



*For Release*

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## **“The Tempest” and “Dreamgirls” take top honors at the 48<sup>th</sup> Annual Jeff Awards**

### **Michael Halberstam receives Special Achievement Award**

*October 17, 2016 – Chicago, IL.* The gala 48th Annual Equity Jeff Awards held at Drury Lane Oakbrook on Monday, October 17, celebrated a season of outstanding productions.

The classic revenge tale “The Tempest”, reimagined at Chicago Shakespeare Theater as a traveling tent show of trickery and amazement, was recognized for Production-Play for a large theatre, Direction of a Play for Aaron Posner and Teller, Magic Design for “The Great Tomsoni” Johnny Thompson, and Lighting Design for Thom Weaver.

Porchlight Music Theatre’s “Dreamgirls”, the story of the aspirations and success of rhythm and blues artists in the 1960s and 70s, was honored with awards for Production-Musical for a midsize theatre, Principal Actress Donica Lynn, Supporting Actor Eric Lewis and Costume Designer Bill Morey.

Paramount Theatre’s “West Side Story” received awards for Production-Musical for a large theatre, newly named The Dr. Harlan Haimes Award, and for Supporting Actress Mary Antonini and Choreographer William Carlos Angulo.

The award for Production-Play of a midsize theatre went to “United Flight 232”, about the emergency landing of that flight, produced by The House Theatre of Chicago. Its cast was honored with the prestigious Ensemble award, sponsored by Actors’ Equity Association.

Rachel Rockwell received the statue for Director of a Musical in a large theatre for “Ride the Cyclone”, the story of school choir members who compete for another chance at life after a rollercoaster crash, which will soon open off Broadway.

Principal acting honors in a play went to Mary Beth Fisher for “Domesticated” at Steppenwolf Theatre Company and Dexter Zollicoffer in Northlight Theatre’s “Charm”. Principal actor in a musical was awarded to Nathaniel Stampley for “Man of La Mancha” at Marriott Theatre.

Brian Quijada was recognized with two awards: Solo Performance and Sound Design of his original autobiographical play “Where Did We Sit on the Bus?”, which expresses his curiosity about the role of Latinos in the Civil Rights era, produced by Teatro Vista in association with the Chicago Department of Cultural Affairs and Special Events and Victory Gardens Theater.

Shari Addison received the award for Actor or Actress in a Revue for “Dynamite Divas” at Black Ensemble Theater.

Chicago continues to be a nurturing center for New Works, and top awards went to Philip Dawkins for “Charm” at Northlight Theatre, based on the true story of a transgender woman teaching etiquette to LGBTQ youth in Chicago, and to John Reeger, the late Julie Shannon and Michael Mahler for “The Man Who Murdered Sherlock Holmes”, a musical tale of the mystery that ensues when Sir Arthur Conan Doyle kills off his famous detective. The statue for New Adaptation was awarded to Robert Falls and Seth Bockley for their interpretation of Roberto Bolaño’s epic novel, *2666*, with 15 actors playing 80 roles over five hours.

The awards for supporting actors in a play went to Jacqueline Williams in “The House That Will Not Stand” at Victory Gardens Theater and Mike Nussbaum in “The Price” at TimeLine Theatre Company.

A Special Award was presented to Michael Halberstam, Artistic Director of Writers Theatre. Under his artistic leadership, from founding Writers Theatre in 1992 with performances in the back of a bookstore to its new state-of-the-art facility designed by world-renown Studio Gang Architects, Writers Theatre has attained a national reputation for excellence and has garnered critical praise for the consistent high quality and intimacy of its artistry.

The capacity audience enjoyed live performances from nominated musicals and video performances from nominated plays. The Equity Awards ceremony was directed by Michael Weber, with music direction by Linda Madonia and stage management by Colleen Tovar. Merrill Prager served as producer for the evening. Actors Janet Ulrich Brooks and James Earl Jones II emceed the event. Following the ceremony, guests enjoyed a lavish Drury Lane buffet and dancing.

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, the Jeff Awards Committee is dedicated to celebrating the vitality of Chicago area theatre by recognizing excellence through its recommendations, awards, and honors. 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 Committee evaluates over 250 theatrical productions and holds two awards ceremonies. Originally chartered to recognize only Equity productions, the Jeff Awards Non-Equity Wing was established in 1973 to celebrate outstanding achievement in non-union theatre. The next Non-Equity awards ceremony will be held at Park West on June 5, 2017.

