faculty member at the Warren Wilson MFA Program for Writers since its inception in 1976. She is currently Milliman Distinguished Writer-in-Residence at the University of Washington in Seattle, a post she has held since 1984.

Downes, 69, received a B.A. (1961) from the University of Cambridge and a B.F.A. (1963) and M.F.A. (1964) from Yale University. His work is in the permanent collections of the Art Institute of Chicago, the Museum of Modern Art, the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, and the National Gallery of Art, among many others. His essays on visual and literary artists as varied as John Constable, Fairfield Porter, and Samuel Beckett have appeared in such publications as *The New York Times*, *Art in America*, and *Art Journal*.

The MacArthur Fellows Program, sponsored by The John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, emphasizes, as does Yaddo, the importance of creative individuals in society. In line with that goal, in 1990 the foundation established an endowed residency at Yaddo to annually support the visits of two creative artists working in any discipline.

O'Connor Title Tops in Public Vote

More than 10,000 people cast ballots in the first public vote in the history of the National Book Awards, and when the votes were tallied *The Complete Stories of Flannery O'Connor* was named "Best of the National Book Awards Fiction from 1950 to 2008".

The Complete Stories of Flannery O'Connor – winner of the 1972 National Book Award for Fiction – was one of six

titles in contention for the special prize, created to mark the 60th anniversary of the National Book Awards, which celebrate American literature. In July, the National Book Foundation, the governing body that manages the awards, announced a campaign to select the best book from among the 77 winners in the fiction category since the inception of the awards in 1950. Previous National Book Award winners, finalists, and judges trimmed the list of 77 winning books to six of their favorite titles and presented them for an unprecedented public vote online from September 21 through October 21. Rounding out the list of finalists for the singular honor were two other books by Yaddo authors – **John Cheever's** *The Stories of John Cheever* and **Eudora Welty's** *The Collected Stories of Eudora Welty* – plus *Invisible Man* by Ralph Ellison, *Gravity's Rainbow* by Thomas Pynchon, and William Faulkner's *Collected Stories of William Faulkner*.

NEW MEMBERS (cont'd from front cover) awards and prizes and have been written for virtually every contemporary genre and performed and broadcast throughout the U.S. and elsewhere, including Stuttgart, London, Prague, Talloires, Hong Kong, Sydney, Berlin, Havana, Kyoto, Singapore, Dresden, and Austria. LeBaron teaches composition, contemporary opera, and related subjects at the California Institute of the Arts and lectures at other institutions, conferences, and festivals on subjects ranging from surrealism and music to environmental awareness through music and other art forms.

Wallace grew up in Texas, both playing in a rock and roll band and singing as a cantor in his synagogue. An entirely self-taught composer, he began writing music when he was eight years old, and wrote his first opera as his thesis for an interdisciplinary honors program at the University of Texas at Austin. His major breakthrough came with

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And the Gold Medal Goes to...Yaddo!

On November 11th, the National Arts Club presented its prestigious Gold Medal of Honor to Yaddo at a gala dinner celebrating the 111th anniversary of the club. Yaddo President Elaina Richardson accepted the award from O. Aldon James, club president, in recognition of Yaddo's longstanding service to individual artists and its continuing vital role in the cultural life of America. The medal ceremony followed an outstanding program masterfully emceed by **Joel Conarroe**, who introduced three fellow Yaddo artists - composer **John B Hedges** and writers **Patricia Volk** and **Brad Gooch** – to entertain the audience with stories of their time at Yaddo and to talk about the influence Yaddo has had on their work. Many of those in attendance offered special congratulations to Hedges and **Lynn Palewicz**, a visual artist he met at Yaddo, who were married in October. New York City Mayor Michael Bloomberg and New York Governor David Paterson were among those issuing congratulatory proclamations to Yaddo and the National Arts Club.

The National Arts Club, which is located in the historic Tilden Mansion in New York City's Gramercy Park neighborhood, was founded by The New York Times literary and art critic Charles de Kay in 1898 with the mission to stimulate, foster, and promote public interest in the arts. Yaddo's founder, Spencer Trask, was a founding member and president of the National Arts Club. More recently, Yaddo, the National Arts Club, and Music from Copland House have collaborated on a series of free concerts in the tradition of the Yaddo Festivals of American Music, founded by Aaron Copland in 1932.

PICTURED: 1. Elaina Richardson delivers the National Arts Club Medal of Honor acceptance speech. 2. Emcee Joel Conarroe. 3. Karl E. Willers and Micki McGee. 4. Actor Matthew Settle. 5. Brad Gooch, Paul Raushenbush, and Lynn Palewicz. 6. O. Aldon James and Brad Gooch (Photos: Ben Gabbe Photography.)





Yaddo

P.O. Box 395
Saratoga Springs, NY 12866

*S*OLIDAY GREETINGS
FROM YADDO!

his fifth opera, *Harvey Milk*, which he wrote with his long-time collaborator, librettist and fellow Yaddo artist **Michael Korie**. The highly successful *Harvey Milk* debuted in Houston before traveling to New York, San Francisco, and Germany. Recently, he collaborated with another Yaddo artist, **Amy Tan**, creating an opera based on her book *The Bonesetter's Daughter* that premiered last fall in San Francisco. In addition to his work with opera, Wallace has composed several film scores and a popular ballet of J.M. Barrie's *Peter Pan*.

Gaffney, a Brooklyn native, graduated with honors from Vassar College and holds an M.F.A. in fiction from Brooklyn College. She also studied philosophy and German at Ludwig-Maximillan University in Munich. From 1989 to 2005, she worked as a staff editor at George Plimpton's *Paris Review*, where she interviewed and edited several contemporary writers. Gaffney's stories have appeared in many magazines, and she has translated three books from German. Her first novel, *Metropolis*, was a Barnes and Noble Discover Great New Writers selection. She is now at work on a second novel, *The War Effort*, and a story

collection. Gaffney is the editor at large of the literary magazine *A Public Space*.

Solomon is a regular contributor to numerous publications, including *The New Yorker*, *ArtForum*, and *The New York Times*. He is the author of *The Noonday Demon: An Atlas of Depression*, which won a 2001 National Book Award and has been published in 24 languages, and *The Irony Tower: Soviet Artists in a Time of Glasnost*, as well as the best-selling novel *A Stone Boat*, a runner-up for the Los Angeles Times First Fiction Award. Solomon graduated with honors from Yale University and Jesus College, in Cambridge, England. He has lectured on depression around the world, including periods at Princeton, Yale, Stanford, Harvard, MIT, Cambridge, and the Library of Congress. He lives in New York City and London.

Nine Elected to Lifetime Membership

At the annual meeting of Yaddo's membership and board this fall in Saratoga Springs, nine people with a long record of

service to the organization were elected to the honor of lifetime membership in The Corporation of Yaddo.

Those recognized for their commitment to Yaddo's mission were **Alberta Arthurs, Peter Cameron, Peter Gould, John Kelly, Harold Reed, Jonathan Santlofer, Barbara Toll, George Tsontakis, and Candace K. Weir**.

"These elections to lifetime membership signify the Corporation's appreciation and respect for the dedication of each of those honored," said Yaddo President Elaina Richardson. "We are proud and honored to have them as part of the Yaddo family."

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MAKES
A DIFFERENCE**

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