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**Author David Hajdu Makes Songwriter Debut
With *Waiting for the Angel*,
Culminating A 5-Year Collaboration with Esteemed Multi-Genre Composers
Jill Sobule, Fred Hersch, Renee Rosnes & Michael "Mickey" Leonard**

Out August 28th on Miranda Music

**Album Features Top-Call Vocalists & Musicians Including
Jo Lawry, Karen Oberlin, Michael Winther, Steve Wilson, Steven Bernstein,
Charles Pillow, Peter Bernstein, Dave Eggar, Sean Smith & Carl Allen**

After years of writing about songs in books and essays, David Hajdu has taken up writing them. Over the past five years, Hajdu has been working with several esteemed composers of jazz, pop and theater music: the pianists Renee Rosnes and Fred Hersch, the alternative-folk singer-songwriter Jill Sobule, and the veteran Broadway composer Michael (Mickey) Leonard. The result is *Waiting for the Angel*, a collection of quirkily artful songs that defy easy categorization. The album will be released by Miranda Music as a CD and digital download, with a bonus track, on August 28.

An all-star group of artists came together to record the material: singers Jo Lawry, Karen Oberlin, and Michael Winther; pianists Rosnes and Hersch, playing the songs they composed; additional pianist Tedd Firth; and a band with saxophonist Steve Wilson, trumpeter Steven Bernstein, guitarist Peter Bernstein; oboist Charles Pillow, cellist Dave Eggar, bassist Sean Smith, and drummer Carl Allen.

Much like Hajdu's writing in prose, the lyrics on *Waiting for the Angel* tell unexpected tales from unconventional vantage points. "David Hajdu's lyrics tell complex and moving stories -- always from his unique point of view," says Fred Hersch. "They are so easy to work with, the songs almost write themselves."

Jill Sobule adds, "I wish I wrote those lyrics myself." As Renee Rosnes says, "When David first asked if I might be interested to write some songs together, I was very intrigued. I was well aware that he is a wordsmith of the highest order and was excited at the prospect that we might be able to create something of beauty together. Collaborating with David has been a true revelation. It was very fulfilling to hear Jo, Karen, and Michael bring our songs to life with their brilliant artistry. I feel that David's words have awakened a new compositional side of me, and it is one that I am looking forward to continuing to explore."

Hajdu, the longtime music critic for *The New Republic*, is currently music critic for *The Nation*. He has written about music of all kinds, from Tin Pan Alley to EDM, for *The New Yorker*, *The Atlantic Monthly*, *The New York Times Magazine*, *Rolling Stone*, and *Spin*, among other publications. He teaches a seminar on arts and culture at the Columbia Graduate School of Journalism.

Several of the songs on *Waiting for the Angel* have been performed or recorded over the past few years by singers including Kate McGarry, Hilary Kole, Mary Foster Conklin, Marissa Mulder, and Stacy Sullivan, among others. While working on these songs, Hajdu collaborated with Jill Sobule on her last album, *Dottie's Charms*, a song cycle with lyrics by a group of literary writers including Jonathan Lethem, Rick Moody, Mary Jo Salter, and Luc Sante, as well as Hajdu, who co-conceived the album and co-wrote two of the songs.

"For as long as I can remember, songs are the main thing I've thought about, every day and every night," says Hajdu. "I was talking about that with Jill, and she asked me why I don't write songs myself. I said, 'I guess I just don't have the calling.' Jill said, 'If thinking about something every day and every night isn't a calling, I don't know what is!' We started writing together, and that was that."

Artist bios

Jo Lawry

(singer)

A singer of rare virtuosity and versatility, Jo Lawry has performed in every major venue around the world from Carnegie Hall and the Hollywood Bowl to the Royal Albert Hall and the Kremlin. A gifted composer in her own right, Lawry has released two solo albums, including the recent *Taking Pictures*, a collection of all original material. She performs regularly with Sting, and collaborated with him on songs in his musical drama *The Last Ship*. Lawry is a featured singer in the Academy Award-winning documentary *20 Feet from Stardom*.

