The 2018 St. Louis Literary Award Winner Has Been Announced!

Stephen Sondheim will accept the Award on October 4, 2018 at the Sheldon Concert Hall

Bit by bit,
Putting it together…
Piece by Piece-
Only way to make a work of art.
Every moment makes a contribution,
Every little detail plays a part.
Having just a vision’s no solution,
Everything depends on execution:
Putting it together-
That's what counts!

Stephen Sondheim
Sunday in the Park with George

To understand the breadth of composer-songwriter Stephen Sondheim’s interests, consider his sources. They range from ancient Roman comedy (Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum) to fairy tales (Into the Woods) to a George Seurat painting (Sunday in the Park with George) to an Ingmar Bergman film (A Little Night Music). Throughout, Sondheim is recognized for stunning melodies and witty, intelligent lyrics.

I chose and my world was shaken.
So what?
The choice may have been mistaken.
The choosing was not.
You have to move on.

Sunday in the Park with George

Herbert and Foxy Sondheim ran a successful dress manufacturing business, raising their son Stephen in luxury on Central Park West, until Herbert abandoned his family for another woman. The ten-year-old was left to live with his mother. Sent off to boarding school, Stephen became friends with Jamie Hammerstein, son of Oscar and Dorothy Hammerstein. The Hammerstein’s became Sondheim’s surrogate family. He credits Hammerstein with inspiring him to try a life in the theatre, saying that if Oscar had been a dentist he would probably have gone into dentistry.

Sondheim ended up at Williams College where he became involved in the school’s active theatrical and literary community and began to study music formally. He had written a musical (By George!) while at the George School, and wrote Phinney’s Rainbow for the Williams theatre group. Upon graduation he received a two-year fellowship to study composition. While visiting the Hammersteins, he asked Oscar to comment on a musical comedy he had written. His mentor labeled it the worst thing ever written but offered to tell the young composer why.

Sondheim later said, "In that afternoon I learned more about songwriting and the musical theater than most people learn in a lifetime."

The Hammerstein connection proved valuable in other ways. At the opening of South Pacific, Sondheim met Hal Prince with whom he would later co-produce Company, Follies, A Little Night Music, Pacific Overtures, Sweeney Todd, and Merrily We Roll Along, forever changing the American musical theater landscape. According to one critic,

The history of the book musical is the history of Oscar Hammerstein II and Stephen Sondheim ... A musical theater without [Cole] Porter and [Lorenz] Hart would be a poorer place; one without Hammerstein and Sondheim would be unimaginable.

Over the next few years Stephen lived in the dining room of his father’s crowded apartment struggling to gain a foothold in the theatre, even writing scripts for the
TV comedy Topper. Sondheim’s first break came when he was asked to help write lyrics for an updated version of Romeo and Juliet being composed by Leonard Bernstein. Sondheim had previously met Bernstein at an opening night party, and, as the two talked, Bernstein asked Stephen to consider working on the lyrics for the half-finished project. Sondheim was inclined to refuse, but Hammerstein convinced him that working with Bernstein, writer Arthur Laurents, and choreographer Jerome Robbins would be an incredible learning experience. Shortly after West Side Story debuted in 1956, Sondheim was asked to write lyrics again, this time for Gypsy. Finally, in 1962, he had his first hit as both composer and lyricist with A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum.

The 1970s saw Sondheim/Prince hits Company (1970), Follies (1971), and A Little Night Music (1973). The latter was based on the surprising choice of Ingmar Bergman’s romantic comedy Smiles of a Summer Night. After a chaotic rehearsal process that started with a half-written show and ended with the exhausted star Glynis Johns in the hospital five days before opening night, A Little Night Music opened on February 25, 1973, to ecstatic reviews. To emphasize the romantic triangles in the plot, the entire show was written in 3/4 and 6/8 time. Defying Broadway’s risk profile, A Little Night Music ran for 601 shows, paying back its investors in twelve weeks. Nominated for twelve Tonys and seven Drama Desk awards, it won six of each including the Tonys for Best Musical, Best Score, and Best Actress.

