



PRESSTELEGRAM.COM JOBS CARS HOMES CLASSIFIEDS NEWSPAPER ADS SUBSCRIBE PERSONALS MARKETPLACE

HOME FILM T.V. MUSIC TRAVEL HEALTH GOSSIP LIFESTYLE FOOD DINING STAGE INFO

Site Search:

Enter search term, hit enter key

[Advanced Search](#)

- HOME
- FILM
- GOSSIP
- LIFESTYLE
- DINING
- FOOD
- TRAVEL
- HEALTH
- HOME & GARDEN
- MUSIC
- STAGE**
- Theater Reviews
- TV
- HOROSCOPES
- INFO
- ABOUT US

- EMAIL ARTICLE
- LINK TO ARTICLE
- PRINT ARTICLE

Article Last Updated: Tuesday, November 26, 2002 - 8:06:31 AM MST

L.A. theater celebrates itself at Ovation Awards

By Evan Henerson
Theater Writer

Chances are, that dividing wall on Lankershim Boulevard was humming Sunday night.

Neighboring NoHo theater companies Deaf West Theatre and the Road each took six Los Angeles Ovation Awards on Sunday for their productions of the musical 'Big River' and 'Napoli Milionaria,' respectively.

How close are the two companies? **While at the podium** accepting his second Ovation, "Big River" director Jeff Calhoun gave the Road a plug. "Go see 'The Woman in Black,' " Calhoun said, referring to the production currently playing at the Road.

Burbank's Colony Theatre Company also took six awards, which were spread over three productions. Center Theatre Group, whose Mark Taper Forum and Ahmanson Theatre were the premiere sites for two Broadway-bound musicals, won six awards over four productions.

The Ovations, produced by the Theatre League Alliance of Los Angeles (Theatre LA), are the largest peer-determined stage awards in the United States. Representatives of Theatre LA membership companies and at-large voters select the winners. Two of the awards -- best musical in an intimate theater (won by "Big River") and best solo performance ("Squeeze Box") -- **also carry \$1,000 cash prizes.**

A change in this year's voting procedure meant that categories containing seven nominees were guaranteed three winners.

Held this year at the Orpheum Theatre, the nearly three-hour ceremony struck a certain "We create legitimate art in a movie town for no money' litany. Droll host Alfred Molina, a frequent film actor who also performs in L.A. plays, joked that he and nominee Joe Spano became theater actors "because we both decided we wanted to go somewhere where someone would love us. **Isn't that pathetic?**"

While free of the technical mishaps that **dogged the 2001 Ovations**, this year's ceremony still had its share of oddball moments. As he accepted the award for best featured actor in a play, Al Mancini, from Camelot Artists' "Time of Your Life," concluded his speech by thanking "the near and the near great who live on the Great Crab Nebula."

After informing the audience during his acceptance speech that he was in dire need of a **restroom**, actor R. Christopher

OTHER ARTICLES IN THIS SECTION

12/6/2002

- No fanfare for the common man
- Once more into the breach, without bells and whistles
- Chino production of 'You're a Good Man, Charlie Brown' has heart
- 'Celtic Christmas' in Cerritos
- 'Eleanor' gets high marks on all counts
- 'River', 'Othello' win ADAs
- 'Christmas Carol' tale cleverly adapts Bard's language
- Scinta-lating entertainment
- Jeff Dunham & Peanut ready to put Ontario Improv on a stick
- A triple-dose of holiday cheer
- Not a perfect storm, but it sure moves
- The lioness in summer
- The sounds of silence
- Winter's tale
- L.A. Opera achieves sheer poetry
- You're a Good Man, Charlie Brown
- Candlelight's 'Christmas' an enjoyable tradition
- Co-writing, performing couple stars in comic creation
- Powerful war theme stymied by awful acoustics
- Valley theater profile rises at tonight's Ovation Awards
- Laugh power
- 'Nuncrackers' fun, but needs to come out of its shell
- Musical miracle
- Wooster Group puts on quite the racket with 'Birdie!'
- Strung together pieces of Sondheim form 'knockout' show
- From bad to worse
- Tony Hawk, friends air it out



Link up with your future!



Your ultimate newspaper & online job search tool!




