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American Blues Theater and Goodman Theatre Lead 50th Annual Jeff Awards

Four Theatres Honored With Special Awards

Monday October 22, 2018, CHICAGO - The Jeff Awards celebrated their 50th anniversary on Monday October 22, 2018 during a spirited and nostalgic ceremony at Drury Lane Oakbrook. American Blues Theater’s “Buddy-The Buddy Holly Story” received the most awards including: Production – Musical - Midsize, Director Lili-Anne Brown, Principal Performer in a Musical Zachary Stevenson, Music Director Michael Mahler, and Ensemble - Musical or Revue. Goodman Theatre’s “A View from the Bridge” received awards for Production - Play - Large, and Director Ian van Hove. Goodman was also honored with statues for Ensemble - Play for “The Wolves” and for Ellen Fairey’s New Work “Support Group for Men”.

In the acting categories, awards for Performer in Principal Role in a Play went to Tara Mallen for Rivendell Theatre Ensemble’s “The Cake” and to Caroline Neff for Victory Garden Theater’s “Lettie”. Jason Grimm in Marriott Theatre’s “Murder for Two” received an award for Performer in a Principal Role in a Musical. The Solo Performance award went to Kate Fry for Court Theatre’s “The Belle of Amherst” and Performer in a Revue went to Lorenzo Rush, Jr. for Court Theatre’s “Five Guys Named Moe”. Awards for Performer in a Supporting Role in a Musical went to Matt Crowle for Drury Lane Productions’ “South Pacific” and to Gavin Rohrer for Paramount Theatre’s “Million Dollar Quartet”. Awards for Performer in a Supporting Role in a Play went to Matt DeCaro for Drury Lane Productions’ “Cat on a Hot Tin Roof” and to Keith Kupferer for Rivendell Theatre Ensemble’s “Cal in Camo”.

Special awards were presented to four award-winning Chicago theatres that laid their foundations in drama, comedy, and musical theatre more than half a century ago and have endured to this day. The recipients are Goodman Theatre (1925), Drury Lane Productions (1949), Court Theatre (1955), and The Second City (1959). Collectively, they have received more than 1,400 nominations and over 350 awards, dating back to the first ceremony.

The evening was hosted by the Founder and Artistic Director of Chicago Shakespeare Theater Barbara Gaines and the Founder and CEO of the Black Ensemble Theater Jackie Taylor. The ceremony was directed by Porchlight Music Theatre’s Artistic Director Michael Weber and produced by Merrill Prager.

Highlights of the evening included live performances from nominated musicals and revues, video clips from past Jeff Awards, and a welcome from Guy Barile, one of the founders of the Jeff Awards.

The Jeff Awards has been honoring outstanding theatre artists annually since it was established in 1968. With up to 55 members representing a wide variety of backgrounds in theatre (including producers, directors, actors, playwrights, designers, professors of theatre, entertainment lawyers and agents, and theatre lovers), the Jeff Awards is committed to celebrating the vitality of Chicago area theatre by recognizing excellence through its recommendations, awards and honors. Opening night judges include not only Jeff members but also the team of Artistic and Technical theatre volunteers (the "A/T Team") which is comprised of artistic directors, producers, directors from major Chicago theatres, actors and designers. The Jeff Awards fosters the artistic growth of area theatres and theatre artists and promotes educational opportunities, audience appreciation and civic pride in the achievements of the theatre community. Each year, the Jeff Awards judges 300 theatrical productions and host two awards ceremonies. Originally chartered to recognize only Equity productions, the Jeff Awards established the Non-Equity Wing in 1973 to celebrate outstanding achievement in non-union theatre.