The success of A Little Night Music was followed by such hits as Sweeney Todd (1979) also with Hal Prince, and Sunday in the Park with George (1984) and Into the Woods (1987), both with James Lapine, as well as several anthologies including Side by Side by Sondheim and Sondheim on Sondheim. His lyrics have been published in two volumes: Finishing the Hat and Look I Made a Hat.

Sondheim’s genius has not gone unrecognized, In addition to being elected to the The American Academy of Arts and Letters (1983), he received a Lifetime achievement award from the Kennedy Center (1993). In addition, he has won a Pulitzer, an Academy Award, eight Grammys, eight Tonys, seven Drama Desk awards, and an OBIE.

The last collaborator is your audience … when the audience comes in, it changes the temperature of what you've written. Things that seem to work well—work in a sense of carry the story forward and be integral to the piece—suddenly become a little less relevant or a little less functional or a little overlong or a little overweight or a little whatever. And so, you start reshaping from an audience.

Stephen Sondheim interview: July 5, 2005

Don't miss your chance to be part of Stephen Sondheim’s audience at the St. Louis Literary Award Ceremony, 7:00 October 4th 2018 at the Sheldon Concert Hall. Library Associates members will be receiving an email within the next few weeks with ticket registration information. Tickets will be offered to Library Associates members prior to being offered to the general public.

If I cannot fly, let me sing.
   – Stephen Sondheim
The Library Associates’ Beyond the Book Society

Following on the success of last year’s Margaret Atwood book club, the Saint Louis University Library Associates will be hosting a series of evenings based on the works of Stephen Sondheim.

Monday, July 23rd: Amy Kaiser, Director of the St. Louis Symphony Chorus, will give an overview of Sondheim's work, "Music and Lyrics for a Lifetime," discussing the unique relationship between music and lyrics in his work. One of the few successful composers who also writes his own lyrics, Sondheim has said,

One difference between poetry and lyrics is that lyrics sort of fade into the background. They fade on the page and live on the stage when set to music.

Monday, August 20th: Ken Haller is an Associate Professor in the Department of Pediatrics, Division of General Academic Pediatrics, at Saint Louis University School of Medicine and a cabaret singer known for his interpretations of Sondheim. "As a pediatrician, my primary mission in life is Healing. I will talk about how the work of Stephen Sondheim has been a road to Healing in my own life and how I have chosen to present his songs, not just in my Sondheim show, but in all my shows, as Sondheim's gift to every one of us as we strive for Healing in our lives."

September 10th: George Hodgman, author of Bettyville, will make the case for Sondheim as a literary figure, using handouts to show how he uses songs not just for uniquely done narrative storytelling such as in “Someone in a Tree” from Pacific Overtures, but also for nuanced, sophisticated psychological portraiture as in “Liaisons” from A Little Night Music, “Finishing the Hat” from Sunday in the Park with George, “Bowler Hat” from Pacific Overtures, “The Glamorous Life” from A Little Night Music, and perhaps "No Place like London" from Sweeney Todd.

Past President Lana Pepper has again agreed to host interested Associates members and their guests for these intriguing discussions of Stephen Sondheim’s work. Your $100 membership will be your ticket for these events as well as other yearlong programs. For more information or to register, contact Donna Neely at donna.neely@slu.edu.

Legends and Lore

Former University Archivist John Waide has returned to campus as Outreach Coordinator for the University Libraries. He is working on various activities related to the University’s bicentennial celebration and assisted Dr. Dolores Byrnes, the author of our bicentennial history book, Always at the Frontier: Saint Louis University 1818-2018. This book may be ordered at https://www.slu.edu/bicentennial/book.php

Among the many projects Waide has taken on is the Legends and Lore series. Dean David Cassens, aware of Waide’s vast knowledge, suggested he research and write short vignettes on interesting people and events in the University’s 200-year history, and the Legends and Lore series was born. To date, Waide has identified thirty-seven topics, prepared texts for twenty-five of them and even completed a dozen PowerPoint presentations. Topics range from the history of the Billiken to the story of the St. Louis exorcism and from the first forward pass in collegiate football to the Library Associates’ St. Louis Literary Award.

Several of these topics have been presented through the Legends and Lore series at Pius Library and more are planned for this fall.