## **2016 Equity Jeff Award Recipients**

### **PRODUCTION – PLAY – LARGE**

“The Tempest” - Chicago Shakespeare Theater

### **PRODUCTION – PLAY – MIDSIZE**

“United Flight 232” - The House Theatre of Chicago

### **PRODUCTION – MUSICAL – LARGE**

“West Side Story” - Paramount Theatre

### **PRODUCTION – MUSICAL – MIDSIZE**

“Dreamgirls” - Porchlight Music Theatre

### **DIRECTOR – PLAY**

Aaron Posner and Teller - “The Tempest” - Chicago Shakespeare Theater

### **DIRECTOR – MUSICAL**

Rachel Rockwell - “Ride the Cyclone” - Chicago Shakespeare Theater

### **ENSEMBLE**

“United Flight 232” - The House Theatre of Chicago

### **ACTOR IN A PRINCIPAL ROLE – PLAY**

Dexter Zollicoffer - “Charm” - Northlight Theatre

### **ACTOR IN A PRINCIPAL ROLE – MUSICAL**

Nathaniel Stampley - “Man of La Mancha” - Marriott Theatre

### **ACTRESS IN A PRINCIPAL ROLE – PLAY**

Mary Beth Fisher - “Domesticated” - Steppenwolf Theatre Company

### **ACTRESS IN A PRINCIPAL ROLE – MUSICAL**

Donica Lynn - “Dreamgirls” - Porchlight Music Theatre

### **ACTOR OR ACTRESS IN A REVUE**

Shari Addison - “Dynamite Divas” - Black Ensemble Theater

### **SOLO PERFORMANCE**

Brian Quijada - “Where Did We Sit on the Bus?” - Teatro Vista in association with the  
Chicago Department of Cultural Affairs and Special Events and Victory Gardens Theater

### **ACTOR IN A SUPPORTING ROLE – PLAY**

Mike Nussbaum - “The Price” - TimeLine Theatre Company

ACTOR IN A SUPPORTING ROLE – MUSICAL

Eric Lewis - “Dreamgirls” - Porchlight Music Theatre

ACTRESS IN A SUPPORTING ROLE – PLAY

Jacqueline Williams - “The House That Will Not Stand” - Victory Gardens Theater

ACTRESS IN A SUPPORTING ROLE – MUSICAL

Mary Antonini - “West Side Story” - Paramount Theatre

NEW WORK

Philip Dawkins - “Charm” - Northlight Theatre

John Reeger, Julie Shannon and Michael Mahler - “The Man Who Murdered Sherlock Holmes” –  
Mercury Theater Chicago

NEW ADAPTATION

Robert Falls and Seth Bockley - “2666” - Goodman Theatre

CHOREOGRAPHY

William Carlos Angulo - “West Side Story” - Paramount Theatre

ORIGINAL MUSIC IN A PLAY

Diego Colon and Christopher Kriz - “The Grapes of Wrath” - The Gift Theatre

MUSIC DIRECTION

Ryan T. Nelson - “Man of La Mancha” - Marriott Theatre

SCENIC DESIGN – LARGE

Jeffrey D. Kmiec - “Deathtrap” - Drury Lane Productions

SCENIC DESIGN – MIDSIZE

Sarah E. Ross - “The Rainmaker” - American Blues Theater

LIGHTING DESIGN – LARGE

Thom Weaver - “The Tempest” - Chicago Shakespeare Theater

LIGHTING DESIGN – MIDSIZE

Mike Durst - “Adding Machine: A Musical” - The Hypocrites

COSTUME DESIGN – LARGE

Catherine Zuber - “War Paint” - Goodman Theatre

COSTUME DESIGN – MIDSIZE

Bill Morey - “Dreamgirls” - Porchlight Music Theatre

SOUND DESIGN – LARGE

André Pluess - “Treasure Island” - Lookingglass Theatre Company and Berkeley Repertory Theatre

SOUND DESIGN – MIDSIZE

Brian Quijada - “Where Did We Sit on the Bus?” - Teatro Vista in association with the  
Chicago Department of Cultural Affairs and Special Events and Victory Gardens Theater

PROJECTIONS / VIDEO DESIGN

Shawn Sagady - “2666” - Goodman Theatre

ARTISTIC SPECIALIZATION

Johnny Thompson - Magic Design - “The Tempest” - Chicago Shakespeare Theater

## 2015-2016 EQUITY STATISTICS

In its 48<sup>th</sup> Equity season, August 1, 2015 through July 31, 2016, the Jeff Awards Committee judged the opening nights of 158 productions from 58 producing organizations. Of these, 112 productions were “Jeff Recommended”, which made them eligible for award nominations.

### MULTIPLE RECIPIENTS

#### THEATRES

Chicago Shakespeare Theater	5
Porchlight Music Theatre	4
Goodman Theatre	3
Paramount Theatre	3
The House Theatre of Chicago	2
Marriott Theatre	2
Northlight Theatre	2
Teatro Vista in association with the Chicago Department of Cultural Affairs and Special Events and Victory Gardens Theater	2

#### PRODUCTIONS

“Dreamgirls”	4
“The Tempest”	4
“West Side Story”	3
“2666”	2
“Charm”	2
“Man of La Mancha”	2
“United Flight 232”	2
“Where Did We Sit on the Bus?”	2

#### INDIVIDUALS

Brian Quijada	2
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#### **SPECIAL NOTICE TO NEWS MEDIA**

The Jeff Awards website, [www.jeffawards.org](http://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](http://www.jeffawards.org), for your download and use. Please credit Johnny Knight 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](mailto:media@jeffawards.org).