



THE 59TH ANNUAL  
MUSICAL  
AMERICA  
AWARDS

4 DECEMBER 2019



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## Order of Ceremony

### Welcome

Annie Bergen, Midday Host WQXR  
Sedgwick Clark, Features Editor

### Composer of the Year

Joan Tower

### Instrumentalist of the Year

Sharon Isbin

### Vocalist of the Year

Peter Mattei

### Ensemble of the Year

Danish String Quartet

### Festival of the Year

Salzburg Festival



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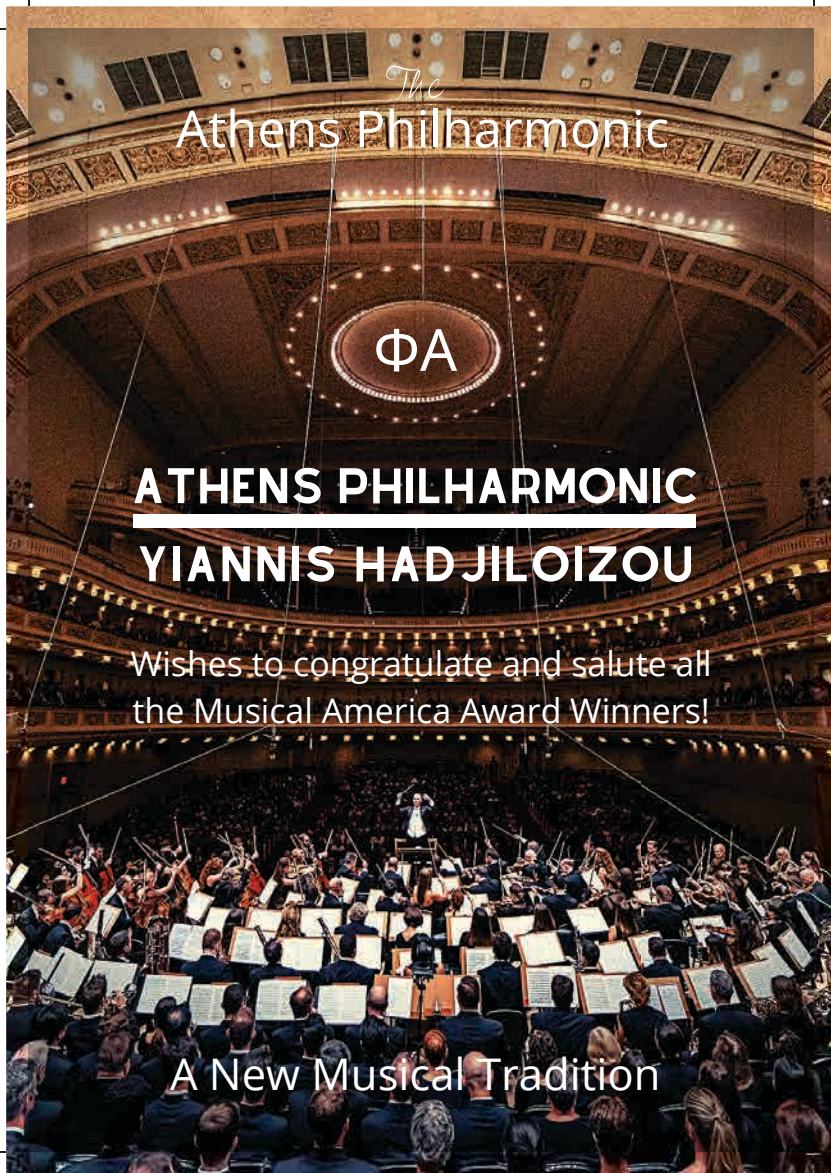
Photo: © Franz Neumayr.

## *Salzburg Festival*

### *Festival of the Year*

In the wake of the First World War, the Salzburg Festival was launched in 1920 as “a project for freedom,” in the words of Festival President Helga Rabl-Stadler, to combat “crises—the crisis of meaning and loss of values, the crisis of identity of the individual human being as well as entire nations.”

The Festival today—200 opera, concert, and drama performances jam-packed into six weeks and 16 venues, attracting tens of thousands of guests from 80 countries, half of them outside of Europe—is barely recognizable from its humble beginnings with a performance of *Jedermann* (Everyman) on the steps of the Salzburg Cathedral. By way of example, one day at last year’s festival started at 11 a.m., when Andrew Manze conducted the Mozarteum Orchestra Salzburg; at noon, the “Drama Investigations” series offered a lecture by lawyer/author Literary Saloon blogger Michael Orthofer; the afternoon featured a children’s opera workshop, followed by the opera itself (*Der Gesang der Zauberinsel*, a Festival commission); at 4 p.m., the curtain rose on Ödön von Horváth’s play *Youth Without God* at the Salzburg State Theater, followed at 7:30 by George Enescu’s *Oedipe*, with Ingo Metzmacher conducting the Vienna Philharmonic. Also at 7:30, Roger Norrington was conducting the Camerata Salzburg at the Mozarteum. At 9 p.m., Hofmannsthal’s *Jedermann* was reprised from nearly a century ago. In Salzburg, all three of the principal sectors—opera, drama, concerts—are flourishing. It is hard to imagine that, as its centennial approaches, the Festival has ever been healthier.



