



**Elysium and the Erwin Piscator Award Society
present the 27th Piscator Awards
to Harold Prince and Vartan Gregorian**

New York, March 2014 – On Tuesday, March 25, **Gregorij H. von Leitis**, Artistic Director of Elysium – between two continents, presents the **27th Annual Erwin Piscator Awards** at the prestigious Lotos Club in New York - one of the oldest literary clubs in the US. **Harold Prince**, Broadway producer and director, will receive the Erwin Piscator Award for his outstanding contributions to the American theater and musical theater over the past six decades. The well-known American stage director **Jack O'Brien** will give the remarks on Harold Prince. Mr. O'Brien, winner of three Tony Awards, served as Artistic Director of The Old Globe Theatre in San Diego from 1987 until 2007. In April he will direct a one-night-only concert performance of *Guys and Dolls* at Carnegie Hall.

Vartan Gregorian, President of Carnegie Corporation of New York, is the recipient of the Erwin Piscator Honorary Award 2014 in memory of Maria Ley Piscator. He will be honored for his extraordinary contributions to education, culture and arts in the United States, from his time at the University of Pennsylvania, to his legendary tenure at the helm of New York Public Library, his Presidency at Brown University, and his current position as the head of one of the biggest and oldest American foundations. **Joel Conarroe** will introduce Mr. Gregorian. Mr. Conarroe served as President of the John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation from 1985 to 2002. The author of books and articles about American literature, he has previously chaired the National Book Awards and is a former President of the PEN American Center.

Harold Prince, born in New York in 1928, became famous through Broadway hits such as *Cabaret*, *Sweeney Todd*, *Evita*, *The Phantom of the Opera*, and *Kiss of the Spider Woman*, among others. He also has directed numerous opera productions at various opera houses, such as the Lyric Opera in Chicago, the Metropolitan Opera in New York, the Vienna State Opera and the Teatro Colon in Buenos Aires. Among the many plays he directed are: *Hollywood Arms* by Carrie Hamilton and Carol Burnett, *The Visit* by Friedrich Dürrenmatt, *The Great God Brown* by Eugene O'Neill, Arthur Kopit's *End of the World*, *Play Memory* by Joanna M. Glass, and his own play *Grandchild of Kings*. During his long career, Mr. Prince has garnered 21 Tony Awards, more than any other artist in the history of Broadway. He is also the recipient of a Kennedy Center Honor, and a National Medal of the Arts from President Clinton for a career in which "he changed the nature of the American musical."

Vartan Gregorian is the twelfth president of Carnegie Corporation of New York, a grant-making institution founded by Andrew Carnegie in 1911. Prior to assuming his current position in June 1997, Gregorian served for nine years as the sixteenth president of Brown University. Born in Tabriz, Iran, in 1934 to Armenian parents, he received his elementary education in Iran and his secondary education in Lebanon. In 1956 he entered Stanford University, where he majored in history and the humanities, graduating with honors in 1958. He was awarded a Ph.D. in history and humanities from Stanford in 1964.

Mr. Gregorian has taught European and Middle Eastern history at San Francisco State College, the University of California at Los Angeles, and the University of Texas at Austin. In 1972 he joined the University of Pennsylvania faculty and was appointed Tarzian Professor of History and professor of South Asian history. He was founding dean of the Faculty of Arts and Sciences at the University of Pennsylvania in 1974 and four years later became its twenty-third provost until 1981.

New Yorkers probably will best and most lovingly remember him for the glorious work he did as president of the New York Public Library. He turned around an institution that was broke. When he left after eight years, the once deteriorated library was again a cultural landmark, the operational budget had doubled, four hundred new employees were hired and he had raised \$ 327,000,000.

Vartan Gregorian serves on the boards of The World Trade Center Memorial Foundation and the Library of Alexandria among others. He served on the boards of the J. Paul Getty Trust, the Museum of Modern Art, the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, and Human Rights Watch. He has been decorated by the French, Italian, Austrian and Portuguese governments. His numerous civic and academic honors include nearly seventy honorary degrees. In 1998, President Clinton awarded him the National Humanities Medal. In 2004, President Bush awarded him the Presidential Medal of Freedom, the nation's highest civil award. In 2009, President Obama appointed him to the President's Commission on White House Fellowships.

Members of this year's Piscator Awards Committee include, among others: The playwright **Edward Albee**; the Artistic Director of Lincoln Center Theater in New York **André Bishop**; the Academy-Award winning actresses **Ellen Burstyn** and **Lee Grant**; the American author **E. L. Doctorow**; **Jürgen Flimm**, Artistic Director of the State Opera in Berlin; the American baritone **Thomas Hampson**; the German philanthropist and artist **Gabriele Henkel**; human rights activist **Kerry Kennedy**; **Judith Malina**, co-founder of the Living Theater and a student of Erwin Piscator; Maestro **Kurt Masur**; the Artistic Director of the Salzburg Festival **Alexander Pereira**; the American directors **Bartlett Sher** and **Robert Wilson**; and the soprano **Deborah Voigt**.

In 1985 Gregorij H. von Leitis founded the Erwin Piscator Award Society which has been presenting the Annual Erwin Piscator Award in honor of Piscator's tremendous contribution to the theater and his lasting influence on stage direction on both sides of the Atlantic ocean. **Erwin Piscator** (1893 – 1966), a pioneer of political and experimental theater in Berlin in the 1920s, fled the Nazis and found exile in New York. In 1940 he founded the Dramatic Workshop at the New School for Social Research. Among his students were Harry Belafonte, Marlon Brando, Arthur Miller, Tony Randall, Elaine Stritch, Tennessee Williams, and Shelley Winters. As the Artistic Director of the Freie Volksbühne Berlin (Free People's Theater) he directed four world premieres in the 1960s, which wrote theater history: Rolf Hochhuth's *The Deputy* dealing with the silence of the Catholic Church and the Pope in the face of the Holocaust; Heiner Kipparadt's *In the Case of J. Robert Oppenheimer*; Peter Weiss' *The Investigation* about the Auschwitz trials in Frankfurt; and Hans Hellmut Kirst's *Officers' Revolt* about the resistance on July 20, 1944.

Piscator was convinced that "art achieves its purpose only, when it contributes to the improvement of man." Since the first award ceremony, the Annual Erwin Piscator Award has been presented to artists, who – like Piscator – use the arts to contribute to the improvement of man. The Honorary Erwin Piscator Award in memory of Maria Ley Piscator was instituted in 1996 to recognize the extraordinary support of the arts and culture by individuals and institutions

Founded on October 11, 1983, in New York City, **Elysium** fosters artistic and creative dialogue and mutual friendship between the United States of America and Europe. By means of theater / opera productions, readings, concerts, exhibitions and lectures Elysium fights against discrimination, racism and anti-Semitism.

Celebrating the 30th anniversary of the founding of Elysium, Michael Lahr published the book *The Erwin Piscator Award*. Lavishly illustrated, the book documents the rich legacy of Piscator and the tremendous history of the award named after him.