

Yaddo



summer news 2014



10 Questions for Tarik O'Regan

Composer Tarik O'Regan says classical music is experiencing a "Golden Age" that fills him with excitement to be alive and working in the company of peers he admires. In this recent interview with Amanda Holloway for Sinfini Music, O'Regan touches on a great sense of energy in the contemporary music field, a trend that we have observed in our residency program. Our admissions panels are seeing fresh voices in musical composition with diverse backgrounds and innovative ideas. Increasingly, composers who come to Yaddo are part of a collaborative team – working with a writer, a visual artist, or a filmmaker on projects that often blur the lines of definition – and we're noticing an increase in applications from composers working in musical theater and jazz. O'Regan, 36, is currently working on projects with the Dutch National Ballet,

(continues on page 4)



PHOTO: THATCHER KEATS

On Manifest Destiny

By Philip Roth

Pulitzer Prize-winning author Philip Roth was greeted with loud applause and a standing ovation as he accepted the inaugural Yaddo Artist Medal at our May 14th New York City Benefit. Roth, who had his first residency at Yaddo in 1964 and then returned six times over the next eight years, wrote most of *Portnoy's Complaint*, *The Breast*, and *The Great American Novel* at Yaddo. He dedicated *The Breast* to Yaddo and its then Executive Director Elizabeth Ames as "the best friends a writer could have." Fellow Yaddo artist and longtime friend Alison Lurie introduced Roth and presented him with the medal. His remarks followed and it is our great pleasure to share them with readers of the Yaddo News.

In the summer of 1964 I was 31, the author of two books, *Goodbye, Columbus* and *Letting Go*. Alimony payments incurred by a childless three-year marriage in my twenties had emptied my pockets and stoked my spleen. I had barely been able to write a worthwhile sentence during the previous two years (and didn't yet know that the drought was going to last some two years more.)

Instead, I had been enmeshed – to be more precise, I should say "ensnailed," given the reduction in volume one sustains in such dessications – I had been ensnailed in a descending spiral of

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ABOVE: Philip Roth greets an appreciative audience upon receiving the inaugural Yaddo Artist Medal.

Philip Roth

(continued from front cover)

courtroom appearances where an aging, cherubic municipal judge, who intended only to be charitable when I reported to him that I was broke, advised me Poloniously from the bench that rather than publishing short stories in the *Paris Review* for \$50 a piece I should instead write for the movies. Go West, young man, he triumphantly informed me like Horace Greeley – out West my manifest destiny would indubitably be to rake in tons of money for a single film script. The judge read me wrong: my manifest destiny was Yaddo.

Two years earlier, in 1962, a massive novel replete with the weightiest epigraphs I could find from Thomas Mann and Simone Weil, a book so solemn and morally in earnest that it might have been taken to be a voluminous plea proffered for a novitiate in the Society of Jesuits – *Letting Go*, as it was called, had been gently dismissed by *Time* and *Newsweek* for failing to keep the “promise” of *Goodbye, Columbus*. Lastly, a two-year stint as a writer-in-residence at Princeton had come to an end and there was no other sugarplum in sight.

So it was that in the summer of 1964, exactly a decade out of college and feeling more like a tramp down on his luck than a young writer who four years earlier had received a National Book Award, I arrived at the gates of Yaddo, discouraged, sad, not a little desperate, still bearing the emotional traces of a final courtroom defeat whose injustice I would eagerly lament to as many as would listen, and fearing that it might require something like a feat of magic for me to recover such force as I was all but sure had originally been in me. I allude to the force that Dylan Thomas tells us, “through the green fuse drives the flower.” I could swear that I’d once had it.

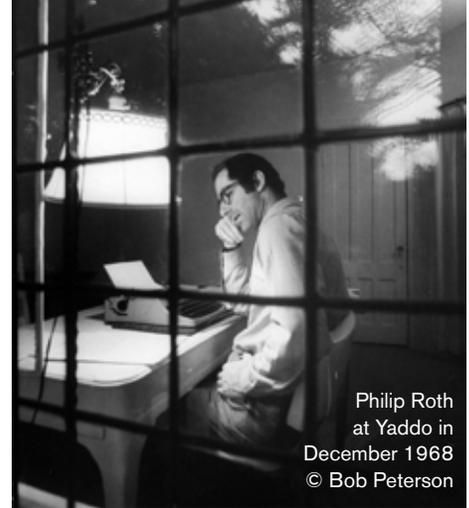
My patient sidekick through all this leveling, my Sancho Panza, was an Olivetti Lettera 22, a loveable manual portable typewriter of that era on which, alas, I could write nothing but crap.