Saint Louis University’s Medical Library and SSM Health

The Saint Louis University Medical Center Library has recently expanded its partnership with SSM Health. SLU’s Medical Center Library now provides library services to seven area hospitals including: Saint Louis University Hospital, Cardinal Glennon Children’s Hospital, St. Mary’s Hospital, St. Clare Hospital, and the three clinical sites for St. Joseph Hospital in St. Charles, Wentzville, and Lake St. Louis.

Patient care support under the program includes point of patient care health information, rapid electronic delivery of journal articles, and clinical information via, chat, phone, email, or in person.

The library’s support of patient care and biomedical research extends beyond the Saint Louis area with its document delivery program, which enjoys a national reputation as one of the country’s premier providers in the National Library of Medicine’s DOCLINE program, a resource sharing system among North American academic medical centers.
Library Associates’ Fourth Undergraduate Writing Awards Announced

Since 2014, the Saint Louis University Library Associates has awarded prizes to prominent undergraduate writers. The award rotates between fiction, poetry and creative non-fiction. This year’s entries in the fiction category were so strong that two first prizes and an encouragement prize were given. The $500 First Prizes went to sophomore Patrick Bernas for his story “Death After Life,” and senior Parvuna Sulaiman for “Metro Waltz.” Senior Gabriele “Bri” Super received the Encouragement Award for her story, “Ingredients.”

The prizes were given as part of SLU’s Seventh Annual Student Reading on Wednesday, April 11, at the Pius XII Memorial Library. The students read excerpts from their winning entries. All three stories have been published online through the undergraduate literary journal Kiln.

Followers of the Undergraduate Writing Award will remember that Parvuna Sulaiman won last year’s competition for her non-fiction piece “Reds and Yellows,” a memoir of her Kurdish background. Sulaiman also recently appeared on the stage as Yasmina in the Mustard Seed Theater’s production of Rohina Malik’s play, “Yasmina’s Necklace.” She also appeared in the joint production between Saint Louis University and Prison Performing Arts of “Antigone.”

Student submissions are evaluated by a committee of Library Associates board members, Saint Louis University faculty and others using blind readings of the student submissions. Submission requirements and timing for the 2019 prize, which will be awarded for poetry, will be posted in the fall semester on the Undergraduate Writing Award website.

Pope Pius XII, the Catholic Church, and Nazi Germany

Tuesday, October 9, 2018

Coinciding with the 60th anniversary of the death of Pope Pius XII, the Saint Louis University Libraries will be presenting an academic symposium examining the relationship between the Pope, the Church and Nazi Germany. For more than seventy years, historians have scrutinized the actions of the Pontiff during World War II, debating the implications of his silence with respect to the holocaust.

This fall, the University will bring together three internationally-known scholars who have written extensively on the subject—Dr. Mark Ruff (Department of History, Saint Louis University); Dr. Robert Ventresca (Department of History, King’s University College at Western University, Canada); and Father Charles Gallagher, S. J. (Department of History, Boston College)—to conduct a panel on the topic. John Waide will discuss the relationship of Pope Pius to Saint Louis University and to what would become the Pius XII Memorial Library. The symposium will be held in the afternoon. Look for final details in the Fall on the University calendar.
At Home with David Henry Hwang

On January 25th, the Saint Louis University Library Associates and Opera Theatre of Saint Louis joined forces to host renowned playwright David Henry Hwang in the magnificent Sinqufeild Stateroom in DuBourg Hall on Saint Louis University's campus. Hwang was in town to talk about his libretto for Opera Theatre's world premiere of the full-length version of An American Soldier scheduled for June 2018. The evening opened with a reception for Library Associates members in the Pere Marquette Gallery. Ted Ibur, Library Associates president opened the formal presentation by introducing Opera Theatre General Director Timothy O’Leary. O’Leary, in turn, spoke about OTSL’s work in commissioning the piece by composer Huang Ruo with a libretto by David Henry Hwang. More than 125 people were privileged to hear Hwang discuss his latest opera. An American Soldier is the story of New York-born Danny Chen. A gifted student who had won a full scholarship to Baruch College, Danny instead enlisted in the army. After training at Fort Benning, Georgia and Fort Wainwright, Alaska, Danny was deployed to active combat in Kandahar, Afghanistan. There, as the only Asian in the unit, he encountered extreme verbal hazing and physical harassment. In October 2011, two months after arriving in Afghanistan, Danny reported to guard duty without his helmet. Upon returning to retrieve the helmet, he was forced to crawl over gravel on his hands and knees back to the guard tower while his superior officers ordered Danny’s fellow soldiers to stone him. Barely three hours later a single shot rang out. Danny was discovered dead with a bullet wound to his head. On his arm he had written “veggie pull the plug” and “tell my parents I’m sorry.”

