

THE BESSIES ANNOUNCE NOMINEES FOR THE 2019 BESSIE AWARDS

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By The Bessies

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The Bessies are produced in partnership with Dance/NYC.

The NY Dance and Performance Awards, The Bessies, New York City's premier dance awards honoring outstanding creative work in the field, celebrates a landmark 35th anniversary this year. Today, the nominees for the 2019 Bessie Awards, along with the recipients of the 2019 Juried Bessie Award and 2019 Outstanding Breakout Choreographer Award, were announced and celebrated at the Bessies press conference. (The list of nominations follows.)

Established in 1984, the NY Dance and Performance Awards, named The Bessies for revered dance teacher Bessie Schönberg, are considered the field's highest honors. Nominees are selected by the Bessie Awards Selection Committee, an independent committee of 34 dance industry professionals. Award categories include Outstanding Production, Outstanding Revival, Outstanding Performer, Outstanding Music Composition or Sound Design, and Outstanding Visual Design.

Two awards were presented at the press event. The 2019 Outstanding Breakout Choreographer Award, which recognizes an artist who has made an exceptional leap in visibility and impact in their career this past season, was presented to Daina Ashbee. Her citation reads: "For using the elemental female body itself as a means to excavate and expose layered histories of violence against women. Using repetition, painful ritual, and raw and resilient bodies, her work draws the viewer into a journey of insistence and transformation."

Alice Sheppard was honored with the 2019 Juried Bessie Award "for boldly and authentically inventing new movement vocabularies full of supercharged physicality and nuanced detail. Working with gravity, mechanics, human connection, and momentum, she creates work of power and empowerment."

The Juried Bessie Award is bestowed by a group of three acclaimed choreographers, which changes each year. The 2019 Bessies Jury includes Carlota Santana, Pam Tanowitz, and Abby Zbikowski. The Bessies Jury is responsible for selecting a choreographer who exhibits some of the most interesting and exciting ideas in dance in New York City today, and who deserves to be seen more widely outside the city. The honored dance maker works with longtime dance manager Ivan Sygoda to secure touring and residency opportunities outside the city through a partnership with the New York State DanceForce, a statewide network of arts organizers and presenters. Starting this year, the recipient will also be invited to share work in the form of a studio presentation with the American Dance Festival community during the renowned festival's 2020 season.

This year's awards will also inaugurate a groundbreaking partnership between the Bessies and WNET's ALL ARTS, the new broadcast channel, streaming platform, and website dedicated to arts and culture. This partnership with ALL ARTS will increase the reach of the Bessies and cultivate new generations of dance audiences across the country. Details to be announced at a later date.

The 35th Annual Bessie Awards will be held on Monday, October 14, 2019, at NYU's Skirball Center for the Performing Arts.

The 2019 Bessie Awards Nominations

Outstanding Production:

600 HIGHWAYMEN

The Fever

Co-presented by La MaMa, The Public Theater, and Onassis USA

Kyle Abraham

The Runaway

New York City Ballet

David H. Koch Theater

Nick Cave

The Let Go

Park Avenue Armory

Nora Chipaumire

#Punk 100% POP* NIGGA

The Kitchen

Merce Cunningham with stager Patricia Lent

Night of 100 Solos: A Centennial Event

BAM Opera House

Tania El Khoury

As Far As My Fingertips Take Me

Under the Radar/The Public Theater

Juliana F. May

Folk Incest

Abrons Arts Center and American Realness

Alexei Ratmansky

The Seasons

American Ballet Theatre
Metropolitan Opera House

Royal Osiris Karaoke Ensemble (ROKE)
The Art of Luv (Part 6): Awesome Grotto!
Abrons Arts Center

Caleb Teicher
More Forever
Guggenheim Works & Process

Noa Wertheim
One. One & One
Vertigo Dance Company
Baryshnikov Arts Center

Ni'ja Whitson
Oba Qween Baba King Baba
Co-commissioned by Danspace Project and Abrons Arts Center

Outstanding Performer:

Xianix Barrera
in Latido by Xianix Barrera
Emerging Choreographers Series at LaGuardia Performing Arts Center

Warren Craft
in Harlequin and Pantalone by Bill Irwin
Dorrance Dance
New York City Center

Leslie Cuyjet
Sustained Achievement with Jane Comfort, Niall Jones, Juliana F. May, Cynthia Oliver, and Will Rawls

Kirsten Davis
in Oba Qween Baba King Baba by Ni'Ja Whitson
Co-commissioned by Danspace Project and Abrons Arts Center

Gabrielle Hamilton
in Oklahomal choreographed by John Heginbotham
St. Ann's Warehouse

