



For Release

10:30 PM, Monday, June 8, 2015

**Bailiwick Chicago and Griffin Theatre Company
Take Top Honors at the 42nd Annual Non-Equity
Jeff Awards Ceremony in Chicago**

Russ Tutterow's Career and Legacy receive Special Award

June 8, 2015 - Chicago, IL. “The Wild Party,” a dark, sensual, wanton musical, and “Men Should Weep,” a tale of a disordered Scottish tenement household, took home top honors Monday, June 8, at Park West during the 42nd Annual Non-Equity Jeff Awards ceremony recognizing excellence in non-union Chicago theatre. Bailiwick Chicago’s musical of Michael LaChiusa’s “The Wild Party” led all musical nominees with eight awards, and Griffin Theatre’s “Men Should Weep” led play nominees with three awards.

“The Wild Party” received Jeff Awards for Production-Musical, Ensemble, Direction of a Musical and Choreography (both helmed by Brenda Didier), as well as Principal Actress in a Musical or Revue for Danni Smith (in the role of Queenie), Principal Actor in a Musical for Matthew Keffer (in the role of Burrs), Musical Direction for Aaron Benham, and Lighting Design for Brian Hoehne.

Griffin Theatre’s “Men Should Weep” received Jeff Awards for Production-Play, Direction of a Play for Robin Witt, and Principal Actress in a Play for Lori Myers.

Theo Ubique Cabaret Theatre's production of "Always...Patsy Cline" received the Jeff Award for Production-Revue.

Long-time Chicago actors Karl Hamilton and Sarah Hayes served as emcees for the award show, which recognized 118 nominees in 24 categories from 66 Jeff Recommended productions, and ultimately honored 24 recipients from 9 theatres with awards celebrating excellence in all aspects of Chicago Non-Equity theatre. Brenda Didier directed Monday's ceremony, with musical direction provided by Jimmy Morehead. John D. Glover, Non-Equity Wing Chair of the Jeff Committee, produced the event.

Diane Hires, Chair of the 55-member Jeff Awards Committee, welcomed the audience and presented this year's Special Jeff Award honoring the career and legacy of Russ Tutterow, longtime Artistic Director and patron of new works at Chicago Dramatists, who recently passed away.

Other individual acting awards went to Kevin Cox for his turn as the street clown Valere in Trap Door Theatre's "La Bête," Ginneh Thomas for her role of Emilie in Pride Films and Plays' "The Submission," Shane Kenyon for his part as Terry in Steep Theatre Company's "If There Is I Haven't Found it Yet," Donterrio Johnson for his portrayal of Judas in Theo Ubique Cabaret Theatre's "Jesus Christ Superstar," and to Danni Smith for her role of Louise in "Always...Patsy Cline," also produced by Theo Ubique.

Technical nods went to Sound Designer Sarah Espinoza for "The Arsonists" at Strawdog Theatre Company, Scenic Designer Ray Toler for "Vieux Carre" at Raven Theatre, and Costume Designer Rachel Sypniewski for "La Bête" at Trap Door Theatre.

The Jeff Award for New Work went to Ike Holter for "Exit Strategy" at Jackalope Theatre Company, the story of a Chicago public high school slated for closure. The Jeff Award for New Adaptation went to Matt Foss for Oracle Productions' "The Jungle," Upton Sinclair's story of immigrants striving to find the American Dream in the Chicago stockyards at the turn of the 20th century.

For the second consecutive year, the annual awards gala sold out with 650+ guests, which featured musical production numbers from the season's nominated musicals and revues, as well as excerpts from the season's nominated plays.