Playwright Hwang was first approached by Elizabeth OuYang of the Asian and Pacific advocacy group OCA to tell Danny’s story. He declined, feeling it did not fit his darkly humorous style. However, when approached by Chinese-American composer Huang Ruo who had been asked to write an opera on an American theme for the Washington National Opera’s American Opera Initiative, Hwang quickly agreed to tell Danny’s story. After the one-hour chamber opera appeared in 2014, James Robinson of Opera Theatre of Saint Louis approached the duo about expanding the piece into a full-length version. They readily agreed. Hwang pointed out that opera is about big emotions and big themes giving it the ability to both accommodate nuance and address epic stories. An American Soldier premiered at OTSL on June 3rd, 2018.

Asked about the process of creating a libretto, Hwang described making up a melody in his head as he writes. He is aided by a musical upbringing. His mother played the piano, his sister the cello and the author the violin.

David Henry Hwang has been described by The New York Times as "a true original" and by Time as "the first important dramatist of American public life since Arthur Miller." Hwang’s first play, FOB, written while he was an undergraduate, won the 1981 Obie Award for Best New American Play. FOB, which stands for “fresh off the boat,” highlights differences between recent immigrants and first- and second-generation Chinese-Americans. Many of Hwang’s subsequent pieces examine the Chinese experience in America. More recent plays include Yellow Face (2007)—which garnered Hwang’s third Obie in Playwriting and his third finalist nomination for the Pulitzer Prize in Drama—and the Joseph Jefferson Award-winning Chinglish (2011). The author is perhaps best known for M. Butterfly, which won the 1988 Tony Award, as well as the Drama Desk, John Gassner, and Outer Critics Circle awards for Best Play. Overall, M. Butterfly earned nineteen nominations (and eleven wins) across several competitions that year.

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Inge Award for Distinguished Achievement in the American Theatre, the Asia Society Cultural Achievement Award, and the Steinberg Distinguished Playwright Award. In 2014, he received the Doris Duke Artist Award. In 2015, he received the 2015 ISPA Distinguished Artist Award and was named a Ford Foundation Art of Change Fellow. He is also Chair of the Board of Trustees of the American Theatre Wing, the organization behind the Tony Awards.

For more information or to buy tickets for the world premiere of Huang Ruo’s and David Henry Hwang’s *An American Soldier*, go to the Opera Theatre of Saint Louis website at [www.opera-stl.org](http://www.opera-stl.org), or call the OTSL box office at 314-961-0644.

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**Finishing the Hat: Students Sing Sondheim**

In conjunction with the St. Louis Literary Award’s 2018 event in honor of composer and lyricist Stephen Sondheim, the Library Associates will be launching a series of concerts featuring local high school and college students performing music from Sondheim productions. The event is titled after Sondheim’s published collection, *Finishing the Hat: Collected Lyrics (1954–1981) with Attendant Comments, Principles, Heresies, Grudges, Whines and Anecdotes*. Associates president Ted Ibur has been working with Gary Barker, SLU’s Associate Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences for Undergraduate Affairs and with Lara Teeter, Head of the Musical Theatre Program at Webster University’s Conservatory of Theatre Arts to set up the event.

High schools invited to participate include: Cardinal Ritter High School, Clayton High School, the Grand Center Arts Academy, John Burroughs School, Rosati-Kain High School, Saint Louis University High School, Visitation Academy, the Visual and Performing Arts Academy, and Webster Groves High School.

