



For Release

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Paramount Theatre and Court Theatre take top honors at the 49th Annual Jeff Awards

Steve Scott receives Special Achievement Award

November 6, 2017 – Chicago, IL. The gala 49th Annual Equity Jeff Awards held at Drury Lane Oakbrook on Monday, November 6, celebrated a season of outstanding productions.

The tale of the revengeful and murderous “Sweeney Todd: The Demon Barber Of Fleet Street” at Paramount Theatre led the evening with five awards: Production-Musical-Large, and for Director-Musical Jim Corti, for Actor-Principal-Musical Paul-Jordan Jansen, for Lighting Design-Large to Nick Belley and Jesse Klug, and for Music Direction to Tom Vendafreddo. Paramount Theatre also received three awards for “Disney’s The Little Mermaid”, for Scenic Design-Large to Jeffrey D. Kmiec, for Costume Design-Large to Theresa Ham, and for Puppet Design to Jesse Mooney-Bullock.

Production-Play-Large went to Court Theatre’s “Blues for an Alabama Sky” and for its Director Ron OJ Parson. Court Theatre also received two awards for “Man in the Ring”, to playwright Michael Cristofer and for Sound Design-Large to André Pluess.

Remy Bumpo Theatre Company’s “Born Yesterday” received Production-Play-Midsized. Its production of “Pygmalion” also received an award for Kristy Leigh Hall’s Costume Design-Midsized.

Production-Musical-Midsized went to Porchlight Music Theatre’s “The Scottsboro Boys”. The Production-Revue award went to Drury Lane Productions’ “Smokey Joe’s Café”.

Principal acting honors in a Play went to Alex Weisman for “Hand to God” at Victory Gardens Theater, and to Angela Ingersoll for “End of the Rainbow” at Porchlight Music Theatre. Principal actors in a Musical honors also went to Kathy Voytko in “The Bridges of Madison County” at The Marriott Theatre. Actor honors in the Revue category went to Michelle Lauto in “Spamilton” at The Royal George Theatre Cabaret and to Austin Cook for “Marry Me a Little” at Porchlight Music Theatre. The Solo Performance award went to Linda Reiter in “Rose” at The Greenhouse Theater Center in association with Forum Productions.

Supporting actor honors in a Play went to Marton Csokas for "Uncle Vanya" at Goodman Theatre and to Kymberly Mellen for "The Columnist" at American Blues Theater. Supporting actor in a Musical honors went to Jonathan Butler-Duplessis in "Parade" at Writers Theatre and to E. Faye Butler in "Chicago The Musical" at Drury Lane Productions.

The prestigious Ensemble Award, sponsored by Actors Equity Association, went to "East Texas Hot Links" at Writers Theatre.

Chicago continues to be a nurturing center for New Works, and three were recognized: Michael Cristofer's "Man in the Ring" at Court Theatre, a true story of 6-time world boxing champion Emile Griffith, Lauren Gunderson and Margot Melcon's "Miss Bennet: Christmas at Pemberly" at Northlight Theatre, an imagined sequel to Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*, and Antoinette Nwandu's "Pass Over" at Steppenwolf Theatre Company, a searing and timely social exposé.

A Special Award was presented to Steve Scott, honoring his career achievements that have inspired artistic collaboration, educational outreach and demonstrated dramatic creativity for more than 37 years.

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. Jack Phillips served as producer for the evening. Actors Mierka Girtten and Anish Jethmalani 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 the Athenaeum Theatre on June 11, 2018.

2017 Equity Jeff Award Recipients

PRODUCTION – PLAY – LARGE

"Blues for an Alabama Sky" - Court Theatre

PRODUCTION – PLAY – MIDSIZE

"Born Yesterday" - Remy Bumpo Theatre Company

PRODUCTION – MUSICAL – LARGE

"Sweeney Todd: The Demon Barber of Fleet Street" - Paramount Theatre

PRODUCTION – MUSICAL – MIDSIZE

"The Scottsboro Boys" - Porchlight Music Theatre

PRODUCTION – REVUE

"Smokey Joe's Café" - Drury Lane Productions

DIRECTOR – PLAY

Ron OJ Parson - "Blues for an Alabama Sky" - Court Theatre

DIRECTOR – MUSICAL

Jim Corti - "Sweeney Todd: The Demon Barber
of Fleet Street" - Paramount Theatre

ENSEMBLE

"East Texas Hot Links" - Writers Theatre

ACTOR IN A PRINCIPAL ROLE – PLAY

Alex Weisman - "Hand to God" - Victory Gardens Theater

ACTOR IN A PRINCIPAL ROLE – MUSICAL

Paul-Jordan Jansen - "Sweeney Todd: The Demon Barber
of Fleet Street" - Paramount Theatre

