Toward the end of his life, Duke Ellington composed what he considered his “most important” music: the suites and songs for three “Sacred Concerts,” performed live between 1965 and 1973. The works include the genre-bending “Almighty God” and “Heaven,” sung by Swedish soprano Alice Babs, a versatile stylist with a three-octave range. Throughout his career Ellington had also written other songs (such as “The Blues I Love to Sing”) specifically for classically trained singers like Adelaide Hall and Kay Davis. Many of these intricate, often wordless compositions (in which voice becomes one of the instruments) were overshadowed by his more mainstream melodies; a small number of recordings were made, or still exist.

Yet they spoke loudly to Candice Hoyes ’99. “I loved ‘Almighty God’ because the arrangement is so soulful, the vocal line is so refined—but swinging,” says Hoyes, who first heard it a few years ago. “The sacred musical text by Ellington is down-to-earth and colorful.” Herself an opera-trained soprano and jazz singer, Hoyes has performed around the world and with the Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra, led by Wynton Marsalis, D.Mus. ’09. She felt a personal connection to Ellington’s female vocalists, most of whom were African American, as she is; the music, she thought, could just as easily have been written for her. “My voice has a lot of facility at the top and the bottom, and I found that pop music didn’t really utilize all the range,” she says. “Also, I have a real curiosity and appetite that is much better suited to jazz and classical—as far as the harmonic richness and the storytelling of the music.”

Moved to reanimate this Ellingtonian legacy with her own imprint, Hoyes spent months researching the rarer compositions, and visited the Duke Ellington Collection of the Smithsonian’s Archives Center in Washington, D.C. Ultimately, she recorded 13, including “Almighty God” and “Heaven,” for her debut album, On a Turquoise Cloud, which was launched in March at Minton’s jazz club (co-owned by Julia Collins ’01). On the lead track her soprano voice floats atop the sounds of a big band, and ascends like a kite against the horizon.

That song, “Transblucency,” and “Violet Blue” were originally recorded by the coloratura soprano Kay Davis, who performed with Ellington in the late 1940s. She was the only singer he allowed to re-record his stunningly modern “Creole Love Call,” the wordless song first performed by another Ellington muse and Harlem Renaissance star, Adelaide Hall, in 1927. “His use of the voice is luxurious, womanly, and bold,” says Hoyes. “The female Ellingtonians who originated these songs sang virtuosically—and I honor them.” In the archives she found a version of “Creole Love Call” with lyrics by longtime Ellington band member and composer Billy Strayhorn, but she chose to write her own—“You wrap my hair around your ring/And pull me for another kiss/And if that first kiss wasn’t right/Boy what we doin’ here tonight?”—which she felt spoke better to her own womanly point of view. “That song is touched by some relationships I have lived,” she says. “I add that authentic part of myself to the song as well.”
Harvard Medalists

Five alumni—Charles J. “Charlie” Egan Jr. ’54, Michael E.A. Gellert ’53, Thomas W. Lentz Jr., Ph.D. ’85, Sandra Ohrn Moose, Ph.D. ’68, and Robert D. Reischauer ’63—received the 2015 Harvard Medal for “extraordinary service to the University” on May 28, during the Harvard Alumni Association’s (HAA) annual meeting on the afternoon of Commencement day. President Drew Faust read the citations, printed in italics below.

• Charles J. Egan Jr. received the HAA’s David T.W. McCord ’21 Lifetime Achievement Award in 2012 and the College admissions office’s Hiram S. Hunn Memorial Schools and Scholarships Award in 2004. He has co-chaired the Harvard College Fund Executive Committee and led his class’s reunion-gift efforts. A former executive for Hallmark Cards Inc., Egan is a co-trustee of the Stanley H. Durwood Foundation.

Whether setting records in the pool as a student athlete or in class reunion giving as an alum-nus, you are a Crimson captain through and through, leaving your hallmark on the University as president of the Harvard Alumni Association and the Harvard Club of Kansas City, co-chair of the Harvard College Fund, and a passionate supporter of athletics, financial aid, and House Renewal.

• A member of the Faculty of Arts and Sciences (FAS) Campaign Steering Committee and the FAS New York Major Gifts Committee, Michael E.A. Gellert has also been part of the Harvard College Fund Council and the Radcliffe Institute’s Tenth Anniversary Steering Committee. Gellert is a co-founder, investor, and general partner of Windcrest Partners, and the father of former HAA president Catherine “Kate” Gellert ’93.

Devoted alumnus, committed volunteer, and proud Harvard parent, you have embodied the spirit of One Harvard through your dedicated and continuing service across the University, from the Faculty of Arts and Sciences to the Radcliffe Institute to the Harvard Library.