Local colleges invited to participate include: Fontbonne College, Lindenwood University, Meramec Community College, Saint Louis University, Southern Illinois University—Edwardsville, Washington University in St. Louis, Webster University, and the University of Missouri-Saint Louis.

The high school performances will take place on Friday, September 28 at 7:00 pm. The college performances will be on Saturday evening, September 29, also at 7:00. The venue with be University Theater at Xavier Hall. There is no charge for the event. For more information contact Donna Neely at donna.neely@slu.edu.
For more than a decade SLU’s first-year experience has featured a First Year Common Reading Program, showcasing texts that speak to SLU’s Jesuit, liberal arts educational heritage. Faculty- and staff-led reading groups help new students discuss the chosen book early in the fall term, followed by a presentation by each book’s author later in the term. The program has become a significant tradition at SLU, and deservedly so. This kind of shared intellectual endeavor is often cited as a “high impact educational practice” in the scholarly literature on student success.

Another significant SLU tradition is the conferral of the St. Louis Literary Award by the SLU Library Associates. Since 1967, this award has been given to some of the world’s most highly-respected authors, including Margaret Atwood (2017), Salman Rushdie (2009), Seamus Heaney (1998), Arthur Miller (1980), and Tennessee Williams (1974). Each awardee has come to SLU for a presentation to the University community and the St. Louis community at-large.

I write today to announce a pilot project bridging both of these traditions. For Fall 2018, the First Year Common Reading Program will focus not on a book but on a selection of the most heralded works of lyricist and composer Stephen Sondheim—recipient of the 2018 St. Louis Literary Award who has also won Grammy Awards, Tony Awards, the Pulitzer Prize for Drama, and the Presidential Medal of Freedom.

This effort, proposed by members of the First Year Common Reading committee and the SLU Library Associates, appropriately embraces a broader concept of “text,” and illuminates the roles of music and theatre in our shared quest to understand and interpret ourselves. Each of the three Sondheim works of focus—Into the Woods, Sweeney Todd, and West Side Story—takes a different path to addressing issues of identity, self-authorship, morality, tribalism, and other defining facets of the human experience.

A few of the related events/activities already planned include the following:

• **Fall 2018 New Student Orientation:** On-campus screenings of film adaptations of Into the Woods, Sweeney Todd, and West Side Story; themes on identity from those works will also be incorporated into U101 course activities and learning communities

• **October 4th:** The St. Louis Literary Award is presented to Mr. Sondheim at the Sheldon Concert Hall

• **October 5th:** Mr. Sondheim offers a presentation on craft in the SLU Xavier Theatre

• **Faculty Awards** for innovative approaches to incorporating Sondheim’s works into their courses or other departmental/college/University events

• **A contest for students** to submit works of music, poetry, film, art, photography, writing, etc. centered on a theme(s) from one or more of the three Sondheim works of focus

The First Year Common Reading Committee also seeks to support faculty efforts to weave the themes of any or all of the three Sondheim works into as many components of their first-year undergraduate courses as possible. To that end, I have dedicated funding in the form of $500 mini-grants to faculty willing to develop or revise their Fall 2018 courses accordingly; as always, our colleagues in the Reinert Center are available to assist faculty in such efforts.

We might choose to continue to coordinate the First Year Common Reading Program with our St. Louis Literary Award in future years. I will ask the University Undergraduate Core Committee to consider this effort as part of their curriculum planning going forward. In the meantime, I have the First Year Common Reading Committee and the SLU Library Associates to thank for an excellent proposal. I hope you’ll consider how you can take part in the program as well. For more information, including details on applying for the faculty mini-grants, please contact Associate Provost Dr. Rob Wood at x3718 or robert.wood@slu.edu.

Respectfully,
Nancy Brickhouse, Ph.D.
Provost
President's Letter

There are many exciting things happening right now for the SLU Library Associates. We are eagerly planning for the 2018 Literary Award, which is being presented to Stephen Sondheim, the preeminent lyricist and composer of our time. Mr. Sondheim has been extremely gracious, accommodating, and funny in our exchanges online and over the phone. The award ceremony will once again take place at the Sheldon Concert Hall on the evening of Thursday, October 4, with a reception to follow. We are going to do something different this year as part of the celebration of Stephen Sondheim’s theatrical work. There will be six Sondheim songs performed before the award is presented, followed by an interview with the Muny’s Mike Isaacson.