ACTRESS IN A PRINCIPAL ROLE – PLAY

Angela Ingersoll - "End of the Rainbow" - Porchlight Music Theatre

ACTRESS IN A PRINCIPAL ROLE – MUSICAL

Kathy Voytko - "The Bridges of Madison County" - The Marriott Theatre

ACTOR IN A REVUE

Austin Cook - "Marry Me a Little" - Porchlight Music Theatre

ACTRESS IN A REVUE

Michelle Lauto - "Spamilton" - The Royal George Theatre Cabaret

SOLO PERFORMANCE

Linda Reiter - "Rose" - The Greenhouse Theater Center
in association with Forum Productions

ACTOR IN A SUPPORTING ROLE – PLAY

Marton Csokas - "Uncle Vanya" - Goodman Theatre

ACTOR IN A SUPPORTING ROLE – MUSICAL

Jonathan Butler-Duplessis - "Parade" - Writers Theatre

ACTRESS IN A SUPPORTING ROLE – PLAY

Kymberly Mellen - "The Columnist" - American Blues Theater

ACTRESS IN A SUPPORTING ROLE – MUSICAL

E. Faye Butler - "Chicago The Musical" - Drury Lane Productions

NEW PLAY

Michael Cristofer - "Man in the Ring" - Court Theatre

Lauren Gunderson and Margot Melcon - "Miss Bennet: Christmas at Pemberley"
- Northlight Theatre

Antoinette Nwandu - "Pass Over" - Steppenwolf Theatre Company

CHOREOGRAPHY

Matthew Crowle - "Crazy for You" - Drury Lane Productions

ORIGINAL MUSIC IN A PLAY

Orbert Davis - "Paradise Blue" - TimeLine Theatre Company

MUSIC DIRECTION

Tom Vendafreddo - "Sweeney Todd: The Demon Barber of Fleet Street"
- Paramount Theatre

SCENIC DESIGN – LARGE

Jeffrey D. Kmiec - "Disney's The Little Mermaid" - Paramount Theatre

SCENIC DESIGN – MIDSIZE

Joe Schermoly - "Naperville" - Theater Wit

LIGHTING DESIGN – LARGE

Nick Belley and Jesse Klug - "Sweeney Todd: The Demon Barber
of Fleet Street" - Paramount Theatre

LIGHTING DESIGN – MIDSIZE

Cat Davis - "The River Bride" - Halcyon Theatre

COSTUME DESIGN – LARGE

Theresa Ham - "Disney's The Little Mermaid" - Paramount Theatre

COSTUME DESIGN – MIDSIZE

Kristy Leigh Hall - "Pygmalion" - Remy Bumppo Theatre

SOUND DESIGN – LARGE

André Pluess - "Man in the Ring" - Court Theatre

SOUND DESIGN – MIDSIZE

Grover Hollway - "The Great and Terrible Wizard of Oz"
- The House Theatre of Chicago

PROJECTION DESIGN

Mike Tutaj - "Objects in the Mirror" - Goodman Theatre

PUPPET DESIGN

Jesse Mooney-Bullock - "Disney's The Little Mermaid" - Paramount Theatre

2016-2017 EQUITY STATISTICS

In its 49th Equity season, August 1, 2016 through July 31, 2017, the Jeff Awards judged the opening nights of 159 productions from 62 producing organizations. Of these, 123 productions were "Jeff Recommended", which made them eligible for award nominations.

MULTIPLE RECIPIENTS

<u>THEATRES</u>	
<u>Paramount Theatre</u>	8
<u>Court Theatre</u>	4

<u>Drury Lane Productions</u>	<u>3</u>
<u>Goodman Theatre</u>	<u>2</u>
<u>Remy Bumpo Theatre Company</u>	<u>2</u>
<u>Writers Theatre</u>	<u>2</u>
<u>PRODUCTIONS</u>	
<u>"Sweeney Todd: The Demon Barber of Fleet Street"</u>	<u>5</u>
<u>"Disney's The Little Mermaid"</u>	<u>3</u>
<u>"Blues for an Alabama Sky"</u>	<u>2</u>
<u>"Man in the Ring"</u>	<u>2</u>

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.

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