



David Hertzberg, *composer*



MCANA's Best New Opera Award Goes To David Hertzberg's 'The Wake World'

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The Music Critics Association of North America (MCANA) is pleased to announce that its second annual award for Best New Opera has been given to composer David Hertzberg for *The Wake World*, which received its premiere on September 18, 2017, commissioned by Opera Philadelphia in a co-presentation with The Barnes Foundation. The award was created to honor musical and theatrical excellence in a fully staged opera that received its world premiere in North America during the preceding calendar year. The inaugural award went to *Breaking the Waves*, composed by Missy Mazzoli with libretto by Royce Vavrek.

The award will be presented on April 13 during the MCANA Annual Meeting in Washington, DC. David Hertzberg will also be featured in MCANA's web publication, [Classical Voice North America](#). The other finalists were *Dinner At Eight*, by composer William Bolcom and librettist Mark Campbell, *The (R)evolution of Steve Jobs*, by composer Mason Bates and librettist Mark Campbell, and *War of the Worlds*, by composer Annie Gosfield and librettist/director Yuval Sharon.

After soliciting nominations from MCANA members, the finalists were chosen by an Awards Committee co-chaired by MCANA members Heidi Waleson, opera critic of *The Wall Street Journal*, and George Loomis, longtime contributor to the *Financial Times* and *Musical*

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America, alongside committee members Arthur Kaptainis, who writes for the Montreal Gazette and Musical Toronto, representing Canada; John Rockwell, former critic and arts editor of The New York Times and co-New York correspondent of Opera (UK); and Alex Ross, music critic of The New Yorker.

Said MCANA president John Fleming of the 2nd annual award: "At MCANA, we're thrilled to recognize The Wake World as the recipient of our Best New Opera award. David Hertzberg is a gifted composer-librettist whose experimental, site-specific work for Opera Philadelphia was an outstanding example of today's rich contemporary opera scene. The award is part of the association's mission to foster excellence and, through our news site [Classical Voice North America](#), to convey the richness of musical life in the U.S. and Canada and around the world."

In response to winning the award, Hertzberg said: "The Wake World represents a deeply personal vision, an attempt to render in lurid detail the strange, frightening, in-articulable mystery of imagination, into which I poured every iota of my creative being. To have this work recognized by a jury of such distinguished and probing musical minds is inexpressibly gratifying and moving. I would like to thank director R.B. Schlather for his gleaming inspiration, Opera Philadelphia for their support and courage in bringing this work to the stage, and especially, my dad for his unconditional respect for my creative journey, which has always seemed to me a superhuman act of generosity."

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