Then – the transformation. NO – the transfiguration. At Yaddo, there was no cheery matrimonial judge urging me helpfully toward Hollywood. There were no courtroom appearances headlined, as mine had been, in the *New York Daily News*, “Walks Out on Platinum” – meaning *Blond*. And there were no reviews intimating that my second book proved my first to have been no more than the excrescence of a precocious child, no censuring reviewers to bring me up on the charge of beginner’s luck.

Instead, there was a sandwich and a celery stalk in a lunch pail. Instead, there was a Monkish bed amid the tchotchke-laden grandeur of the mansion. Instead, there was an unprepossessing cabin-studio tucked off by itself in the summer weeds. And, at workday’s end, there was a pool where I swam my laps each day as if to be ritualistically cleansed of the bewilderment that was at a boil over Humpty-Dumpty’s first great fall. At 4 p.m. daily I immersed myself in the pool as if I might wash away all my stupidity.

And then there were those others wandering about, those strangers, twenty-five or thirty of them, who, like me, astonishingly found themselves revived in a flash by as humble as a man-made artifact as a Yaddo lunch pail. (I cannot mention often enough the salutary effect of the Yaddo lunch pail.)

Who were these fellow colonists? As I would discover in chats after playing Ping-Pong at West House or between trips to the betting booth at the harness races, more than a few were hiding within the sheltering shadow of the ancient spruces from their biographies: some retreating from enslavement to philistine wives or worse, others from a not-so-secret aversion to maddeningly selfish husbands or worse, still others from zany lovers, serpent-toothed children, dim-witted colleagues, unscrupulous rivals, illiterate students, dunning bill collectors, unmet deadlines, noisy upstairs neighbors, and cramped living quarters, artists and would-be-artists in flight from a superabundance of triviality,



Philip Roth
at Yaddo in
December 1968
© Bob Peterson

distraction, futility, treachery, and, not least, from the encompassing miasma of everyday malice. One could not but sense weariness down to the bone with flawed humanity and enfeeblement approaching collapse before a demented world. How agitated an emergency can one life be? Yaddo beckons.

Those fellow colonists: secreted in Saratoga Springs from everything wickedly conspiring to prevent them from practicing in peace their sullen art, any number of them taking merciful refuge from tribulations that, as they are chillingly described to me over a late-night beer at the Spuyten Duyvil, are more dire even than my own – punishing tales of degradation, both personal and professional, that bring the darkness of Russian literature to mind.

And yet breakfast mitigates all. The very next morning the once disheartened will perk right up, knife and fork in hand, before a generous stack of syrup-drenched pancakes, invincible now, happily invulnerable within the paneled walls of the grand dining room where, decades earlier, the patrician financier Spencer Trask took dinner with his poet wife, Katrina – splendid exemplars each of the gentility of late-Victorian refinement burnished by the splendor of the Gilded Age.

The superfluous artist vindicated! At last the existence to which our calling entitles us! Why shouldn’t we dine like the rich!

“Give me your tired, “entreats Mother Yaddo, “your poor...the wretched refuse... yearning to breathe free. Send these, the homeless, tempest-tossed to me!”

A fellow Yaddo sponger salutes you.

The Art of Our Medal



When the idea of Yaddo honoring a seminal artist first came up, James Siena – the notable painter and sculptor who serves on our Board – generously agreed to make the medal itself a thing of beauty and inspiration.

The front of the Yaddo Artist Medal, produced by the Walla Walla Foundry in Walla Walla, Washington, features a relief image divided into five sections, symbolizing the artistic disciplines represented at Yaddo – film, literature, musical composition, performance, and the visual arts. The production process began by creating a 3D model based on designs submitted by Siena, which aided in considering a variety of fabrication options. A combination of machining, etching, and hand finishing was used to fashion the medal to achieve the highest possible level of detail in the finished piece.

Siena is a New York-based artist whose complex, rule-based linear abstractions have situated him firmly within the trajectory of American art. He has lectured and taught at art institutions throughout the country and is represented by Pace Gallery. Siena has twice been a guest artist at Yaddo, in 2004 and 2007,

and was elected to Yaddo's Board of Directors in 2011.

