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**THE CHAMBER MUSIC SOCIETY OF LINCOLN CENTER
DAVID FINCKEL AND WU HAN, ARTISTIC DIRECTORS
ANNOUNCES**

**2016 ELISE L. STOEGER PRIZE
AWARDED TO**

HUW WATKINS

“His versatility knows no bounds. As a pianist and chamber musician, he is a key interpreter of the foremost British composers – he himself must now be counted among them – and his sensibilities as a performer clearly inform his own work.” *The Guardian*



For immediate release, January 25, 2017. The Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center’s 2016 Elise L. Stoeger Prize has been awarded to British composer Huw Watkins. The Stoeger Prize, a \$25,000 cash award and the largest of its kind, is given every two years in recognition of significant contributions to the field of chamber music composition. Chamber Music Society Artistic Directors David Finckel and Wu Han commented on the announcement:

We are very proud of the Stoeger Prize’s distinguished history of celebrating composers who devote their talents to chamber music, and we are delighted with our jury members’ selection of Huw Watkins to receive the 2016 prize. They were universal in their

admiration of his work, praising it as fresh and emotionally gripping, beautifully crafted and endlessly lyrical. He won their full endorsement and we agree that Watkins, as a composer of immense talent, is well suited to join the illustrious ranks of his predecessors. [Pictured: Huw Watkins; photo: Benjamin Ealovega.]

Huw Watkins responded:

For as long as I can remember, chamber music has been central to my life: playing it, listening to it and writing it. To be chosen for this prize by the Chamber Music Society is a huge honor - the list of previous Stoeger Prize recipients is indeed an illustrious one - but it is also an inspiration for me to keep writing the music I love most of all.

Huw Watkins will appear with CMS at Alice Tully Hall on February 21, 2017, as pianist in two works by Mendelssohn, the *Andante and Allegro brilliant* for Piano, Four Hands, Op. 92, joined by pianist Orion Weiss, and the Sonata in D major for Cello and Piano, Op. 58, with cellist Paul Watkins. During the 2018-2019 season, CMS will premiere a new piano quintet by Watkins.

Following are links to compositions by Huw Watkins:

In My Craft or Sullen Art

http://res.cloudinary.com/cmslc/video/upload/v1484849629/Watkins_-_In_my_craft_or_sullen_art_HW_025.mp3

Horn Trio

http://res.cloudinary.com/cmslc/video/upload/v1484849626/Watkins_-_Horn_Trio_HW_037_1.mp3

Blue Shadows

<https://chambermusicsociety.wistia.com/medias/1htnzkmwpc>

Huw Watkins was born in Wales in 1976 and studied piano with Peter Lawson at Chetham's School of Music and composition with Robin Holloway, Alexander Goehr and Julian Anderson at Cambridge and the Royal College of Music. In 2001 he was awarded the Constant and Kit Lambert Junior Fellowship at the Royal College of Music, where he later taught composition. He is currently Professor of Composition at the Royal Academy of Music.

A wealth of chamber music is central to Watkins's output, complementing his parallel career as a pianist. Works written for artists with whom he has developed performing partnerships include his Cello Sonata for Paul Watkins (recorded for Nimbus), Partita for Alina Ibragimova (recorded for NMC) and a viola Fantasy for Lawrence Power. Long-time supporters the Nash Ensemble commissioned a Horn Trio, and the String Quartet for the Carducci Quartet was a commission from the Manchester Chamber Concerts Society.

Watkins's growing body of orchestral works includes the widely acclaimed *Violin Concerto* for Alina Abragimova premiered by BBC Symphony Orchestra with Edward Gardner, and two commissions from the London Symphony Orchestra, *London Concerto* and the *Flute Concerto*

for Adam Walker, premiered under Daniel Harding in 2014 with subsequent performances by the BBC National Orchestra of Wales and the RTÉ National Symphony Orchestra. This season the Hallé Orchestra premieres *Symphony* conducted by Sir Mark Elder.

His longstanding relationship with the BBC National Orchestra of Wales has resulted in a number of new works, including a Piano Concerto premiered in 2002 with the composer at the piano, and a *Double Concerto* premiered by Philip Dukes (viola) and Josephine Knight (cello) conducted by Jac van Steen. As Composer in Association (2015-2019) Watkins writes several new orchestral works including the *Cello Concerto* for his brother, the cellist Paul Watkins, premiered at the 2016 BBC Proms under Thomas Søndergård.

Watkins' vocal works include *In My Craft or Sullen Art* for tenor and string quartet, premiered by Mark Padmore and the Petersen Quartet at Wigmore Hall in 2006 and *Five Larkin Songs* for soprano and piano, which won a British Composer Award. Music Theatre Wales has commissioned two chamber operas, both with librettos by David Harsent: *Crime Fiction* and *In the Locked Room*, a co-commission with Scottish Opera which received a new production at Staatsoper Hamburg in 2015. More recent vocal works include *Remember* for soprano and string orchestra written for Ruby Hughes as part of Royal Philharmonic Society's Composer in the House appointment with Orchestra of the Swan 2012-2014, and *Four Sonnets* for tenor and piano premiered at the Cheltenham Festival in 2014 by Mark Padmore and the composer himself.

As one of the UK's finest young pianists Watkins has premiered works by Oliver Knussen, Mark-Anthony Turnage, John Woolrich and Michael Zev Gordon and has performed concertos with the BBC Symphony Orchestra and Orchestra of the Swan. His recordings include chamber music discs on Chandos, Signum and Nimbus, Alexander Goehr's piano cycle *Symmetry Disorders Reach* on Wergo, and music by Knussen on NMC. His own disc of chamber music on NMC, *In my craft or sullen art*, has been warmly praised.

The Elise L. Stoeger Prize was established in 1987 with a bequest from Milan Stoeger, a long-time subscriber to the Chamber Music Society, in memory of his wife, Elise. Winners are chosen from the nominations of leading musicians, composers, educators, managers, and presenters from around the country. Final selection is made by a rotating anonymous panel of professionals and CMS Artistic Directors David Finckel and Wu Han.

Previous Stoeger Prize Winners:

- 1987 Gunther Schuller
- 1990 Oliver Knussen
- 1992 Lee Hyla and Olly Wilson
- 1993 Aaron Jay Kernis and Nicholas Maw
- 1994 Oleg Felzer and Richard Wilson
- 1995 David Liptak and Steven Mackey
- 1996 Martin Bresnick and Osvaldo Golijov
- 1997 Stephen Hartke and Judith Weir
- 1998 Thomas Adès and Yehudi Wyner
- 1999 James Primosch and Scott Wheeler

2000 Michael Daugherty and Kaija Saariaho
2002 Chen Yi
2004 David Rakowski
2006 Pierre Jalbert
2008 Jörg Widmann
2010 Brett Dean
2012 Zhou Long
2014 Thomas Larcher