Samantha Hines
in Attractor by Dancenorth Australia, Lucy Guerin Inc., Gideon Obarzanek, and Senyawa
The Joyce Theater

Tiler Peck
Sustained Achievement with New York City Ballet
Molly Poerstal
Sustained Achievement with Hilary Clark, David Dorfman, Jeanine Durning, Alex Escalante,
Juliana F. May, Susan Rethorst, Roseanne Spradlin, and Larissa Velez-Jackson

Nola Sporn Smith
in metamorphosis by Stacy Grossfield
The Kitchen, Dance and Process

Taylor Stanley
in The Runaway by Kyle Abraham
New York City Ballet
David H. Koch Theater

Shamar Watt
Sustained Achievement in the work of Nora Chipaumire

Takaomi Yoshino (aka Varvara Laptopova)
in ChopEniana by Alexandre Minz
Les Ballets Trockadero de Monte Carlo
The Joyce Theater

Outstanding Revival:

Deuce Coupe
By Twyla Tharp
American Ballet Theatre
Metropolitan Opera House

Hex
By Eleo Pomare, performed by Dyane Harvey
American Dance Guild Performance Festival, Ailey Citigroup Theater

Judson Dance Theater: The Work is Never Done
By Yvonne Rainer, Deborah Hay, Lucinda Childs, David Gordon, Steve Paxton, Trisha Brown, Simone Forti
Museum of Modern Art

Outstanding Sound Design/Musical Composition:

Joseph Kubera and Adam Tendler for interpretation of music of Julius Eastman, and
M. Lamar for original composition inspired by Eastman
for Rambler, Worlds Worlds A Part by Kathy Westwater
New York Live Arts

Leyya Mona Tawil
for Future Faith by Lime Rickey International
Abrons Arts Center

Conrad Tao and Caleb Teicher
for More Forever by Caleb Teicher
Guggenheim Works & Process

Outstanding Visual Design:

Design Team: Tei Blow, Sean McElroy, Eben Hoffer, and Hyung Seok Jeon
for The Art of Luv (Part 6): Awesome Grotto! by Royal Osiris Karaoke Ensemble (ROKE)
Abrons Arts Center

Design Team: Jeanne Medina and Ni'ja Whitson (Costumes), Gil Sperling, featuring art works by Wangech Mutu and Galvin Jantejes (Video),
and Tuçe Yasak (Lighting)
for Oba Qween Baba King Baba by Ni'Ja Whitson
Co-commissioned by Danspace Project and Abrons Arts Center

Mirella Weingarten (Set Design)
for Xenos by Akram Khan
Lincoln Center's White Light Festival at Rose Theater

Outstanding Breakout Choreographer (* indicates award recipient):

Daina Ashbee *

Jonathan González

Stacy Grossfield

Caleb Teicher

The 2019 Bessie Awards Steering Committee, responsible for setting policy and providing oversight for the Bessie Awards throughout the year, is comprised of Cora Cahan, Beverly D'Anne, Jeanne Linnes, Stanford Makishi, Nicky Paraiso, Carla Peterson, Gus Solomons jr, Paz Tanjuaquio, Judy Hussie-Taylor, Laurie Uprichard, and Martin Wechsler.

The 2018–2019 Bessie Awards Selection Committee: Ronald Alexander, Elise Bernhardt, Charles Vincent Burwell, Diana Byer, Tymberly Canale, Alexis Convento, Parijat Desai, Maura Donohue, Boo Froebel, Angela Fatou Gittens, Diane Grumet, Brinda Guha, Joseph Hall, Mai Lê Hô, Irène Hultman, Celia Ipiotis, Koosil-ja, Fernando Maneca, Lydia Mokdessi, Harold Norris, Craig Peterson, Doug Post, Rajika Puri, Tiffany Rea-Fisher, Susan Reiter, Walter Rutledge, George Emilio Sanchez, Andrea Snyder, Sally Sommer, Risa Steinberg, Carrie Stern, Catherine Tharin, Tony Waag, and William Whitener.

ABOUT THE BESSIES

The NY Dance and Performance Awards have saluted outstanding and groundbreaking creative work in the dance field in New York City for 35 years. Known as "The Bessies" in honor of revered dance teacher Bessie Schönberg, the awards were established in 1984 by David R. White at Dance Theater Workshop. They recognize outstanding work in choreography, performance, music composition, and visual design. Nominees are chosen by a selection committee composed 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 and participate in annual discussions on the direction of the awards and nominate members to serve on the selection committee. For more information about The Bessies, visit www.bessies.org.

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