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THEATER

Best musical '1776' tops Ovation Awards

■ Baz Luhrmann's "La Bohème," the Fountain Theatre's "Exits and Entrances" and "Intimate Apparel" at the Mark Taper Forum are among the runners-up.

By Don Shirley, Times Staff Writer

A short-running revival of "1776" in Riverside — far from most of the Ovation Award voters in Los Angeles County — was the big winner at L.A.'s peer-judged theater awards Monday.

Performance Riverside's "1776" — which played only nine shows last April — won five awards, including best musical in a larger theater. It took three acting awards, including a best musical actor nod for Steven Glaudini, who also was the company's executive director-producer. He quit that job — and left acting — two weeks ago and is taking a job as an agent closer to his Studio City home.

Explaining that Performance Riverside does not refer to "Riverside Drive in the Valley," Glaudini thanked "anyone who did the drive," noting that these long-distance theatergoers "had an hour to tear [the production] apart on the way back to L.A."

The Ahmanson Theatre's production of Baz Luhrmann's "La Bohème" won four awards, placing second in the totals and helping lift Center Theatre Group to a total of eight awards — the most for any company.

The Fountain Theatre's "Exits and Entrances" and "Intimate Apparel" at the Mark Taper Forum received three awards each. The Fountain received a total of four, and three companies — International City Theatre in Long Beach, the Rubicon Theatre in Ventura and Theatre@Boston Court in Pasadena — took home three awards each.

The audience for the ceremony, hosted by Hector Elizondo and Garry Marshall at the Orpheum Theatre in downtown L.A., was spared the usually dull speeches by people representing absent winners. Instead, those awards were accepted by "the Ovation" — actually, Troubadour Theater's madcap Matt Walker, dressed head to toe in a tight, white leotard-like outfit. As he darted from the wings, he extended his arms in a pose that mimicked the figure on the Ovation trophy.

His appearances prompted award presenter Marty Ingels to warn "that guy in the white condom" to steer clear.

LA Stage Alliance sponsors the Ovations and recruited 178 voters to assess eligible shows. This year 378 productions registered for Ovation consideration.

The winners:

Play (larger theaters): "All My Sons," Rubicon Theatre

Musical (larger theaters): "1776," Performance Riverside

Play (smaller theaters): "Master Class," Fountain Theatre

Musical (smaller theaters): "Hedwig and the Angry Inch," Celebration Theatre

Touring production: "The Phantom of the Opera," Ahmanson Theatre



'Intimate Apparel'

(Anne Cusack / LAT)

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Premiere play: *"Exits and Entrances,"* by Athol Fugard

Premiere musical: *"The Shaggs: Philosophy of the World,"* by Joy Gregory and Gunnar Madsen

Director, play: Ray Cooney, *"Caught in the Net"*; Stephen Sachs, *"Exits and Entrances"*; Daniel Sullivan, *"Intimate Apparel"*

Director, musical: Nick DeGruccio, *"1776"*

Lead actor, play: Morlan Higgins, *"Exits and Entrances"*

Lead actress, play: Viola Davis, *"Intimate Apparel"*

Lead actor, musical: Steven Glaudini, *"1776"*

Lead actress, musical: Yvette Freeman, *"Dinah Was"*

Featured actor, play: Joseph Fuqua, *"All My Sons"*

Featured actress, play: Carolyn Hennesy, *"The Fan Maroo"*

Featured actor, musical: Nils Anderson, *"1776"*

Featured actress, musical: Jill Van Velzer, *"1776"*

Solo performance: Gigi Bermingham, *"Non-Vital Organs (redux)"*

Ensemble performance: casts of *"La Bohème,"* *"Caught in the Net"*

Choreographer: Dana Solimando, *"Swing!"*

Musical direction: Dean Mora, *"Lady Macbeth Sings the Blues"*

Set design, larger: Catherine Martin, *"La Bohème"*

Set design, smaller: Joel Daavid, *"Ma Rainey's Black Bottom"*

Lighting design, larger: Nigel Levings, *"La Bohème"*

Lighting design, smaller: Mike Durst, *"Nocturne"*

Sound design, larger: Acme Sound Partners, *"La Bohème"*

Sound design, smaller: Steve Goodie, *"Cold/Tender"*; Julie Ferrin, Martin Carrillo, Paul Hepker, *"Romeo and Juliet: Antebellum New Orleans, 1836"*

Costume design, larger: Catherine Zuber, *"Intimate Apparel"*

Costume design, smaller: Alex Jaeger, *"Romeo and Juliet: Antebellum New Orleans, 1836"*; A. Jeffrey Schoenberg, *"The Devils"*

James Doolittle Award for leadership: Paula Holt

Career Achievement Award: Betty Garrett

Community Outreach Award: Cornerstone Theater



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