• As Cabot director of the Harvard Art Museums, Thomas W. Lentz Jr. was instrumental in leading the renovation and expansion of the Harvard Art Museums, which reopened in November 2014. (He stepped down from his post at the end of this academic year.) An expert in Islamic art, Lentz earned his doctorate at Harvard.

With characteristic aplomb and vision, you led the transformation of the Harvard Art Museums, bringing three renowned institutions under one glorious glass roof, reimagining the place of art in the life of the University, and creating a teaching machine that will benefit faculty, students, and the public for generations to come.

• A longtime member of the Graduate School Alumni Association Council, Sandra Ohrn Moose also established the Sandra Ohrn Family Graduate Student Dissertation Fellowship Fund in 2007. Ohrn spent her career at the Boston Consulting Group, where she is now a senior advisor; she is also president of the board of trustees of the Museum of Fine Arts.

Trailblazer for women in business, role model for civic engagement, and catalyst for alumni involvement with decades of service to the University and to the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences, you have enhanced the quality of student life and empowered Harvard scholars to reach new heights of academic excellence.

• Robert D. Reischauer joined the Harvard Corporation in 2002, after a six-year term on the Board of Overseers, and was pivotal in forming the governance reforms adopted in late 2010. He is now a distinguished institute fellow and president emeritus of the Urban Institute in Washington, D.C.

A stalwart champion of good governance from Capitol Hill to Harvard Yard, you provided sage and savvy leadership on Harvard’s governing boards for nearly two decades, deftly guiding the Corporation as senior fellow through historic reforms that have broadened its angle of vision and sharpened its eye on the future.

The daughter of Jamaican parents, Hoyes grew up in South Florida. In her middle-school library, she came across Baroque Duet, an album by Marsalis and soprano Kathleen Battle that explored the use of the trumpet in music of that period. It made her curious about intertwining jazz and opera. She went on to star as Carrie in Carousel and Portia in Merchant of Venice in high school: “I remember feeling like time stood still in the theater,” she says. “Those wonderful performance experiences made me feel like I belonged.” She also gave piano concerts, and took classical voice lessons with a musician at her church in Boca Raton, with whom she recorded Italian art songs to accompany her Harvard admissions application.

At the College, she concentrated in sociology and was heavily involved in the arts. She was a member of the Kuumba Singers,
and also produced an A.R.T.-sponsored student performance of Macbeth, sang in West Side Story, helped run a student hip-hop conference, and spent a summer interning at Atlantic Records. A grant she won in junior year paid for voice lessons at the Boston Conservatory.

After struggling to make it as a classical opera singer in New York City, Hoyes decided to become an entertainment lawyer instead, and graduated from Columbia Law School in 2004. She performed throughout those years, though, and realized that she still wanted to pursue classical training and return to the stage.

A full scholarship to Westminster Choir College in Princeton, New Jersey, enabled her to earn a master’s degree in voice pedagogy, combining performance and teaching, in 2007. In her last year, she performed as a classical soloist in a Mozart program at Carnegie Hall; she has been a freelance singer ever since. Pivotal work came through Dizzy’s Club Coca-Cola, which is affiliated with Jazz at Lincoln Center (JALC). In October 2013, Hoyes went on tour with Marsalis and the JALC Orchestra; she was part of the 70-member gospel choir that performed his Abyssinian: A Gospel Celebration.

The composition, commissioned for the bicentennial of the Abyssinian Baptist Church in Harlem, “digs deeply into what Marsalis would call ‘the soil’ of the black church: its shouts, its dirges, its spirituals, its hymns of praise,” according to a report on National Public Radio. The piece also weaves in jazz and blues, along with the full range of vocals expressed in lyrics and pure instrumentals. Like Ellington’s Sacred Concerts, Hoyes says, “Abyssinian” focuses on themes of inspiration, community, black identity, and “the universal human experience.” “It’s certainly jazz work, but it has certain pieces that are almost like a Catholic mass in structure,” Hoyes says, “so Marsalis hired singers who have an affinity for classical and jazz—perfect for me.”

During the tour, Hoyes became friends with then-orchestra member Ulysses Owens Jr., a Grammy-winning jazz drummer. Although she already had several YouTube music videos and demos for auditions, he encouraged her to find a more substantial project to showcase her strong, supple voice. When she mentioned developing a recital to cover several of Ellington’s sopranos songs, Owens said, “That’s not just a concert idea, that is a concept album I would love to produce, and it is going to open doors for you.”

