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Big River, Woods, Flower Drum, Salonga, Benanti Honored With L.A. Ovation Nominations

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[US](#)

[Tony Awards](#)

[Canada](#)

[International](#)

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[Broadway](#)

[Off Broadway](#)

[Regional](#)

[Nat'l Tours](#)

[London](#)

[Summer Stock](#)

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[Hotels](#)

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[FEATURES](#)

[Feature Stories](#)

[Brief Encounter](#)

2002's Los Angeles' Ovation Awards — a peer-voted theatre honor — announced their nominations Sept. 29 with the Deaf West Theatre's *Big River*, set for a revival at the Mark Taper Forum Nov. 5, coming out on top with eleven nods. Four shows tied for the next highest with eight each — *Flower Drum Song*, whose stars Lea Salonga, Jodi Long and Sandra Allen were nominated, *Into the Woods* with Laura Benanti, Christopher Sieber and Gregg Edelman honored, Colony Theatre's *Side Show* and Road Theatre's *Napoli Milionaria*.

Flower Drum Song and *Into the Woods* both transferred to Broadway, where they are currently playing. Benanti and Edelman were both nominated for Tony Awards. Colony Theatre's *Side Show* is also following a Tony precedent — their Siamese twins, Julie Dixon Jackson and Misty Cotton, are being nominated as one performance for Leading Actress in a Musical.

The Ovations will be held this year at the recently-restored Orpheum Theatre, Nov. 24. Tickets are priced at \$35, \$75 and \$150, and are available through Ticketmaster.

A complete list of the 2002 Ovation nominees follows:

Best Musical (Large Theatre)

A Class Act, Pasadena Playhouse

Crazy for You, Civic Light Opera of South Bay Cities

Flower Drum Song, Mark Taper Forum

Into the Woods, Ahmanson Theatre

Side Show, Colony Theatre

Best Musical (Intimate Theatre)

Big River, Deaf West Theatre

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[Eric Grode](#)
[Michael Buckley](#)
[Week in Review](#)
[Bdwy Grosses](#)
[Quizzes](#)

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[Casting and Jobs](#)

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[Theatre Art](#)

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[Seating Charts](#)
[Drama Book Shop](#)
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[Transcripts](#)
[Who's Who](#)
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Laura Comstock's Bag-Punching Dog, Circle X Theatre
Pinafore!, Celebration Theatre
Spoon River Anthology, Theatre West
Steel: John Henry and the Shaker, Oasis Theatre Company

Best Play (Large Theatre)

Crossings: Journeys of Catholic Immigrants, Cornerstone Theater
Red, East West Players
The House of Bernarda Alba, Mark Taper Forum
The Laramie Project, Colony Theatre
The Moliere Comedies, Mark Taper Forum

Best Play (Intimate Theatre)

After the Fall, Fountain Theatre
Clyt at Home, Theatre of NOTE
Death of a Salesman, Interact Theatre
Napoli Milionaria, Road Theatre
The Exonerated, Actors' Gang

Best Writing-World Premiere Play

Alison Carey, Peter Howard, Shishir Kurup, Page Leong, Armando Molina, Evangeline Ordaz, Bernardo Solano, Bernard White, , *Crossings: Journeys of Catholic Immigrants*

Jessica Blank and Erik Jensen, *The Exonerated*
 Matt Pelfrey, *Terminus Americana*
 Dakin Matthews, translation of *The Proof of the Promise*
 Sam Bobrick and Julie Stein, *Lenny's Back*

Best Writing-World Premiere Musical

Paula Mitchell-Manning and John Lathan, *Flirting With Morty*
 Jillian Armenante and Alice Dodd, *Laura Comstock's Bag-Punching Dog*
 Leon Martell and Penka Kouneva, *Steel: John Henry and the Shaker*
 Max Baxley and Geo Hartley, *Twisted*
 Rose Leiman Goldemberg, *Picon Pie*

Best Touring Production

Aida
Copenhagen
The Full Monty
The Tale of the Allergist's Wife

Best Director of a Musical

Alan Coats, *Crazy for You*
 Jeff Calhoun, *Big River*
 Larry Sousa, *Swing!*
 Nick DeGruccio, *Side Show*
 Robert Longbottom, *Flower Drum Song*

Best Director of a Play

Ayana Cahrr, *How Kintu Became a Man*
 Dan Bonnell, *And Still the Dogs*
 Deborah LaVine, *Napoli Milionaria*

Jessica Blank and Erik Jensen, *The Exonerated*
Karen Kalensky, *Traveling Lady*
Nick DeGruccio, *The Laramie Project*
Stephen Sachs, *After the Fall*

Best Lead Actor in a Musical

Bill O'Brien, *Big River*
David Engel, *Crazy for You*
Kevin Earley, *Side Show*
James Black, *Big River*
Michael A. Shepperd, *Steel: John Henry and the Shaker*
Nic Arnzen, *Moscow*
R. Christofer Sands, *Pinafore!*

Best Lead Actress in a Musical

Christa Jackson, *Always ... Patsy Cline*
Julie Dixon Jackson/Misty Cotton, *Side Show*
Lea Salonga, *Flower Drum Song*
Sally Struthers, *Always ... Patsy Cline*
Stephanie Block, *Crazy for You*

Best Lead Actor in a Play

Brian Bedford, *The Moliere Comedies*
Daniel Davis, *Talking Heads (I)*
George Murdock, *The Price*
Joe Mellis, *Coyote on the Fence*
Mike Genovese, *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?*
Morlan Higgins, *After the Fall*
Sam Anderson, *Napoli Millionaria*

