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## WINNERS ANNOUNCED FOR THE 61<sup>ST</sup> ANNUAL OBIE AWARDS®

**New York, NY** (May 23, 2016) – The **American Theatre Wing** (Heather Hitchens, President) and **The Village Voice** (Peter Barbey, Owner) are thrilled to announce the winners of the **61<sup>st</sup> Annual Obie Awards**. **Rajiv Joseph's *Guards at the Taj***, produced by the Atlantic Theater Company, received the Obie Award® for **Best New American Play**, which is accompanied by a \$1,000 prize. Legendary actor/dancer/choreographer **Carmen de Lavallade** and renowned playwright **A.R. Gurney** each received a special **Obie Award® for Lifetime Achievement**. Obie and Screen Actors Guild® Award-winning actress **Lea DeLaria** returned as host of this year's ceremony, which was held at Webster Hall (125 East 11<sup>th</sup> Street). A complete list of the awards is given below.

This year's presenters included Obie Award® winner **Colman Domingo**, Obie Award® winner **Danai Gurira**, **Maura Tierney**, **Kate Burton**, Obie Award® winner **Savion Glover**, three-time Obie Award® winner **Elizabeth Marvel**, **Carrie Preston**, **Norm Lewis**, Obie Award® winner **Tovah Feldshuh**, **Marlo Thomas**, two-time Obie Award® winner **Lisa Kron**, three-time Obie Award® winner **David Henry Hwang**, **Jordan Roth**, and **Natasha Katz**.

The evening's festivities, which were live-streamed on the official Obie Awards® Facebook page [www.facebook.com/ObieAwards](http://www.facebook.com/ObieAwards), also included an opening number featuring Obies host **Lea DeLaria** and her "Orange Is the New Black" cast mates **Emily Althaus**, **Lori Tan Chinn**, **Joel Marsh Garland**, **Kimiko Glenn**, **Annie Golden**, **Vicky Jeudy**, **Emma Myles**, **Dascha Polenco**, and **Dale Soules**, as well as **Stephen Wallem**. In addition, special performances were given by 2016 Tony Award® nominee **Leslie Odom, Jr.** who honored the 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of *Rent* by performing "Without You," and by *Dear Evan Hansen* star **Ben Platt** performing "Waving Through a Window," accompanied by a band including composer **Justin Paul** on piano.

### Playwriting

**Lucas Hnath**, *The Christians* (Playwrights Horizons) and *Red Speedo* (New York Theatre Workshop)

**Stephen Karam**, *The Humans* (Roundabout Theatre Company)

### Musical Theater

**Steven Levenson** (book), **Benj Pasek** and **Justin Paul** (music & lyrics), *Dear Evan Hansen* (Second Stage Theatre)

### Direction

**Rachel Chavkin**, *The Royale* (Lincoln Center Theater)

**Michael Leibenluft**, *I'll Never Love Again* (Bushwick Starr)

Performance

**Khris Davis**, *The Royale* (Lincoln Center Theater)  
**Emily Donahoe**, *The Christians* (Playwrights Horizons)  
**Georgia Engel**, *John* (Signature Theatre Company)  
**Ensemble**, *Eclipsed* (The Public Theater): **Pascale Armand**, **Akosua Busia**, **Zainab Jah**, **Lupita Nyong'o**, **Saycon Sengbloh**  
**Jayne Houdyshell**, *The Humans* (Roundabout Theatre Company)  
**Omar Metwally** and **Arian Moayed**, *Guards at the Taj* (Atlantic Theater Company)  
**Ben Platt**, *Dear Evan Hansen* (Second Stage Theatre)  
**Lucas Caleb Rooney**, *Red Speedo* (New York Theatre Workshop)  
**Tamara Tunie**, *Familiar* (Playwrights Horizons)

Design

**Rachel Hauck**, Sustained Excellence of Set Design  
**Jason Lyons**, Sustained Excellence of Lighting Design  
**James Ortiz**, Puppet Design, *The Woodsman* (New World Stages)  
**Bray Poor**, Sustained Excellence of Sound Design  
**Kaye Voyce**, Sustained Excellence of Costume Design

Special Citations: Collaboration

**Annie Baker** (playwright), **Sam Gold** (director), and the design team of *John* (Signature Theatre Company): **Mark Barton** (lighting), **Asta Bennie Hostetter** (costumes), **Mimi Lien** (set), **Noah Mease** (props), **Bray Poor** (sound)  
**Dominique Morisseau** (playwright) and **Ruben Santiago-Hudson** (director), *Skeleton Crew* (Atlantic Theater Company)

Obie Grants (\$4,000 prize to each theater)

**Bedlam Theatre**  
**Noor Theatre**  
**Prospect Theatre Company**

The Ross Wetzsteon Award (\$3,000 prize)

**NAATCO/National Asian American Theatre Company**

Best New American Play (\$1,000 prize)

**Guards at the Taj** by **Rajiv Joseph** (Atlantic Theatre Company)

Lifetime Achievement Award

**Carmen de Lavallade**  
**A.R. Gurney**

The Obie Award judges panel for this season, headed by *Village Voice* columnist and longtime Obie chairman **Michael Feingold**, included Obie-winning actress **Quincy Tyler Bernstine**, Obie-winning director **Oliver Butler**, Obie-winning costume designer **Clint Ramos**, Obie-winning actress **Juliet Rylance**, *Variety* senior critic **Marilyn Stasio**, and freelance theatre critic **Michael Sommers**.