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Athens Philharmonic



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## *Joan Tower* *Composer of the Year*

Long before women composers grabbed the public by the lapels, Composer of the Year Joan Tower was busy working in the trenches, a pioneer in an oft-neglected field. In 1990, she became the first woman to receive the prestigious Grawemeyer Award, for *Silver Ladders*, and earlier this year the League of American Orchestras honored her with its Gold Baton award. Also a teacher and a pianist, she founded the Da Capo Chamber Players in 1969, among the very first contemporary-music ensembles to gain any traction. She has been composer-in-residence with major ensembles, boasting a vast and varied list of commissions. One of them, *Made in America*, was performed in the early 2000s by more than 65 orchestras in all 50 states. Her six *Fanfares for the Uncommon Woman* have been performed worldwide by over 500 ensembles.

Photo: © Bernie Mindich.

A large advertisement for Joan Tower. It features a full-length photo of her in a black blazer against a red background. Text on the left side of the image reads: "G. Schirmer & Associated Music Publishers Congratulate **JOAN TOWER** Musical America's 2020 Composer of the Year". At the bottom left is the G. Schirmer/AMP logo with the tagline "part of The McGraw-Hill Companies". At the bottom right is the website "musicsalesclassical.com". A small photo credit "Photo: Bernie Mindich" is visible near the bottom center of the image.

G. Schirmer & Associated  
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Congratulate  
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Photo: Bernie Mindich

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## *Sharon Isbin*

### *Instrumentalist of the Year*

Sharon Isbin is the first guitarist to be named Musical America's Instrumentalist of the Year. Celebrating her virtuosity as a musician, the designation also recognizes her wide range of commissions for the instrument, adding to the repertoire works by John Corigliano, Lukas Foss, Tan Dun, Joan Tower, Aaron Jay Kernis, and the late Christopher Rouse, among others. She is also the first guitarist to record as a soloist with the New York Philharmonic, and her breadth of stylistic range is reflected in some of her performing and recording collaborators—Antonio Carlos Jobim, jazz guitarist Larry Coryell, folk singer Joan Baez, country fiddler Mark O'Connor, and rock guitarists Steve Vai and Steve Morse. She has also sought to bring her instrument to a wider public, writes Allan Kozinn in his tribute article, "updating the ways classical guitarists present themselves and their instrument."

*Photo: © Darnell Renee.*



"Music is enough for a whole lifetime—  
but a lifetime is not enough for music."  
—SERGEI RACHMANINOFF

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## *Peter Mattei* *Vocalist of the Year*

Vocalist of the Year Peter Mattei made his Metropolitan Opera debut in 2002 singing the Count in Mozart's *The Marriage of Figaro*. A consistently solid and assured presence on stage, he is as adept at bringing out the comic side of that ineffectual lord of the manor as he is the arrogant side of Don Giovanni, the role that first brought him to international prominence. Other notable roles have included Amfortas in *Parsifal*, and his sexy if slightly dangerous characterization of Figaro in Rossini's *The Barber of Seville*. His tenth Met Opera role, Berg's *Wozzeck*, opens two days after Christmas. It is certain to showcase the Swedish baritone's ability to find beauty while delving into the dark side. "The more you work with this music, the more beauty you find in it," he tells Heidi Waleson in her tribute piece.

Photo: © Marty Sohl/Met Opera.

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Photo: Todd Rosenberg

# Celebrating Inspiring Performance



Supporting performing arts and artistic excellence is a top priority for Meyer Sound. We're honored to be a part of the 59th Musical America Annual Awards and salute the Musical America team and all of the outstanding 2020 winners.



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## *Danish String Quartet* *Ensemble of the Year*

Ensemble of the Year, the Danish String Quartet—Frederik Øland (violin); Rune Tonsgaard Sørensen (violin); Asbjørn Nørgaard (viola); Fredrik Schøyen Sjölin (cello)—made its debut in 2002 and by 2006 had been named Artist-in-Residence by Danish Radio. Its first recordings, of the Nielsen string quartets, garnered high praise from critics. Having demonstrated its special affinity for Scandinavian composers early on (and winning the Carl Nielsen Prize in 2011), the group has since broadened its repertoire and reputation. This season the DSQ embarks upon its greatest challenge to date, performing the complete Beethoven cycle in honor of the composer's 250th year. In a project for the ECM label, these young artists are recording five "Prism" CDs—each containing a late Beethoven quartet, an arrangement of a Bach fugue, and a 20th-century work.

Photo: © Caroline Bittencourt.

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# ***Acknowledgements***

*Musical America wishes to thank  
the following organizations for  
their support of this event.*

**CARNEGIE HALL**

Salome, Salzburg Festival 2018



- Joan Tower: String Quartets Nos. 3-5
- Joan Tower: Violin Concerto
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