Best Lead Actress in a Play

Fay Cato, *Tonseisha*
Jeanne Sakata, *Red*
Kathleen Chalfant, *Talking Heads (2)*
Livia Trevino, *Coyote on a Fence*
Shareen Mitchell, *Tennessee in the Summer*
Suanne Spoke, *Napoli Millionaria*
Tracy Middendorf, *After the Fall*

Featured Actor in a Musical

Christopher Sieber, *Into the Woods*
David Jennings, *Side Show*
Gregg Edelman, *Into the Woods*
Rod Keller, *You're a Good Man, Charlie Brown*
Troy Kotsur, *Big River*

Best Featured Actress in a Musical

Beth Malone, *You're a Good Man, Charlie Brown*
Donna Bullock, *A Class Act*
Jodi Long, *Flower Drum Song*
Laura Benanti, *Into the Woods*
Sandra Allen, *Flower Drum Song*

Best Featured Actor in a Play

Al Mancini, *Time of Your Life*
William Mesnik, *Love's Labour's Lost*
Cooper Thornton, *After the Fall*
Joe Spano, *The Devil's Disciple*
Neil Vipond, *Richard III*

Best Featured Actress in a Play

Carol Kane, *He Hunts*
Cathy Lind Hayes, *He Hunts*
Lily Nicksay, *The Wild Duck*
Louise Davis, *Tennessee in the Summer*
Mary Lou Rosato, *King Lear*

Best Ensemble Performance

How Kintu Became a Man
Jacques Brel Is Alive and Well and Living in Paris
Swing!
The Exonerated
The Laramie Project
The Last Season

Best Solo Performance

Ann Randolph, *Squeeze Box*
Arlene Malinowski, *Or Forever Hold Your Peace*
Gigi Bermingham, *Non-Vital Organs*
Jackie Maruschak, *Last Stop Neverland*
Saundra Quarterman, *"Shak'n, Part One*

Best Choreographer

Alan Coats, *Crazy for You*
Ameenah Kaplan, *Steel: John Henry and the Shaker*
Dana Solimando, *Swing!*
Jeff Calhoun, *Big River*
Robert Longbottom, *Flower Drum Song*

Best Musical Direction

Darryl Archibald, *Swing!*
David O, *Steel: John Henry and the Shaker*
Steven Landau, *Big River*
Steven Smith, *Crazy for You*
Tom Griffin, *Side Show*

Best Set Design (Large Theatre)

Bradley Kaye, *The Laramie Project*
Christopher Barreca, *King Lear*"
Don Llewellyn, *Master Harold ... and the Boys*"
Douglas Schmidt, *Into the Woods*"
Gary Wissman, *King o' the Moon*"
John Lee Beatty, *My Old Lady*
Rachel Hauck, *The House of Bernarda Alba*

Best Set Design (Intimate Theatre)

Bill Eigenbrodt and Meghan Rogers, *Flight*
Desma Murphy, *Napoli Milionaria*
Joel Stoffer, *Coyote on a Fence*
John H. Binkley, *Street Stories*
Ray Klausen, *Big River*
Robert Bingham, *Little Shop of Horrors*
Robert Bingham, *Fools*

Best Lighting Design (Large Theatre)

Brian MacDevitt, *Into the Woods*
Christopher Akerlind, *King Lear*
Geoff Korf, *Crossings, Journey of Catholic Immigrants*
Steven Young, *The Laramie Project*
Tad Shannon, *Do Jump!*

Best Lighting Design (Intimate Theatre)

Doc Ballard, *The Last Season*
Ellen Monocroussos, *The Exonerated*
Jerry Browning, *Steel: John Henry and the Shaker*
John J. Grant, *Exmagare*
Michael Gilliam, *Big River*
Robert Fromer, *Street Stories*
Robert L. Smith, *Napoli Milionaria*

Costume Design (Large Theatre)

A. Jeffrey Schoenberg, *Side Show*
Ellen McCartney, *King Lear*
Gregg Barnes, *Flower Drum Song*
Jane Greenwood, *The Molière Comedies*
Joyce Kim Lee, *The House of Bernarda Alba*
Susan Hilferty, *Into the Woods*

Costume Design (Intimate Theatre)

David Zyla, *Big River*
Marc Hill, *Napoli Milionaria*
Paul Spadone, *Laura Comstock's Bag-Punching Dog*
Shon LeBlanc, *Little Shop of Horrors*
Shon LeBlanc, *After the Fall*

Sound Design (Large Theatre)

Dan Moses Schreier, *Into the Woods*
Drew Dalzell, *Side Show*
Jon Gottlieb and Leon Rothenberg, *King Lear*
Jon Gottlieb and Philip G. Allen, *Flower Drum Song*
Mark Bennett, *The House of Bernarda Alba*

Best Sound Design (Intimate Theatre)

Bill O'Brien, *Big River*
Bob Blackburn, *Street Stories*
Dave Marling, *Napoli Milionaria*
David Robbins, *Mephisto*

Jef Bek, *The Tragedy of Macbeth*
Penka Kouneva, *Steel: John Henry and the Shaker*

Recipients of the Career Achievement awards are stage, film and TV couple Carole Cook (Broadway's original *42nd Street, Romantic Comedy*) and Tom Troupe. The Los Angeles Country Board of Supervisors will receive the James A. Doolittle Award for Leadership in Theater.

First established by the Theatre League Alliance of Southern California in 1989, the Ovation Awards are given in 29 categories — separated in all cases except acting, directing, choreography and writing — into large and intimate theatre divisions.

The Theatre LA Ovation voting season runs from Sept. 1 of the previous year to Aug. 31 of current year. Productions must be registered with Actors Equity Association and run for at least 12 performances. The voters consist of Theatre LA member companies and 65 independent theatre professionals.

For more information on the Ovation Awards, check the Theatre League website at <http://www.theatrela.org>.

— by [Christine Ehren](#)
and Ernio Hernandez

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