"The medal was based on an engraving I did in 2004, coming out of a body of work (*Upside Down Devil*...the title came to me in a dream) begun as early as 1996," Siena explained. "I actually engraved the lines that make up the art side of the medal, and the folks at the foundry created the relief image based on the length of the individual lines."

Selected excerpts from Yaddo's handwritten founding document appear in their original cursive form, with help from Harlan & Weaver Intaglio, on the back of the medal:

New York February 1900
We desire to found here a permanent
Home to which shall come from
time to time men & women
chosen for Creative Gifts
to make these Gifts useful to the World
Spencer Trask
Julia Trask



PHOTO: THATCHER KEATS

"It's a great pleasure for us to begin a new tradition by presenting Philip Roth with the first Yaddo Artist Medal," said Yaddo President Elaina Richardson. "It's long been our custom to award a medal for achievement and service to two graduating seniors at Saratoga High School, and we'd wanted for some time to expand on that tradition in a way that reflected our core history, and century-long commitment, to encouraging, supporting, and inspiring the work of artists and writers. The Yaddo Artist Medal will be awarded annually at our New York City benefit to an artist of outstanding talent whose achievements and commitment to their field exemplifies Yaddo's own tradition of excellence and community. In this way, we hope to pay tribute to all the artists who have been part of the Yaddo story since our founding in 1900."

Tarik O'Regan

(continued from front cover)

Washington Chorus, BBC National Orchestra of Wales, Sydney Dance Company, American Opera Projects, the Hallé orchestra, and Chamber Choir Ireland. He divides his time between New York City and Cambridge, England. In April, his short opera *The Wanton Sublime*, with a libretto by fellow Yaddo artist Anna Rabinowitz, premiered with Ear Heart Music and American Opera Projects at Roulette in New York City. Here, O'Regan shares his thoughts on being a composer today.

When (and why) did you first write music?

I wouldn't have started writing music if I hadn't been made to do it. I know there are images of people who've always wanted to be a composer, but I really wasn't that person. It was part of doing GCSE (General Certificate of Secondary

In a way there's a silent perception in the music world that composers shouldn't repeat themselves; it's felt to be not properly evolving the art form. I feel more like an architect. I've evolved by slowly looping my way forward without feeling that I've had to completely reinvent things.

Education) music, and I was encouraged by very good teachers. As a performer I went from being a drummer to being a percussionist in an orchestra and studying at the junior department of the Royal College of Music. When you're really into music, you develop a sensibility for what you think is great music, then you have a go at doing it yourself, and its crap! It doesn't sound anything like what you adore. And what pushes you on is trying to narrow that gap between your first attempt at writing music and that sensibility you're drawn to. There's something addictive about it. Ira Glass, who hosts *This American Life*, speaks very eloquently on this very phenomenon.

What is your composing method: (a) sitting at a piano (b) a computer

and keyboard (c) pencil on manuscript paper (d) improvisation with musicians (e) other?

When does composing begin? The choices above are really to do with the moment you put your ideas down. When I write now, it's on a computer or laptop, at home in my studio in New York or Cambridge, or on a plane. But there are all these other aspects of composing, beginning when someone says, "We're thinking of asking you to write this piece of music." And the minute they say that, inevitably you will start thinking – thinking of the space, of the people performing, of what else is on the program. All these things begin the process of composing.

Do you know where your ideas come from?

A musical idea is influenced in some way by everything that's happened up to that point. I'm very aware of the fact

that your own life is your unique set of experiences. That is your window onto the world, and if you're a creative artist you're just painting what you see out of that window, or composing what you see out of that window. You may think you're using a specific set of colors to paint that image, or a particular set of sounds, and it may be purely musical, but the image that you are trying to recreate is one made up entirely from the vantage point of your own life.

Do you find inspiration from other composers? If so, which?

Yes! I've split them into three groups. **1)** The composers I listen to and whose influences I can hear in my own music. Medieval and Renaissance composers such as Machaut, Dufay, Gombert,

Tallis, Lassus and Byrd. Then a jump to the sort of modernists that are probably heard in the music of many people, but who for me are Stravinsky, Bartók, Britten and Schoenberg. And the minimalist composers: Steve Reich, Philip Glass, Michael Nyman and lesser-known composers such as the British minimalist Andrew Poppy.

