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# News From: **The Helen Hayes Awards**

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**For Immediate Release**

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January 25, 2010  
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**HELEN HAYES AWARDS NOMINEES ANNOUNCED  
Monday, January 25, 2010  
AT THE NATIONAL THEATRE'S, HELEN HAYES GALLERY**

**26th Annual Awards To Be Presented Monday, April 5, 2010**

**Washington, DC** – Theatre artists and productions nominated for The 26th Annual Helen Hayes Awards were announced this evening at a press conference hosted by The National Theatre in its Helen Hayes Gallery.

Out of **Washington's 73 professional theatres, 57 theatres produced 182 productions that met eligibility requirements during the January 1 – December 31, 2009 judging cycle.** From these shows, **151 artists, ensembles and productions from 25 theatres were nominated in 26 categories.**

Sixty-three judges, selected by a panel of area artistic directors, cast **22,558 scores** in consideration of **2821 pieces of work** (performances, designs, productions, directions etc). From that work, **1,669 were acting performances alone.**

**A list of the 2010 Helen Hayes Awards nominations is also online at [www.helenhayes.org](http://www.helenhayes.org).**

In comparison, in 2009 (for adjudicated productions from January 1 – December 31, 2008, 45 eligible theatres produced 172 productions that met Awards' eligibility requirements, resulting in 150 nominations. A summary of the Helen Hayes Awards Adjudication Process is available at [www.helenhayes.org](http://www.helenhayes.org).

This year's nominations mark the first year that the award for *Outstanding Production, Theatre for Young Audiences* will be presented. Productions eligible for this category must be intended specifically for audiences age 12 and under.

As occurred in 2009, the quantity and quality of ensemble work necessitated the division of The Canadian Embassy Award for Outstanding Ensemble into two separate categories: one for ensemble of a play and the other for ensemble of a musical. This distinction is applied in any year when there are a similarly large number of ensembles garnering such high scores.

Upon welcoming the crowd of approximately 200 theatre leaders, artists and patrons, Victor Shargai, Chairman of The Helen Hayes Awards Board of Directors, announced that:

The **John Aniello Award for Outstanding Emerging Theatre Company** will be given to **1<sup>st</sup> Stage**, an exciting young theatre company who has made their home in Tysons Corner specifically to provide opportunities to emerging talents so they can in fact be the "first stage" in their careers.

This award was established in 2008 in memory of John Aniello, a devoted champion of young, promising talent and an avid theatergoer since 1960. The John Aniello Award recognizes and encourages the efforts of companies who are just getting started yet have produced a body of work that is new, daring, and exciting. This is the third year the award will be presented, having been previously been given to Taffety Punk in 2008 and Constellation Theatre Company in 2009.

Before announcing the nominees, Helen Hayes Awards President & CEO Linda Levy Grossman announced a new initiative: "**Helen Hayes Recommended**" a marketing initiative to help encourage attendance during the run of a show. The endorsement is determined by judges attending productions throughout the year as part of their balloting process. If a production is recommended by the judges, the endorsement of "**Helen Hayes Recommended**" and a special logo is sent to the producing theatre for their use in up-to-the-minute marketing and communications efforts.

In 1983, Helen Hayes Awards Founder Bonnie Nelson Schwartz recognized that the 14 professional theatres that, at the time made Washington their home, were worthy of great attention and celebration. So when the first Helen Hayes Awards judging cycle began in 1984, the stage was set to cultivate a theatre community that would become **the second most prolific theatre town in the country**.

### **2010 Partners**

The Helen Hayes Awards is extraordinarily proud to partner with Presenting Sponsors **PNC Bank** and **KPMG**; **American Airlines**, the Official Airline of the Helen Hayes Awards; **BNA**; **The Washington Post**, and **Washington Life Magazine**, the Official Magazine Sponsor of the Helen Hayes Awards. The ongoing support and encouragement of these generous sponsors allows us to build audiences, honor excellence and educate the youth of our region – all year long.

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**Helen Hayes** began her lifelong love affair with theatre at the age of five after seeing her first play at The National Theatre. Her legendary work ethic and standards of excellence earned her the title "First Lady of the American Theatre." Eighty years after her first visit to The National Theatre, she presided over the inaugural presentation of her namesake awards and continued to inspire the Washington artists that followed in her footsteps. The National Theatre is now operated by the non-profit National Theatre Corporation, and managed by The Shubert Organization.

**The Helen Hayes Awards** is among the area's chief community builders, helping to strengthen our region by building one of its most powerful assets: the professional theatre. While the organization takes center stage on one night each year to celebrate Washington area theatre, our work behind the scenes to build audiences, honor excellence, and educate youth continues for 365 nights – and days.

**The 26<sup>th</sup> Annual Helen Hayes Awards will be held on Monday, April 5, 2010 at the Warner Theatre and JW Marriott Hotel.** One of our country's most prestigious cultural events, The Helen Hayes Awards annually honors excellence in professional theatre throughout the Washington metropolitan area. For more information about the Helen Hayes Awards programs and services and tickets to the Awards Gala, go to [www.helenhayes.org](http://www.helenhayes.org) or call 202-337-4572.