

## THE BESSIE AWARDS ANNOUNCE 2015 NOMINEES

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New York, NY, July 15, 2015 – The New York Dance and Performance Awards (The Bessies), New York City's premier dance awards honoring outstanding creative work in the field, today announced the nominees for the 2014–15 season at its annual press conference. The

37 nominees were selected by the Bessies Selection Committee, an independent committee of 39 dance industry professionals. Produced in partnership with Dance/NYC, Bessie Award categories include Outstanding Production, Outstanding Revival, Outstanding Performer, Outstanding Music Composition or Sound Design, and Outstanding Visual Design. The list of nominations follows.

The 31st Annual Bessie Awards will take place on Monday, October 19, 2015, at 7:30pm, at the legendary Apollo Theater in New York City. The 2015 ceremony will mark the Bessie Awards' fifth year at this historic venue.

Two 2015 awards were presented at the press conference. The Outstanding Emerging Choreographer Award was presented to Storyboard P for fusing various styles of Hip-Hop with elements of modern and jazz dance, creating a cinematic choreographic vision for new dance narratives and abstract movement-based works.

This year's Bessies Jury—Susan Marshall, Shen Wei, and Reggie Wilson—named Pavel Zuštiak as the recipient of the 2015 Juried Bessie Award. Zuštiak was recognized for his poetic layering of movement and visual imagery, conceiving the stage space as a decentralized world in which the corporeal body is the focus and canvas for a wide range of human expression.

The jury of three acclaimed choreographers, appointed each year by the Bessies Steering Committee, is responsible for choosing a choreographer who exhibits some of the most interesting and exciting ideas in dance in New York City today. The award provides the honored dance maker with touring and residency opportunities outside of New York City through a partnership with the New York State DanceForce, a statewide network of arts organizers and presenters.

The 2015 Bessie Awards Steering Committee, responsible for setting policy and providing oversight of the Bessie Awards throughout the year, is comprised of Cora Cahan, Beverly D'Anne, Lane Harwell, Judy Hussie-Taylor, Stanford Makishi, Carla Peterson, Laurie Uprichard, and Martin Wechsler.

The 2014–2015 Bessie Awards Selection Committee consists of Nolini Barretto, Diana Byer, Kim Chan, H.T. Chen, Blondell Cummings, Nancy Dalva, Andrew Dinwiddie, Maura Donohue, Simon Dove, Boo Froebel, Laurel George, Caleb Hammons, Zhenesse Heinemann, Irène Hultman, Robert LaFosse, Matthew Lyons, Nicole Macotsis, Caridad Martinez, Harold Norris, Nicky Paraiso, Mathew Pokoik, Susan Reiter, Rokafella, Walter Rutledge, Sue Samuels, Philip Sandstrom, Gus Solomons Jr., Sally Sommer, Risa Steinberg, Carrie Stern, Kay Takeda, David Thomson, Muna Tseng, Kay Turner, Tony Waag, Edisa Weeks, Ryan Wenzel, Adrienne Westwood, and Elizabeth Zimmer.

### The 2015 Bessie Nominations

#### Outstanding Production:

600 HIGHWAYMEN *Employee of the Year* FIAF/Crossing the Line

Soledad Barrio and Noche Flamenca *Antigona* The Joyce Theater

Dorrance Dance with Toshi Reagon and BIGLOVELY *The Blues Project* The Joyce Theater

Neil Greenberg *This* New York Live Arts

Roger Guenveur Smith *Rodney King* BRIC

Xavier LeRoy *Retrospective* MoMA PS1 and Crossing the Line

Shwe Man Pwe *Music and Dance from Myanmar* Asia Society

David Neumann/Advanced Beginner Group I *Understand Everything Better* Abrons Arts Center co-presented by The Chocolate Factory

Justin Peck *Rodeo: Four Dance Episodes* New York City Ballet Lincoln Center

Lemi Ponifasio/MAU *Birds with Skymirrors* Next Wave Festival, Brooklyn Academy of Music