2) Composers who don't write music like me, but whom I'm very influenced by regarding certain aspects of their work, particularly the handling of drama, and pacing, which is so crucial to music. The list includes Harry Birtwistle, Salvatore Sciarrino, Kaija Saariaho, George Benjamin, Olga Neuwirth, and American composers Sebastian Currier, Alvin Singleton and Morton Feldman.

3) And lastly I want to emphasize the excitement of being alive and around with a bunch of really amazing peers. We're going through a bit of a golden age, I think, and the fact that all these people are out there writing music and people are coming to hear it, that validates what I do, and is hugely influential in its own way. So I'll mention a few people whose work I've come across in the UK and the USA, Joseph Phibbs, Joby Talbot, Helen Grime, Anna Clyne, Huw Watkins, Vijay Iyer, Christopher Cerrone, and Sarah Kirkland-Snyder. I wish I had space to mention more!

Which non-musical influences are important to your music?

Architecture. Architects don't feel the need to reinvent the wheel with each building. Having done something in one project you don't scrap it and do something completely different on the next one; there's a very conscious sense of evolving one's style by overlapping innovation. In a way there's a silent perception in the music world that composers shouldn't repeat themselves; it's felt to be not properly evolving the art form. I feel more like an architect. I've evolved by slowly looping my way forward

without feeling that I've had to completely reinvent things.

What do you say when asked to describe your music?

It depends how facetious I'm feeling. Sometimes I just say "guess!" And then I agree with anything they say. Generally, though, I say, "I'll send you a link on the internet and then you can have a listen."

Your own life is your unique set of experiences. That is your window onto the world, and if you're a creative artist you're just painting what you see out of that window, or composing what you see out of that window

Do you think about the listener when you're composing?

Yes, I do. Which is not to say that I don't try and forget about them sometimes! Whether a composer cares what the listener thinks is different to the act of thinking about the listener. Even actively choosing to disengage from the listener, as I occasionally do, or ignore the role of the listener, is a form of thinking about them too.

What's your musical guilty pleasure?

Shreds. You've got to look it up on the internet! Basically, someone uploads a famous concert, and they just redub all the music in a really bad way, or subtly manipulate it. But it's done as an homage. There's a great one of Keith Jarrett. There's a fantastic Miles Davis and John Coltrane one, and a hilarious One

Direction shred... I love finding new ones on the internet.

What's your ideal night out?

I'm a real city person and I travel a lot for my work. Luckily so does my partner, who's an academic. There's something utterly exhilarating about that first night walking in a city you've never been to before and having that first meal. You feel as if you're really living!

Contemporary music can be daunting to newcomers: what do you suggest they start with?

We've more access to more music on our computer, on our phone, on our tablet, than at any time before. So what I'd do is look up any of these living composers that I've mentioned and listen to their work. Book tickets for the Proms (a London music festival founded in 1895), go to all the new pieces or listen to them on the radio. That's going to give you a much greater sense of what's going on. And get to grips with what's going on in popular music, especially electronic dance music, both the more mainstream stuff and the more experimental variety (sometimes, if controversially, referred to as IDM or Intelligent Dance Music), where there's a lot of innovation happening. There's a lot more interaction now between the world of dance music and the classical concert world. And listen for the music in a film you like. That's new music, even if we don't think of it like that. No two pieces are going to be the same and I'd be wary of pointing someone in one direction, so see as much as possible that's happening now. With the internet there's no excuse.

Learn more at: www.tarikoregan.com or www.sinfinimusic.com



Well, Hello!

We are pleased to welcome two new Members of The Corporation of Yaddo – Laura Callanan, an independent consultant, author, and teacher in the field of social innovation; and Barry Johnson, a principal at 32 Advisers LLC with 25 years of experience as a corporate business executive, entrepreneur, and economic diplomat.

Callanan is currently Scholar in Residence at UC-Berkeley/Haas School of Business, a Visiting Fellow at New York University/Wagner School of Public Service, and a Senior Fellow with The Foundation Center. She previously was a consultant with McKinsey & Company, a Senior Adviser at the United Nations Development Programme, Executive Director of The Prospect Hill Foundation, and Associate Director at The Rockefeller Foundation. She recently was awarded a Rockefeller Foundation Bellagio Fellowship to continue her work on artist social entrepreneurs.

