

# Forbes

## This Woman Just Won The 2015 Pulitzer Prize For Music

By Hugh McIntyre

April 23, 2015

The Pulitzer Prize winners of 2015 were announced earlier this week, and there is one honoree that stands out from the rest of those awarded. Julia Wolfe is not a journalist or a writer, at least not in the way that most people think of the word. Wolfe is a composer, and this year her piece *Anthracite Fields* took home the medal (and the \$10,000 purse that comes with it), as the jury found it to be the best in a crowd of amazing work.

*Anthracite* is a historic piece that focuses on the coal miners of Pennsylvania from the past. After being commissioned to write a piece (which ended up being over an hour long) by the Mendelssohn Club of Philadelphia, the composer spent over a year researching every aspect of these miners' lives, in order to properly tell their story. She went to museums and spoke with surviving family members of those that had worked in the mines, even visiting some herself.



*Julia Wolfe, winner of the Pulitzer Prize for music, poses for a portrait, Monday, April 20, 2015 in New York. Wolfe's "Anthracite Fields" was described by the judges as a "powerful oratorio for chorus and sextet evoking Pennsylvania coal-mining life around the turn of the 20th Century." (AP Photo/Mark Lennihan)*

organization called the piece a "powerful oratorio for chorus and sextet evoking Pennsylvania coal-mining life around the turn of the 20th century." Wolfe has been nominated before, and this time she beat out fellow composers Lei Liang's *Xiaoxiang* and John Zorn's *The Aristos* for the top prize. In addition to working on pieces like *Anthracite*, Wolfe is the Director of Music Composition at New York University.

The work debuted last April in Pennsylvania, where Wolfe is also from. *Anthracite* was performed by music collective *Bang on a Can*, which Wolfe helped co-found with her husband. Another member of the group, David Lang, won the same prize several years ago.

No recording of *Anthracite* has yet been released, but if it is not already in the works, it is likely that after winning such a prestigious prize, it will likely be available for the public to own at some point in the near future.

In a release revealing the winners of this year's prizes, the Pulitzer

organization also honors other mediums, such as music and plays.

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