The Jeff Awards has been honoring outstanding theatre artists annually since established in 1968. With up to 55 members representing a wide variety of backgrounds in theatre, the Jeff Awards is committed to celebrating the vitality of Chicago area theatre by recognizing excellence through its recommendations, awards and honors. The Jeff Awards fosters artistic growth of area theatres and theatre artists

and promotes educational opportunities, audience appreciation, and civic pride in the achievements of the theatre community. The Jeff Awards evaluates more than 250 theatrical productions and host two awards ceremonies annually. Originally chartered to recognize only Equity productions, the Jeff Awards established the Non-Equity Wing in 1973 to celebrate outstanding achievement in non-union theatre. The next Equity Awards Ceremony, honoring productions presented under union contracts, is on Monday, October 5, 2015, at the Drury Lane Oakbrook in Oakbrook Terrace.

2015 Non-Equity Jeff Award Recipients

PRODUCTION – PLAY

"Men Should Weep" - Griffin Theatre Company

PRODUCTION - MUSICAL

"The Wild Party" - Bailiwick Chicago

PRODUCTION - REVUE

"Always... Patsy Cline" - Theo Ubique Cabaret Theatre

ENSEMBLE

"The Wild Party" - Bailiwick Chicago

DIRECTOR - PLAY

Robin Witt - "Men Should Weep" - Griffin Theatre Company

DIRECTOR - MUSICAL OR REVUE

Brenda Didier - "The Wild Party" - Bailiwick Chicago

ACTOR IN A PRINCIPAL ROLE - PLAY

Kevin Cox - "La Bête" - Trap Door Theatre

ACTOR IN A PRINCIPAL ROLE - MUSICAL

Matthew Keffer - "The Wild Party" - Bailiwick Chicago

ACTRESS IN A PRINCIPAL ROLE - PLAY

Lori Myers - "Men Should Weep" - Griffin Theatre Company

ACTRESS IN A PRINCIPAL ROLE - MUSICAL OR REVUE

Danni Smith - "The Wild Party" - Bailiwick Chicago

ACTOR IN A SUPPORTING ROLE - PLAY

Shane Kenyon - "If There Is I Haven't Found It Yet" - Steep Theatre Company

ACTOR IN A SUPPORTING ROLE - MUSICAL

Donterrio Johnson - "Jesus Christ Superstar" - Theo Ubique Cabaret Theatre

ACTRESS IN A SUPPORTING ROLE - PLAY

Ginneh Thomas - "The Submission" - Pride Films and Plays

ACTRESS IN A SUPPORTING ROLE - MUSICAL OR REVUE

Danni Smith - "Always... Patsy Cline" - Theo Ubique Cabaret Theatre

NEW WORK

Ike Holter - "Exit Strategy" - Jackalope Theatre Company

NEW ADAPTATION

Matt Foss - "The Jungle" - Oracle Productions

CHOREOGRAPHY

Brenda Didier - "The Wild Party" - Bailiwick Chicago

ORIGINAL MUSIC IN A PLAY

Nicholas Tonozzi and Sam Allyn - "The Jungle" - Oracle Productions

MUSIC DIRECTION

Aaron Benham - "The Wild Party" - Bailiwick Chicago

SCENIC DESIGN

Ray Toler - "Vieux Carré" - Raven Theatre

LIGHTING DESIGN

Brian Hoehne - "The Wild Party" - Bailiwick Chicago

COSTUME DESIGN

Rachel Sypniewski - "La Bête" - Trap Door Theatre

SOUND DESIGN

Sarah Espinoza - "The Arsonists" - Strawdog Theatre Company

ARTISTIC SPECIALIZATION

Aaron Benham - "A Musical Tribute to the Andrews Sisters" - Theo Ubique Cabaret Theatre

SPECIAL AWARD

Russ Tutterow

MULTIPLE RECIPIENTS

Theatre Companies

Bailiwick Chicago	8
Theo Ubique Cabaret Theatre	4
Griffin Theatre Company	3
Oracle Productions	2
Trap Door Theatre	2

Productions

"The Wild Party"	8
"Men Should Weep"	3
"Always...Patsy Cline"	2
"The Jungle"	2
"La Bête"	2

Individuals

Aaron Benham	2
Brenda Didier	2
Danni Smith	2

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