For more information, visit [www.ObieAwards.com](http://www.ObieAwards.com).

*The Village Voice* (Peter Barbey, Owner) created the **Obie Awards**, at the suggestion of then editor Jerry Tallmer, soon after the publication's own inception in 1955, to encourage the newly burgeoning Off Broadway theater movement and to acknowledge its achievements. The Obies are structured with informal categories, to recognize artists and productions worthy of distinction in each theatrical year. Over the decades, the Obie Awards have played a major role in the *Voice's* long history of championing work of innovative and exceptional quality Off and Off-Off Broadway. *The Village Voice* put the new downtown theater movement on the map with its in-depth coverage, becoming a forum for conflicting viewpoints which helped generate excitement over new works and new approaches to theater-making. The Obies have become a theatrical tradition, a meaningful way to acknowledge the best artistic achievements of downtown theater. The list of actors, writers, directors, and designers who have

received Obies at pivotal moments in their careers is a virtual who's who of contemporary theater. While the categories of the awards have continued to change almost annually, the creative spirit remains the same. The Obie Awards continue to salute a theatrical movement that's as important, and as vibrant, today as it was in 1955.

The **American Theatre Wing** (Heather Hitchens, President) is dedicated to advancing artistic excellence and nurturing theatre's next generation: on the stage, behind the scenes, and in the audience. For nearly a century, the Wing has pursued this mission with programs that span the nation to invest in the growth and evolution of American Theatre. Traditionally, the Wing has encouraged members of the theatre community to share their off-stage time and talent directly with the theatre audience at large--whether it was singing for the troops in the Stage Door Canteen of the 1940's, or sharing their stories on a podcast today. As the founders of The Tony Awards®, the American Theatre Wing has developed the foremost national platform for the recognition of theatrical achievement on Broadway. Yet the Wing's reach extends beyond Broadway and beyond New York. The Wing develops the next generation of theatre professionals through the SpringboardNYC and Theatre Intern Network programs, incubates innovative theatre across the country through the National Theatre Company Grants, fosters the song of American theatre through the Jonathan Larson Grants, honors the best in New York theatrical design with the Henry Hewes Design Award, and illuminates the creative process through the "Working in the Theatre" program and media archive. Beginning last season, the American Theatre Wing has entered into a long-term partnership with *The Village Voice* to co-present The Obie Awards, Off Broadway's Highest Honor. The 61<sup>st</sup> Annual Obie Awards will be held in May 2016. Visitors to [americantheatrewing.org](http://americantheatrewing.org) can get inspired and gain insight into the artistic process through the Wing's extensive media collection, and learn more about its programming for students, aspiring and working professionals, and audiences.

Follow the Wing on [Facebook.com/TheAmericanTheatreWing](https://www.facebook.com/TheAmericanTheatreWing) and [Twitter.com/TheWing](https://twitter.com/TheWing).

The **Village Voice** and the **American Theatre Wing** are grateful to Viacom for its leadership support of the Obie Awards. Supporting Sponsors and partners are: Athletics, Clear Channel Spectacolor, The Howard Gilman Foundation, India Restaurant New Canaan, Serino/Coyne, 3-Legged Dog, and Ivie Joy Floral Arts + Events.

Founded in 1955 by a small group that included Norman Mailer, **The Village Voice** was the nation's first alternative newsweekly. Over the years it has been a home to a wide range of writers and artists, from e.e. Cummings and Katherine Anne Porter to Ezra Pound, James Baldwin, photographer Sylvia Plachy, cartoonist Lynda Barry, investigative journalists Wayne Barrett and Tom Robbins, music writer Robert Christgau, and film writer J. Hoberman, among many others. The Voice, which has won three Pulitzers, has always been an aggressive interrogator of the powers that be, as well as a force for finding and promoting cutting edge arts and culture.

Under new ownership and editorial leadership in 2016, *The Village Voice* is rededicating itself to being an indispensable resource for progressive New Yorkers of all sorts. This year, the Voice will be unveiling an updated design for the paper, new world-class writing and editing talent, and a state of the art digital platform. Our current portfolio of products includes the print paper (110,000 circulation and growing), a robust website, independently produced lifestyle events, plus many specialty inserts focused on arts, food, fashion, culture, music, and more.

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