

# American Composer & Jazz Icon **Patricia Barber** Elected to the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, 2019

On April 16, Patricia Barber was elected to the illustrious American Academy of Arts and Sciences, a society founded in 1780 to honor excellence and convene leaders from every field of human endeavor toward advancing the common good. Among others elected this year are Michelle Obama, Jonathan Franzen, Judge Merrick Garland, gender philosopher Judith Butler, actress Anna Devereaux Smith, and poet and president of the Mellon Foundation Elizabeth Alexander.

Jazz inductees from recent years include Keith Jarrett, Herbie Hancock, and Wayne Shorter, who join the rolls with musicians Bob Dylan, Renée Fleming, Shulamit Ran, Riccardo Muti, Mitsuko Uchida, Daniel Barenboim, and Stephen



PHOTO BY JIMMY AND DENA KATZ

Sondheim.

Barber's election comes on the heels of last month's release of her much-anticipated album *Higher* on the ArtistShare platform, which has already been premiered to great acclaim. She is currently touring the album in the United States, Canada, and Europe.

Barber, renowned as both jazz pianist/singer and composer, has made twelve studio albums for Antilles, Premonition, Blue Note Records, Concord, and ArtistShare. A pioneer of the jazz song cycle, she won a Guggenheim in 2003 to compose a cycle

on Ovid's *Metamorphoses* (culminating in the Blue Note album *Mythologies*, 2006) and ventures an arresting new song cycle on *Higher*, "Angels, Birds, and I..." that combines the Barber jazz sensibility with the French harmonic palette of Ravel and Fauré.

## **On *Higher*:**

"The album delivers a sea of serenity and crystalline works, sometimes full of emotion, and then full of hope, or even humor. Yes, from a textual and musical point of view, *Higher* is a poetic gem that far surpasses Barber's previous works. And that is remarkable for an artist who has set the bar extremely high for herself for three decades. "

– *Hifi.nl*

"Conspicuously literate and restlessly inventive."

– *The New Yorker*

"Barber braids wrenching, elemental poetry into a private musical language fashioned from the yearning ache of Bill Evans' piano, Joni Mitchell's zigzag introspections, Jobim's winking mix of high end philosophy and pastel melody and an occasional explosion of skronk and funk."

– *Downbeat*

"As a pianist and vocalist, she is a force to be reckoned with. As a songwriter, she is pure devastation."

– *Jazz Police*