



Arts: October 3, 2008

<http://www.austinchronicle.com/gyrobase/Issue/story?oid=681239>

2008 B. Iden Payne Awards

Nominees enter stage right

By Robert Faires

Not sure if Bevo was a member of this year's B. Iden Payne committee, but the nominations for the 2008 Payne Awards announced on Sept. 18 bear something of a burnt-orange hue. The University of Texas Department of Theatre & Dance received 23 nominations for the Austin Circle of Theaters' annual dramatic awards – by far the most for any producing organization this year – with three productions scoring five or more nominations each. A new staging of Maria Irene Fornes' seminal feminist drama *Fefu and Her Friends* was honored with eight noms, for production of a drama; Leslie Swackhamer's direction; performances by Jenny Keto, Kim Adams, and Tiffany Knight; and designs by Sarah Davidson (set), Katy Hallee (lighting), and Susan Branch (costumes). The other shows were, significantly, written by playwrights studying at UT: the eloquent historical work *Elephant's Graveyard*, by George Brant (five nominations, including original script and production of a drama), and the brightly imaginative dark fable *Ashes, Ashes*, by Eve Tulbert (six noms, including production of a play for youth, costume design for Sarah Mosher, and set design for Lisa Laratta).

Also taking top honors in the nominations: Tongue and Groove Theatre's *The Red Balloon* with eight (including production of a play for youth, David Yeakle's direction, Justin Sherburn's musical direction and original score, and Jennifer Sherburn's choreography), Second Youth Family Theatre's *Wiley and the Hairy Man* with seven (among them production of a play for youth and the set design and direction by Andréa S. Smith), Zilker Theatre Productions' *Disney's Beauty and the Beast* with seven (with nods for production of a musical, Scott Schroeder's direction, Judy Thompson-Price's choreography, and Michael McKelvey's musical direction), and Mary Moody Northen Theatre's *Full Circle* with seven (including musical production; David Long's direction; acting by Jill Blackwood, Greg Holt, and Helyn Rain Messenger; and McKelvey's musical direction). The second most honored company was City Theatre, which received 15 nominations for seven productions staged during what is only its second season.

Overall, 59 productions mounted from September 2007 to August 2008 received nominations, which are made by a committee of volunteers who regularly see productions throughout the year. The awards are determined by a vote of the ACoT membership, which receives ballots that are tabulated by the accounting firm of KPMG LLP and held in secret until the ceremony. This year, that will be held Sunday, Oct. 26, 7pm, in the Rollins Studio Theatre of the Long Center for the Performing Arts. In addition to the presentation of the regular awards, the ceremony will include presentation of the Special Recognition Award, given annually by the ACoT board to an individual who has made exceptional contributions to Austin theatre, to lighting designer Jason Amato. The public is welcome. For more information, call 474-8497 or visit www.acotonline.org. For a full list nominees, see this piece at austinchronicle.com.

Copyright © 2008 Austin Chronicle Corporation. All rights reserved.