



NEWS FROM OFFICE FOR THE ARTS AT HARVARD and
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John Lithgow To Be Honored at Harvard University

TONY, EMMY AND GOLDEN GLOBE WINNING ACTOR WILL RECEIVE HARVARD ARTS MEDAL AT APRIL 27 CEREMONY, LAUNCHING HARVARD'S 25th ANNUAL ARTS FIRST FESTIVAL

(Cambridge, MA)—Award-winning actor **John Lithgow** '67 ArD '05 is the recipient of the 2017 Harvard Arts Medal, which will be awarded by Harvard University President **Drew Gilpin Faust** at a ceremony on **Thursday, April 27, 2017 at 4 pm at the Loeb Drama Center**, 64 Brattle St., Cambridge. The ceremony, presented by the Office for the Arts at Harvard and the Harvard University Board of Overseers in association with the American Repertory Theater, will include a discussion with Lithgow moderated by President Faust. This is the official opening event for **ARTS FIRST**, Harvard University's annual festival showcasing student creativity in the arts celebrating its 25th anniversary April 27-30.

Admission is free but tickets are required, available in person at the Harvard Box Office at Farkas Hall, 10 Holyoke St., Cambridge, or by calling 617.496.2222 or visiting www.boxoffice.harvard.edu (phone and online ticket orders are subject to service fees). Ticket distribution for Harvard affiliates (2 per person, with valid ID) begins Tuesday, April 18; ticket distribution for the public (2 per person) begins Thursday, April 20. Some remaining tickets may be available at the door one hour prior to event start time.

The Harvard Arts Medal honors a distinguished Harvard or Radcliffe graduate or faculty member who has achieved excellence in the arts and has made a contribution through the arts to education or the public good. Previous Medal recipients include architect **Frank Gehry** GSD '57 ArD '00; former ballet dancer and now arts leader **Damian Woetzel** MPA '07; photographer **Susan Meiselas** EdM '71; visual artist and essayist **Catherine Lord** '70; saxophonist/composers **Joshua Redman** '91 and **Fred Ho** '79; composers **John Harbison** '60 and **John Adams** '69 MA '72; playwright **Christopher Durang** '71; poets **John Ashbery** '49 and **Maxine Kumin** '41; cellist **Yo-Yo Ma** '76; film director **Mira Nair** '79; conductor and founder of Les Arts Florissants **William Christie** '66; stage director **Peter Sellars** '80; National Theatre of the Deaf founder **David Hays** '52; authors **John Updike** '54 and **Margaret Atwood** AM '62 LittD '04; songwriter/musicians **Bonnie Raitt** '72 and **Pete Seeger** '40; and actors **Jack Lemmon** '47, **Tommy Lee Jones** '69 and **Matt Damon** '92.

"John Lithgow is an extraordinary actor who has enriched and entertained the world with unforgettable stage and screen performances," said Drew Gilpin Faust, President of Harvard University. "We owe the launch of ARTS FIRST—this year celebrating its

25th anniversary—to his unfailing efforts and his lifelong belief in the abundance and power of our creative community. He has shaped the experiences of countless people at Harvard and beyond, and it will be an honor to present him with this year’s Harvard Arts Medal.”

Born in Rochester, New York, and raised in a theater family—his mother was a former actor; his father a producer and director who ran the McCarter Theatre in Princeton, New Jersey—John Lithgow has been described as an “actor’s actor” who has played a wide range of dramatic and comic roles on stage, film and television. A History and Literature concentrator at Harvard, he has written of his undergraduate years as “the most active and creative of my life,” graduating *magna cum laude* in 1967. Later he studied at the London Academy of Music and Dramatic Art on a Fulbright scholarship.

Since then, Lithgow has amassed numerous credits and won accolades from critics and audiences worldwide. His performance as Roberta Muldoon in the film adaptation of John Irving’s novel *The World According to Garp* was nominated for a 1982 Academy Award, and earned him Best Supporting Actor nods from the Los Angeles Film Critics Association and the New York Film Critics Circle. Some of his other notable film credits include Brian De Palma’s *Obsession* (1976) and *Raising Cain* (1992); *Twilight Zone: The Movie* (1983); *Terms of Endearment* (1984, Academy Award nominee); the cult film *The Adventures of Buckaroo Banzai Across the 8th Dimension* (1984); *Footloose* (1984); *Harry and the Hendersons* (1987); *Cliffhanger* (1997); *Shrek* (2001), for which he voiced the villainous character Lord Farquaad; *Rise of the Planet of the Apes* (2011); and *Love is Strange* opposite Alfred Molina (2014), which earned him an Independent Spirit Award nomination for Best Male Lead.