Our awardees have always taken part in a craft talk at SLU. This year is no different. Stephen Sondheim will be interviewed by our own SLU professor, actress, and playwright, Nancy Bell, at the University Theater in Xavier Hall at 1:00 pm on Friday, October 5.

A new opportunity this year, one week prior to the Literary Award gala, are two evenings of Sondheim’s theatrical work. Area high school and university students will perform Sondheim works. This will be a fun collaboration of area theater programs. These events will be held during the week of September 24 and are called Finishing the Hat: Students Sing Sondheim. Three of those acts will also perform at the craft talk.

Of course, one of the most thrilling opportunities Library Associate Benefactors have is the chance to meet and greet the awardee at a dinner in a private home. Past Board President, Lana Pepper, will once again host the dinner in her beautiful Central West End condo. In our ongoing effort to raise funds for the Associates to support Pius Library and Library Associates programs, such as the Literary Award, Evenings At Home with local authors, the craft talk, and more. Please consider becoming a Benefactor to take advantage of these benefits.

Last year, we featured several book discussions focused on Margaret Atwood’s work at the home of Lana and Ted Pepper. This year, Lana has once again offered her home as the site of a series of Sondheim discussions led by several local Sondheim experts. Invitations will be coming to you soon.

I, along with several other board members, also had the honor of attending SLU’s English Department Annual Reading featuring the Undergraduate Writing Award winners in creative nonfiction: Patrick Bemas and repeat winner Parvuna Sulaiman. Bri Super was the recipient of the Encouragement Award. It was wonderful seeing a full house at the event in Pius Library.

More exciting news … The Freshman Common Reader, a selection of literary works and projects for incoming freshmen to SLU, will now use the writings of the St. Louis Literary Award winner for that year. This reimagining of the first year program will begin this fall with the works of Stephen Sondheim. Please see the letter from Provost Nancy Brickhouse.

It has been a busy and wonderful year behind the scenes with the Library Associates. You have an open line should you ever want to contact me directly. I wish you all a happy and healthy summer! I hope to see you all at the Literary Award Presentation and reception in October.

Sincerely,

Ted Ibur
President, Saint Louis University Library Associates
314-799-2039
edwardscottibur@gmail.com

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# PAST LITERARY AWARD RECIPIENTS

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<td>1997</td>
<td>Stephen E. Ambrose</td>
<td>1975</td>
<td>John Hope Franklin</td>
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<td>1996</td>
<td>Antonia Fraser</td>
<td>1974</td>
<td>Tennessee Williams</td>
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### Facts about Pius XII Memorial Library

- **Built in 1959**
- **Named after Pope Pius XII**
- **215,000 square feet**
- **Houses over 1.3 million volumes**
- **Over 12,000 e-Books**
- **446 group presentations to 8,043 participants**
- **Wireless access throughout the library**
- **53 public computers**
- **34 laptops available to check out**
- **1,600 seats**
- **19 study rooms**
- **Home to the Vatican Film Library**
- **Over 30,000 volumes of rare books**
- **Serves over 14,000 students and faculty**
- **24-hour access during fall and spring semesters - Sunday to Friday**
- **Einstein Bros. Bagels open 7 days a week during fall and spring semesters**
- **Academic Technology Commons (ATC) opened November 2017**

### Consider becoming a member of the Library Associates to support the wonderful library of Saint Louis University in addition to the following benefits:

**Contributing Member - $100**

- Pius XII Memorial Library borrowing privileges
- Access to unique library resources
- Invitations to members-only literary programs
- Library Associates newsletter

**Supporting Member - $150 all of the above plus**

- Preferred seating at Award event

**Literary Friend - $250 all of the above plus**

- 2018 program recognition

**Patron - $500 all the above plus**

- A signed copy of the awardee’s book

**Benefactor - $1,000 all of the above plus**

- Dinner with the awardee at a private home