Johnson leads the Inbound Investment & Global Market Access advisory practice of 32 Advisors LLC. He also is a Fellow in the University of Texas-Austin's Institute for Creativity and Capital, the innovative think tank helping to catalyze regional economic development through cross-society collaboration. Prior to joining 32 Advisors, Johnson served in the Obama Administration in senior advisory capacities. His government service was preceded by extensive management experience in the private sector, where he helped launch "intrapreneurial" businesses within some of the world's leading corporations, and was founding President of MSBET, the joint venture between Viacom's BET Networks and the Microsoft Corporation.

Connect

It is quick and easy to stay in touch with Yaddo

- **Website:** Subscribe now to our email list to receive regional, national, and international news about Yaddo and our artist guests. Visit www.yaddo.org to sign up.
- **Facebook:** Find us on Facebook and "Like" us for fun and interesting news from Yaddo.
- **Twitter:** Follow us @YaddoToday.

In Memoriam

Linda Collins

Linda Collins, a talented writer and generous and active Member of The Corporation of Yaddo for more than 25 years, died January 7, 2014, in New York City.



Collins published several stories in her 20s, most notably one called "Intimacy" in *Mademoiselle*, and then stopped writing for a period of 15 years to raise her children, to study classics, and to teach Greek and Latin literature at Columbia University and New York University. She first visited Yaddo as a guest artist in the fall of 1984. During that residency, she worked on a novel and



Linda Collins was instrumental in securing a home for the Yaddo Archive Collection at The New York Public Library, which celebrated the opening of the records to the public with a 2008-2009 exhibition, "Yaddo: Making American Culture" (shown here), that drew more than 70,000 visitors. Acquisition of the collection was made possible by a grant from Collins's family foundation, the Morris and Alma Schapiro Fund. The NYPL will continue to receive the Yaddo Records at least through the year 2026, the centenary of the year Yaddo received its first artist guests. Learn more at <http://archives.nypl.org/mss/4795>

finished two short stories that appeared in her book *Going to See the Leaves*, a collection of stories written over 10 years. A graduate of Barnard College

demonstrated insightful leadership and support, in particular in securing a home for the Yaddo Archive Collection with The New York Public Library.

and Columbia University, she returned for six subsequent Yaddo visits, the last in 1997. Her work has appeared in numerous publications, including *Commentary*, *Kenyon Review*, *St. John's Review*, *Hudson Review*, and *Intersection*.

Elected a Yaddo Member in 1987, Collins

Terry Adkins

The lauded artist, musician, and educator Terry Adkins, a Member of The Corporation of Yaddo since 2007 and a former



Yaddo guest artist, died February 8, 2014, at his Brooklyn home at the age of 60.

Adkins was a great champion of younger artists and an exceptional teacher and artist who enjoyed challenging others

intellectually. A professor of fine art at the University of Pennsylvania, he was known for assemblage sculptures and performances with his longtime band, The Lone Wolf Recital Corps. He worked in a variety of mediums, incorporating his affinity for music, history, and literature into his art.

Adkins had solo exhibitions at the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York City (1995), the SculptureCenter, Long Island City, New York (1997), and The Frances Young Tang Teaching Museum and Art Gallery, Saratoga Springs, New

York (2012). Most recently, his work was featured in the 2014 Whitney Biennial, in a solo exhibition at the Anchorage Museum, and in the exhibition "Radical Presence," organized by Contemporary Arts Museum, Houston, which traveled to the Grey Art Gallery, New York, The Studio Museum in Harlem, and to the Walker Art Center in Minneapolis. Sculptures by Adkins are in the permanent collections of numerous institutions, including the Museum of Modern Art in New York City and Tate Modern in London.

YADDO ALSO AFFECTIONATELY RECALLS

other members of our community who passed away in recent months: composer and jazz pianist **Charles E. Argersinger**, Emeritus Professor of Music at Washington State University, founder of the WSU Festival of Contemporary Art Music, and a former teacher at Cal State Bakersfield and DePaul University; poet **Barry Spacks**, a St. Botolph Club Award recipient who published 11 books of poetry and two novels, served as Santa Barbara, California's first poet laureate, and was a

professor at MIT for 22 years and for 32 years at University of California, Santa Barbara; novelist, performer, and spoken-word poet **Maggie Estep**, who helped popularize slam poetry on MTV, HBO, and PBS, and published several books, including mystery novels set in New York City; poet and literary critic **John Hollander**, known for his translations from Yiddish as well as his own poems, who taught at Connecticut College, Hunter College, and the Graduate Center at The City University at New York and was at the time of his death Sterling

Professor Emeritus of English at Yale University; and composer **Lee Hyla**, who received the Stoecker Prize from the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center, a Guggenheim Fellowship, two National Endowment for the Arts fellowships, the Goddard Lieberman Award from the American Academy of Arts and Letters, the St. Botolph Club Award, and the Rome Prize, taught at New England Conservatory, and in 2007 was appointed the chair of music composition at Northwestern University's Bienen School of Music.

