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**THE AMERICAN THEATRE WING
AND THE VILLAGE VOICE
ANNOUNCE JUDGES
FOR THE
63RD ANNUAL OBIE AWARDS[®]**

**MELISSA ROSE BERNARDO, WENDALL K. HARRINGTON,
CHARLES ISHERWOOD, SONDRA LEE, TONI-LESLIE JAMES,
ARIAN MOAYED, AND CHING VALDES-ARAN,
TO JOIN CHAIRMAN OF THE OBIE JUDGES MICHAEL FEINGOLD**

New York, NY (October 2, 2017) – The **American Theatre Wing** (**Heather Hitchens**, President) and **The Village Voice** (**Peter Barbey**, CEO; **Stephen Moallem**, Editor in Chief) are pleased to announce the judges for the 63rd Annual Obie Awards[®]. Longtime Chair of the Obie Judges Panel **Michael Feingold** will be joined by *Entertainment Weekly* theater critic **Melissa Rose Bernardo**, Obie-winning projection designer **Wendall K. Harrington**, *Broadway News* theater critic **Charles Isherwood**, Tony nominee and Obie-winning costume designer **Toni-Leslie James**, dancer-actress-director **Sondra Lee**, Tony nominee and Obie-winning actor **Arian Moayed**, and Obie-winning actress **Ching Valdes-Aran**, to form the 2017-18 Obie Awards[®] judges' panel. The 63rd Annual Obie Awards[®] will take place in May 2018, with more details of the event to be announced shortly.

Productions that wish to invite consideration from the judges should fill out the official invitation form at www.ObieAwards.com/about.

Please direct questions regarding Obie consideration to ObieInvites@AmericanTheatreWing.org.

ABOUT THE OBIE AWARDS

The Village Voice 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 salute a theatrical movement that's as important, and as vibrant, today as it was in 1955.

ABOUT THE AMERICAN THEATRE WING

One hundred years ago, on the eve of America's entry into World War I, seven suffragettes—all women of the theatre—came together to form The Stage Women's War Relief. A century later, the spirit and vision behind the founding of **American Theatre Wing** remains a touchstone for all we do. The Wing continues to champion bravery, with a focus on developing the next generation of brave artists. The Wing advances the future of American Theatre by celebrating excellence and nurturing the next generation: on stage, behind the scenes, and in the audience. We envision an American Theatre that is as vital, multi-faceted, and diverse as the American people.

The Wing's programs span the nation to invest in the growth and evolution of American Theatre. We provide theatre education opportunities for underserved students through the Andrew Lloyd Webber Initiative, develop the next generation of theatre professionals through the SpringboardNYC and Theatre Intern Network programs, incubate innovative theatre across the country through the National Theatre Company Grants, foster the song of American Theatre through the Jonathan Larson® Grants, honor the best in New York theatrical design with the Henry Hewes Design Award, and illuminate the creative process through the Emmy-nominated "Working in the Theatre" documentary series. In addition to founding the Tony Awards® which are co-presented with The Broadway League, the American Theatre Wing co-presents the Obie Awards®, Off Broadway's Highest Honor, with *The Village Voice*.

Visitors to AmericanTheatreWing.org can gain inspiration and 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 [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#) @TheWing, and on [Facebook.com/TheAmericanTheatreWing](https://www.facebook.com/TheAmericanTheatreWing).

ABOUT THE VILLAGE VOICE

Founded in 1955 by a small group led by Norman Mailer, *The Village Voice* is the nation's first alternative newsweekly. The winner of three Pulitzers, it built a reputation for itself as an aggressive interrogator of 'the powers that be' as well as a reliable resource for finding and promoting cutting edge arts and culture. Over the years it has been a home to a wide range of writers and artists, including e.e. Cummings, Katherine Anne Porter, Ezra Pound and James Baldwin plus photographer Fred McDarrah, 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 maintains its iconic progressive brand with its digital platform, a variety of editorial initiatives and a full slate of events that include the annual Obie Awards and *The Village Voice* Pride Awards. *The Voice's* website underwent a major redesign in May 2017 to make it a true showcase of content ranging from cultural journalism, political commentary to high-impact imagery. Since relaunching, the site posted double-digit month-over-month increases in traffic, most recently delivering a 47 percent gain in July, according to ComScore.

For more information, visit www.villagevoice.com

JUDGES BIOS

Melissa Rose Bernardo reviews theater for *Entertainment Weekly* and EW.com.

Wendall K. Harrington is an Obie Award winning projection designer and head of the Projection Design Concentration at the Yale School of Drama.

Charles Isherwood is a Nathan Award-winning theater critic who currently writes for Broadway.news, among other publications.

Toni-Leslie James is an Obie Award winner and two time Tony Award nominee in costume design, and the Head of Design at Virginia Commonwealth University.

Sondra Lee is a multi-award-winning actress, dancer, writer, painter, director, producer and theatre legend.

Arian Moayed is a Tony-nominated and Obie-winning actor, founder-producer of Waterwell, and writer/director of the upcoming series, "The Accidental Wolf."

Ching Valdes-Aran is an OBIE-Award winning actress and a Fox Foundation Fellow.

Michael Feingold, longtime chairman of the Obie judges panel and critic for *The Village Voice*, is a two-time winner of the Nathan Award and two-time Pulitzer Prize finalist in Criticism.

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www.ObieAwards.com
www.AmericanTheatreWing.org

www.omdkc.com
www.twitter.com/omdkc