Karen Oberlin

(singer)

One of the most respected singers in jazz and cabaret, Karen Oberlin has won the MAC Award, the Bistro Award, and the Nightlife Award, as well as an honorary Doctorate in Music. She has released five acclaimed CD's, including a live album of the music of Frank Loesser, recorded during her three-week engagement at the Oak Room at the Algonquin Hotel. A teenage punk rocker, Oberlin began singing in the Catatonics and Porcelain Forehead. More recently, *The New York Times* has lauded her a "savior of the American songbook."

Michael Winther

(singer)

Praised by *The New York Times* as "a singer of unusual refinement," Michael Winther was honored by the Drama Desk and the Drama League for his solo performance in *Songs from an Unmade Bed* at the New York Theatre Workshop. He starred in *My Coma Dreams*, the multi-media work by Fred Hersch and Herschel Garfein, and is featured this year in the new staged song cycle [Rooms of Light](#), with music by Hersch and a libretto by the poet Mary Jo Salter. He has performed in concerts at Avery Fisher Hall, Merkin Hall, and the Town Hall, among other venues.

Fred Hersch

(composer)

A six-time Grammy nominee as both a composer and a pianist, Fred Hersch has won virtually every award in the field of jazz, as well as a Guggenheim Fellowship in composition. He has released dozens of albums over more than 30 years, and was the first pianist in the history of the

Village Vanguard to play a week-long engagement as a solo pianist. His concert of original settings of poetry from Walt Whitman's *Leaves of Grass* was performed at Zankel Hall at Carnegie Hall, and he has collaborated with artists as varied as Renee Fleming, Stan Getz, and Bill Frisell.

Renee Rosnes

(composer)

Canadian-born Renee Rosnes is one of the premier jazz pianists and composers of her generation. She has recorded and toured with a veritable "who's who" of jazz, being the pianist of choice for such legendary musicians as Joe Henderson, Wayne Shorter, Buster Williams, and Bobby Hutcherson. Rosnes has released 14 albums as a pianist and bandleader, four of which have earned Juno Awards, the Canadian equivalent of a Grammy. She has collaborated with a diverse range of artists, from veteran masters such as Jack DeJohnette and the tabla maestro Ustad Zakir Hussain to younger musicians such as Chris Potter and Steve Nelson.

Jill Sobule

(composer)

A pop singer and songwriter of exceptional wit and intelligence, Jill Sobule has released ten albums of original songs, as well as several EP's and singles. She has written three musicals, including an adaptation of *Yentl* based on the original Isaac Bashevis Singer story. In collaboration with David Hajdu, the lyricist for *Waiting for the Angel*, Sobule created *Dottie's Charms*, a song cycle featuring lyrics by a blue-chip roster of American literary figures, including Jonathan Lethem, Sam Lipsyte, Luc Sante, and Vendela Vida, as well as Hajdu.

Michael Leonard

(composer)

Michael (Mickey) Leonard is the composer of "Why Did I Choose You," "The Kind of Man a Woman Needs," and many other standards. With the lyricist Herbert Martin, he wrote the musical *The Yearling*, a Broadway flop with an enduring score of songs recorded by dozens of singers and musicians. As a jazz arranger, he worked with notable distinction with the pianist Bill Evans. Several revues of his songs have been produced in recent years.

David Hajdu

(lyricist, co-composer)

Best known as an author of literary nonfiction and criticism, David Hajdu is the author of the multi-award-winning books *Lush Life*, *Positively 4th Street*, *The Ten-Cent-Plague*, and *Heroes and Villains*, as well as the forthcoming *Popped Up*, a personal history of American popular music. In recent years, Hajdu has been absorbed with songwriting, working primarily as a lyricist but also, with Jill Sobule, as co-composer.

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For more information, contact Matt Merewitz at Fully Altered Media at matt@fullyaltered.com or 347-384-2839 or visit www.aarongoldberg.com / www.sunnysiderecords.com / www.fullyaltered.com.