Snapshots: New York City Benefit

Friends of Yaddo gathered for our May 14th New York City Benefit enjoyed a wonderful party: Alison Lurie presented her longtime friend Philip Roth with the inaugural Yaddo Artist Medal (see Pages 1-3), we honored The New York Racing Association, which operates our closest neighboring institution, the Saratoga Race Course, and performance artist Joseph Keckler entertained.

1. Joseph Keckler. 2. Charles Wait (right) presents a James Siena print to Christopher Kay, President and CEO of The New York Racing Association, the corporate honoree at the event. 3. Yaddo Board Co-Chair Susan Unterberg, Daniel Brewbaker, Benefit Committee Chair Patricia Volk, John Kelly. 4. Edward Hower, Alison Lurie. 5. Dwight Lee, Blair Brown. 6. Chloe Kimberlin, Zia Haider Rahman, Kevin Kimberlin. 7. Sam "The Buglar" Grossman gives the call to dinner. 8. Prentice Onayemi, Young Jean Lee.



PHOTOS: THATCHER KEATS



APPLY ONLINE NOW

Yaddo is now accepting applications for the August 1, 2014 deadline in all disciplines through our online portal at www.yaddo.slideroom.com. We no longer accept paper applications. All application materials, including contact information, resume, work sample, and reference letters, must be submitted electronically

through www.yaddo.slideroom.com. Complete, step-by-step instructions are offered on the website. Applicants will be asked to pay the application fee by credit card. The nonrefundable application fee is \$30, to which is added a fee for media uploads ranging from \$5 to \$10, depending on the discipline. The August 1, 2014 deadline is for residencies starting late October of 2014 through May of 2015.



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Play Born at Yaddo Wins 2014 Pulitzer

Annie Baker's *The Flick*, a play set in a run-down movie theater that was hailed by the judges as a "thoughtful drama with well-crafted characters" with "lives rarely seen on the stage," won the 2014 Pulitzer Prize for Drama. Baker worked on the play at Yaddo in 2012.

The Flick premiered February 15-April 7, 2013 at the Mainstage Theater in New

York City, with Playwrights Horizon and under the direction of Sam Gold. An off-Broadway commercial run for the play is anticipated for later this year. The story follows three underpaid employees in a theater in central Massachusetts who mop the floors and attend to one of the last 35 millimeter film projectors in the state. The Pulitzer panel cited *The Flick* for "keen insight and a finely-tuned comic eye".

Baker's other full-length plays include *Circle Mirror Transformation* (Playwrights Horizons, Obie Award for Best New American Play, Drama Desk nomination for Best Play), *The Aliens* (Rattlestick Playwrights Theater, Obie Award for Best New American Play), and *Body Awareness* (Atlantic Theater Company, Drama Desk and Outer Critics Circle nominations for Best Play/Emerging Playwright). Her plays have been produced regionally at South Coast Rep, the Guthrie, Victory Gardens, Artists Rep,

Huntington Theater Company, Seattle Rep, Studio Theatre in DC, Hyde Park Theatre, and the San Francisco Playhouse, and produced internationally in England, Australia, Argentina, Bolivia, Chile, Peru, Venezuela, Mexico, Latvia, and Russia. An anthology of her work, *The Vermont Plays*, has been published by TCG, and her adaptation of *Uncle Vanya* had its world premiere at Soho Rep in June 2012.

Other Yaddo playwrights who have received the Pulitzer Prize for Drama include Ayad Akhtar (for *Disgraced in 2013*), Doug Wright (for *I Am My Own Wife* in 2004), David Auburn (for *Proof* in 2012), Paula Vogel (for *How I Learned to Drive* in 1998), and Hatcher Hughes (for *Hell-Bent fer Heaven* in 1924).

Two other Yaddo writers were finalists for this year's Pulitzers, both in the fiction category: Philipp Meyer for *The Son* and Bob Shacochis for *The Woman Who Lost Her Soul*.