After the tour ended, Hoyes visited the Ellington archives, where she talked with volunteers who had known him or grew up with his music, which helped deepen her interpretation of the compositions on the CD. She gathered recordings of many wordless songs; perhaps most moving was Kay Davis’s 1947 version of “On a Turquoise Cloud” that she found on the online streaming service Spotify. “She had perfect pitch, a very strong intellectual passion, and a great technical facility,” says Hoyes. “She was a real consummate artist, and she sings with so much soul and so much warmth and personality.”

All of the songs on Hoyes’s CD feature new arrangements by Owens, who also helped with research, produced the album, and performs on it. Hoyes, he says in a YouTube video promoting the project, is “one of the most driven people that I have ever met. During my production career I learned how to decide what artists I want to work with, not just by their talent but by their work ethic. When I first encountered Candice she had all these wonderful questions, but she also had all these agendas in terms of what she wanted, being an artist.”

The “sharing of experience is at the heart of jazz.”

Centennial Medalists

The Graduate School of Arts and Sciences Centennial Medal, first awarded in 1989 on the occasion of the school’s hundredth anniversary, honors alumni who have made contributions to society that emerged from their graduate study at Harvard. It is the highest honor the Graduate School bestows, and awardees include some of Harvard’s most accomplished alumni. The 2015 recipients, announced at a ceremony on May 27, are: Wade Davis ’75, Ph.D. ’86, an ethnographer, ethnobotanist, writer, photographer, and filmmaker; Robert Richardson ’56, Ph.D. ’61, an American historian and biographer; Louise Ryan, Ph.D. ’83, head of the maths and information-sciences division at Australia’s national science agency; and Gordon Wood, Ph.D. ’64, Way University Professor and professor of history emeritus, at Brown University. For more about the honorands, see harvardmag.com/centennial-15.
Election Results

The names of the new members of the Board of Overseers and of the new elected directors of the Harvard Alumni Association (HAA) were announced during the HAA's annual meeting on the afternoon of Commencement day.

For Overseer (six-year term), voters chose:


Fernande R. Duffy, J.D. ’78, Boston. Associate Justice, Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court.

Brian Greene ’84, New York City. Professor of physics and mathematics, Columbia University.

Beth Y. Karlan ’78, M.D. ’82, Los Angeles, Director, Women’s Cancer Program, Samuel Oschin Comprehensive Cancer Institute; director, division of gynecologic oncology, department of obstetrics and gynecology, Cedars-Sinai Medical Center; and professor of obstetrics and gynecology, David Geffen School of Medicine at UCLA.

For elected director (three-year term), voters chose:


Ellen M. Guidera, M.B.A. ’86, Santiago, Chile. Investor and director, Portillo Ski Resort and Tierra Hotels.

Andrew Herwitz ’83, J.D. ’90, New York City. President, The Film Sales Company.

Sharon E. Jones ’77, J.D. ’82, Chicago. President and CEO, OH Community Partners.

Tracy “Ty” Moore II ’06, Oakland, California. Co-founder, MindBlown Labs.

Ariel Zwang ’85, M.B.A. ’90, New York City. CEO, Safe Horizon.

Cambridge Scholars

Four seniors have won Harvard Cambridge Scholarships to study at Cambridge University during the 2014-2015 academic year. Gregory Kristof, of Scarsdale, New York, and Kirkland House, a philosophy concentrator, will be the Lionel De Jersey Harvard Scholar at Emmanuel College; Debbie Onuoha, of Accra, Ghana, and Quincy House, a joint concentrator in anthropology and history and literature, will be the Charles Henry Fiske III Scholar at Trinity College; Eleanor Parker, of Bernardsvile, New Jersey, and Eliot House, an organismic and evolutionary biology concentrator, will be the William Shirley Scholar at Pembroke College; and Christopher Magnani, of Hawertown, Pennsylvania, and Leverett House, a joint concentrator in chemistry and astrophysics, will be the John Eliot Scholar at Jesus College.

Among the album’s quieter tracks are the powerful hymn “Come Sunday,” originally sung by contralto Mahalia Jackson on Ellington’s 1958 album Black, Brown, and Beige and the Ellington classic “Single Petal of a Rose” (which Hoyes reimagined as a vocal selection, again writing her own lyrics), played by veteran bass clarinetist Joe Temperley, a former Ellington band member. In high-flying numbers, like “Blues I Love to Sing” and “Baby,” Hoyes reveals her wilder side, her voice soaring from a high soprano to a deep alto, in a style she calls “soar and swing.”

She calls the self-funded CD (available online while she looks for a distributor) “a labor of love,” and since its release has been performing the songs at other area clubs. All of the artists who worked on this project “used their full imagination to bring these songs forward in time,” Hoyes says. “I am grateful for these collaborators. That sharing of experience is at the heart of jazz.”