For his stage work Lithgow won a Tony Award for Best Featured Actor in David Storey’s 1973 play *The Changing Room*; and won again in 2003 as Best Actor in a Musical for his portrayal of columnist J.J. Hunsecker in *Sweet Smell of Success*. A few of his more recent theater credits include Pam MacKinnon’s acclaimed Broadway production of Edward Albee’s *A Delicate Balance* (2014); the National Theater (UK) production of Arthur Wing Pinero’s *The Magistrate* (2012); David Auburn’s *The Columnist* for the Manhattan Theater Club (2012); the Broadway revival of Arthur Miller’s *All My Sons* directed by Simon McBurney (2008); *The Retreat From Moscow*, also on Broadway, co-starring Eileen Atkins (2003); and the hit musical *Dirty Rotten Scoundrels* (2005). Since 2008 Lithgow has appeared in two installments of *Stories by Heart*, his self-written celebration of storytelling, at Lincoln Center Theatre and on tour, and in 2014 he played the title role in *King Lear* presented by the New York Shakespeare Festival/Public Theater at the Delacorte Theater in Central Park.

Beginning in 1996 Lithgow conquered television playing the extraterrestrial Dr. Dick Solomon in the NBC sitcom *3rd Rock from the Sun*, for which he won two Screen Actors Guild Awards, a Golden Globe and three Primetime Emmy Awards. Other notable TV credits include *Twenty Good Years* opposite Jeffrey Tambor (2006-2008); the fourth season of Showtime’s *Dexter*, for which he won a 2009 Primetime Emmy Award as Arthur Mitchell, “The Trinity Killer”; a recurring role on *How I Met Your Mother* (2011-2014); and the acclaimed 2016 Netflix series *The Crown*, for which he won the Screen Actors Guild Award for Outstanding Performance by a Male Actor in a Drama Series and a Critics Choice

Television Award as Best Supporting Actor in a Drama Series for his portrayal of Winston Churchill.

Lithgow is also the author of several children's books, including *Mahalia Mouse Goes to College: Book and CD*, published in 2007 by Simon & Shuster. *Farkle and Friends*, a series of children's concerts that Lithgow continues to perform around the country, is a CD of the same name released by Rhino Records in 2002, and other recordings for children have earned him four Grammy Award nominations. His memoir *DRAMA: An Actor's Education* was published by HarperCollins in 2011. Appointed Master of the Arts at Harvard, Lithgow has served on the Harvard Board of Overseers and is one of the co-founders of the ARTS FIRST festival. He received a Doctor of Arts Honorary Degree from Harvard—and was the first actor to deliver the speech at the University's Commencement exercises—in 2005.

Harvard University's annual **ARTS FIRST** festival, showcasing student and faculty creativity, will take place Thursday-Sunday, April 27-30, 2017. Sponsored by Harvard's Board of Overseers and produced by the Office for the Arts at Harvard with partners across the University, this year's edition will also feature a gala performance on the evening of Friday, April 28 celebrating the festival's 25th anniversary and the University's growing arts landscape; as well as the all-day Performance Fair on Saturday, April 29 showcasing more than 200 music, theater, dance, film, visual arts and multidisciplinary events at indoor and outdoor venues. All events are open to the public, most free of charge. For more information, contact the Office for the Arts at Harvard at 617.495.8676, or visit www.ofa.fas.harvard.edu/arts.

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The **Office for the Arts at Harvard** (OFA) supports student engagement in the arts and integrates the arts into University life. Through its programs and services, the OFA teaches and mentors, fosters student art making, connects students to accomplished artists, commissions new work, and partners with local, national, and international constituencies. By supporting the development of students as artists and cultural stewards, the OFA works to enrich society and shape communities in which the arts are a vital part of life. Information: 617.495.8676, ofa@fas.harvard.edu, www.ofa.fas.harvard.edu.