Sands was handed an empty water bottle by presenter Gil Cates.

during an extreme Jam session

Honorees also urged the audience to continue fighting to keep the arts alive in the face of nationwide budget cuts. Two of the special award winners -- Joan Boyett and the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors -- were recognized for their efforts on behalf of arts funding within the city.

- 'Major Barbara' is a commanding performance of Shaw

- Acting Chops

- Creative spirit and elbow grease

- Gotta dance

"I want to challenge all of you in the audience tonight," said Boyett, founder of the Music Center Education Division. "Please become vocal about having arts in the schools."

THE WINNERS:

World premiere play: "The Exonerated," Actors' Gang.

World premiere musical: "Laura Comstock's Bag-Punching Dog," Circle X Theatre Company.

Musical (large theater): "Crazy for You," Civic Light Opera of South Bay Cities.

Play (large theater): "The Laramie Project," Colony Theatre Company.

Musical (intimate theater): "Big River," Deaf West Theatre.

Play (intimate theater): "After the Fall," Fountain Theatre.

Lead actor, musical: David Engell, "Crazy for You," Civic Light Opera; Michael A. Shepperd, "Steel: John Henry and the Shaker," Oasis Theatre Company; R. Christofer Sands, "Pinafore!" Celebration Theatre.

Lead actor, play: Joe Mellis, "Coyote on a Fence," Alliance Repertory Company; Morlan Higgins, "After the Fall," Fountain Theatre; Sam Anderson "Napoli Milionaria," The Road Theatre Company.

Lead actress, musical: Julie Dixon Jackson/Misty Cotton "Side Show," Colony.

Lead actress, play: Jeanne Sakata, "Red," East West Players; Suanne Spoke, "Napoli Milionaria," the Road; Tracy Middendorf, "After the Fall," Fountain.

Featured actor, musical: Rod Keller, "You're a Good Man, Charlie Brown," Colony.

Featured actor, play: Al Mancini "Time of Your Life," Camelot Artists.

Featured actress, musical: Jodi Long, "Flower Drum Song," Center Theatre Group: Mark Taper Forum.

Featured actress, play: Carol Kane, "He Hunts," Geffen Playhouse.

Solo performance: Ann Randolph "Squeeze Box," the Court Theatre.

Ensemble performance: "Swing," Musical Theatre West; "The Laramie Project," Colony.

Director, musical: Jeff Calhoun, "Big River," Deaf West.

Director, play: Deborah La Vine, "Napoli Milionaria," the Road; Nick De Gruccio, "The Laramie Project," Colony; Stephen Sachs, "After the Fall," Fountain.

Choreographer: Jeff Calhoun, "Big River," Deaf West.

Musical direction: Steven Landau, "Big River," Deaf West.

Touring company: "The Full Monty," CTG: Ahmanson Theatre.

Lighting design (larger theater): Tad Shannon, "Do Jump!" Geffen Playhouse.

Lighting design (intimate theater): Jerry Browning, "Steel: John Henry and the Shaker,"

Oasis; Michael Gilliam, "Big River,' Deaf West; Robert Fromer "Street Stories,' Playwrights' Arena.

Set design (larger theater): Don Llewellyn "Master Harold ... and the Boys,' International City Theatre; Douglas Schmidt "Into the Woods,' Ahmanson; John Lee Beatty, "My Old Lady,' Mark Taper Forum.

Set design (intimate theater): Desma Murphy, "Napoli Milionaria,' the Road; Joel Stoffer, "Coyote on a Fence,' Alliance; Ray Klausen, "Big River,' Deaf West.

Costume design (larger theater): A. Jeffrey Schoenberg "Side Show,' Colony; Gregg Barnes "Flower Drum Song,' Taper.

Costume design (intimate theater): Marci Hill, "Napoli Milionaria,' the Road.

Sound design (larger theater): Jon Gottlieb and Philip G. Allen, "Flower Drum Song,' Taper.

Sound design (intimate theater): Bob Blackburn "Street Stories,' Playwrights' Arena; Dave Marling of Wav Magic, "Napoli Milionaria,' The Road.

Career Achievement Award: Tom Troupe and Carole Cook.

Community Outreach Award: Joan Boyett.

James A. Doolittle Award for Leadership in the Theater: Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors.

[↑](#) RETURN TO TOP

[Information](#)

Copyright © 2002 Long Beach Press Telegram
Los Angeles Newspaper Group

[Feedback](#)