Pam Tanowitz *Broken Story (wherein there is no ecstasy)* The Guggenheim's Works & Process

Vuyani Dance Theatre Project *Umnikelo* Fall for Dance, New York City Center

#### Outstanding Revival:

Alexei Ratmansky *The Sleeping Beauty* American Ballet Theatre

Outstanding Performer:

Alexandra Albrecht and Andrew Champlin in *Polly Pocket: Expansion Pack* by Jillian Peña Danspace Project

Michelle Boulé For her body of work with Miguel Gutierrez

Lawrence Cassella *Sustained Achievement* — *posthumous*

Talya Epstein in *Star Crap Method* by Larissa Velez-Jackson The Chocolate Factory

Robert Fairchild in *An American in Paris* The Palace Theater

Ellen Fisher For Sustained Achievement in Performance in the work of Meredith Monk

Lauren Grant For her overall body of work with Mark Morris

Ryan Haskett, Daniel Price, and Lil Buck Live Performance following NYC premiere of *Pharaohs of Memphis* DAMN! Film Series TheaterLab Annex

Juan Ogalla in *Antigona* by Soledad Barrio and Noche Flamenca The Joyce Theater

Amar Ramasar New York City Ballet

Ryoji Sasamoto in *OQ* by Kota Yamazaki Japan Society

Melissa Toogood For her body of work during the 2014–15 season in the work of Kimberly Bartosik, Merce Cunningham, Rashaun Mitchell, Stephen Petronio, Sally Silvers, Pam Tanowitz, among others.

Outstanding Emerging Choreographer (\*indicates award recipient):

Yve Laris Cohen

Moriah Evans For *Social Dance 1-8: Index* at Issue Project Room

Troy Schumacher

Storyboard P \*

Outstanding Music Composition/Sound Design:

Tei Blow for *I Understand Everything Better* by David Neumann/Advanced Beginner Group Abrons Arts Center co-presented by The Chocolate Factory

Robyn Orlin | Compagnie Jant-Bi *At the same time we were pointing a finger at you, we realized we were pointing three at ourselves.* by Robyn Orlin | Compagnie Jant-Bi Peak Performances at Montclair State University

Ublado Perez Conde for *CAMBUYÓN* by Enlace S.C. The New Victory Theater

Kate Valk, Bobby McElver and Max Bernstein for *Early Shaker Spirituals* by The Wooster Group St. Ann's Warehouse

Outstanding Visual Design:

Reid Bartelme in collaboration with Harriet Jung For body of work

Kathy Kaufmann for *Bloowst windku* by Rebecca Davis HERE Art Center

Lemi Ponifasio and Helen Todd for *Birds with Skymirrors* Next Wave Festival, Brooklyn Academy of Music

Design Team: Geoff Sobelle (Creator), Steven Dufala (Scenic Installation Designer) Christopher Kuhl (Lighting Designer), Nick Kourtides (Sound Designer), Jamie Boyle (Integrated Archive Designer), Rachel McIntosh (Specialty Props Designer) for *The Object Lesson* by Geoff Sobelle BAM Fisher

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ABOUT THE BESSIES

Produced in partnership with Dance/NYC, the New York Dance and Performance Awards have saluted outstanding and groundbreaking creative work in the dance field in New York City for 31 years. Known as "The Bessies" in honor of revered dance teacher Bessie Schönberg, the awards were established in 1984 by David White at Dance Theater Workshop. They recognize exceptional work in choreography, performance, music composition, and visual design. Nominees are chosen by a 39-member selection committee comprised of artists, presenters, producers, and writers. All those working in the dance field are invited to join the NY Dance and Performance League, as members participate in annual discussions on the direction of the awards and nominate members to serve on the selection committee.

[www.dancenyc.nyc/partner-resources/the-bessies](http://www.dancenyc.nyc/partner-resources/the-bessies)

Digital photos are available on request.

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