2018 Equity Jeff Award Recipients

PRODUCTION – PLAY – LARGE

"A View from the Bridge" - Goodman Theatre

PRODUCTION – PLAY – MIDSIZE

"Traitor" - A Red Orchid Theatre

PRODUCTION – MUSICAL – LARGE

"Ragtime" - Marriott Theatre

PRODUCTION – MUSICAL – MIDSIZE

"Buddy - The Buddy Holly Story" - American Blues Theater

DIRECTOR – PLAY – LARGE

Ivo van Hove - "A View from the Bridge" - Goodman Theatre

DIRECTOR – PLAY – MIDSIZE

David H. Bell - "Southern Gothic" - Windy City Playhouse

Michael Shannon - "Traitor" - A Red Orchid Theatre

DIRECTOR – MUSICAL – LARGE

Nick Bowling - "Ragtime" - Marriott Theatre

DIRECTOR – MUSICAL – MIDSIZE

Lili-Anne Brown - "Buddy - The Buddy Holly Story" - American Blues Theater

ENSEMBLE – PLAY

"The Wolves" - Goodman Theatre

ENSEMBLE – MUSICAL

"Buddy - The Buddy Holly Story" - American Blues Theater

PERFORMER IN A PRINCIPAL ROLE – PLAY

Tara Mallen - "The Cake" - Rivendell Theatre Ensemble

Caroline Neff - "Lettie" - Victory Gardens Theater

PERFORMER IN A PRINCIPAL ROLE – MUSICAL

Jason Grimm - "Murder For Two" - Marriott Theatre

Zachary Stevenson - "Buddy - The Buddy Holly Story" - American Blues Theater

PERFORMER IN A REVUE

Lorenzo Rush, Jr. - "Five Guys Named Moe" - Court Theatre

SOLO PERFORMANCE

Kate Fry - "The Belle of Amherst" - Court Theatre

PERFORMER IN A SUPPORTING ROLE – PLAY

Matt DeCaro - "Cat on a Hot Tin Roof" - Drury Lane Productions

Keith Kupferer - "Cal in Camo" - Rivendell Theatre Ensemble

PERFORMER IN A SUPPORTING ROLE – MUSICAL

Matt Crowle - "South Pacific" - Drury Lane Productions

Gavin Rohrer - "Million Dollar Quartet" - Paramount Theatre

NEW WORK

Dan Collins and Julianne Wick Davis - "Trevor the Musical" - Writers Theatre

Ellen Fairey - "Support Group for Men" - Goodman Theatre

Boo Killebrew - "Lettie" - Victory Gardens Theater

NEW ADAPTATION

Jennifer Blackmer - "Alias Grace" - Rivendell Theatre Ensemble

Brett Neveu - "Traitor" - A Red Orchid Theatre

CHOREOGRAPHY

Jared Grimes - "42nd Street" - Drury Lane Productions

ORIGINAL MUSIC IN A PLAY

Shawn Pfautsch and Matt Kahler - "Hatfield & McCoy" - The House Theatre of Chicago

MUSIC DIRECTION

Michael Mahler - "Buddy - The Buddy Holly Story" - American Blues Theater

SCENIC DESIGN – LARGE

Todd Rosenthal - "20,000 Leagues Under the Seas" - Lookingglass Theatre Company

SCENIC DESIGN – MIDSIZE

Scott Davis - "Southern Gothic" - Windy City Playhouse

LIGHTING DESIGN – LARGE

Thom Weaver - "Macbeth" - Chicago Shakespeare Theater

LIGHTING DESIGN – MIDSIZE

Nick Belley - "Hair" - Mercury Theater Chicago

COSTUME DESIGN – LARGE

Susan E. Mickey - "The Taming of the Shrew" - Chicago Shakespeare Theater

COSTUME DESIGN – MIDSIZE

Paul Kim - "The Explorers Club" - Citadel Theatre

SOUND DESIGN – LARGE

André Pluess - "Macbeth" - Chicago Shakespeare Theater

SOUND DESIGN – MIDSIZE

Christopher Kriz - "Mary's Wedding" - First Folio Theatre

PROJECTION DESIGN

Joseph A. Burke - "Elf the Musical" - Paramount Theatre

ARTISTIC SPECIALIZATION

Eleanor Kahn - Properties Design - "Southern Gothic" - Windy City Playhouse

2017-2018 EQUITY STATISTICS

In its 50th Equity season, August 1, 2017 through July 31, 2018, the Jeff Awards judged the opening nights of 141 productions from 51 producing organizations. Of these, 111 productions were “Jeff Recommended” which made them eligible for award nominations.

MULTIPLE RECIPIENTS

THEATRES

American Blues Theater	5
Goodman Theatre	4
Chicago Shakespeare Theater	3
Drury Lane Productions	3
Marriott Theatre	3
A Red Orchid Theatre	3
Rivendell Theatre Ensemble	3
Windy City Playhouse	3
Court Theatre	2
Paramount Theatre	2
Victory Gardens Theater	2

PRODUCTIONS

“Buddy – The Buddy Holly Story”	5
“Southern Gothic”	3
“Traitor”	3
“A View from the Bridge”	2
“Lettie”	2
“Macbeth”	2
“Ragtime”	2

SPECIAL NOTICE TO NEWS MEDIA

The Jeff Awards website, www.jeffawards.org, lists all current nominees and statistics, along with other Jeff Awards information and news. Photos from the event will be available on our website www.jeffawards.org, for your download and use. Please credit Bill Richert Photography. If you need a quote or interview with any Jeff Awards Committee member, please contact Jeffrey Marks at 312-606-0400 or media@jeffawards.org.