



## DAILY ARTS

# The Critics Table's Crème de la Crème

The winners of the 2017-18 Austin Critics Table Awards

BY ROBERT FAIRES, 1:35PM, TUE. JUN. 5, 2018



The crowd could hardly compete with the one packed into the Erwin Center for **Paul Simon** Monday night, but the one at Cap City Comedy Club was large enough to fill the showroom as the **Austin Critics Table** gathered for the 26th time to honor outstanding work in the arts – and prove, perhaps, that its members are still crazy after all these years.



*Veronica Williams accepts the award for Best Singer at the 2018 Austin Critics Table Awards (Photo by John Anderson)*

Nine arts writers and editors who belong to the informal association spent three-plus hours handing out some 44 awards and special citations to creatives in the fields of theatre, dance, design, classical music, visual art, and improv. No single production, exhibition, or concert swept the field, though in a unique show of appreciation for an individual work, the Critics Table recognized the **Vortex Repertory Company's** expansive and immersive theatrical production/scavenger hunt *Performance Park* with four special citations. **Texas State University's**

**Musical Theatre Program** received one award and a special citation for its production of *Ragtime*; **Ben Toomer**, who starred in the production, received a Deacon Crain Award for outstanding student work; and **Kaitlin Hopkins**, who heads the program, was honored with a special citation. **Street Corner Arts'** production of *Grounded* received three awards. **Blue Lapis Light's** aerial dance work *Belonging, Part One* received two awards, plus a special citation for its rigging team.

Two new categories were added this year, both under the heading of Theatre: Periphery Company, recognizing the theatrical body of work by companies outside of Austin proper, and Improvised Production, recognizing mainstage projects by area improv troupes. **Wimberley Players** received the inaugural Periphery Company award, while the first Improvised Production award was shared by the **Hideout Theatre's** improvised musical *Orphans!* and **Golden's** immersive silent work *Speak No More*.

Inducted into the **Austin Arts Hall of Fame** at the ceremony were: **Norman Blumensaadt** (theatre), **Kathy Dunn Hamrick** (dance), **Jeanne and Michael Klein** (patronage), and **Anuradha Naimpally** (dance).

Taking part in the Critics Table award process this year were the *Austin American-Statesman's* Andrew J. Friedenthal (theatre) and Claire Canavan (theatre); the *Chronicle's* Elizabeth Cobbe (theatre), Melany Jean (visual arts), T. Lynn Mikeska (theatre), Robi Polgar (classical music), Jonelle Seitz (dance), Shanon Weaver (theatre), and Robert Faires (arts); Central Texas Live Theatre's Michael Meigs (theatre) and Dr. David Glen Robinson (theatre, dance); *Arts & Culture Texas'* Claire Spera (dance); Broadway World Austin's Lynn Beaver (theatre), Frank Benge (theatre), and Lacey Cannon (theatre); Austin Entertainment Weekly's Olin Meadows (theatre); and *Conflict of Interest TX's* Rebecca Marino (visual arts) and Thao Votang (visual arts). Note: Members of the Table refrained from voting on any project in which they or an immediate family member took part.

## **The 2017-18 Austin Critics Table Award Winners**

### **THEATRE**

#### **Production**

*Henry IV*, The Hidden Room Theatre

*Ragtime*, Texas State University Department of Theatre and Dance

#### **Direction**

Jason Phelps, *The Brothers Size*

#### **David Mark Cohen New Play Award**

*Wild Horses*, Allison Gregory

#### **Performance by an Ensemble**

*The Wolves*, Hyde Park Theatre

#### **Performance by an Individual**

John Christopher, *The Brothers Size/Fixing Troilus and Cressida*

Chanel, *Lady Day at Emerson's Bar and Grill*

Jennifer Coy Jennings, *Wild Horses*

Sarah Danko, *The Effect/Grounded*

Judd Farris, *Henry IV/The Repentance of Saint Joan*

Joseph Garlock, *The Immigrant*

#### **Periphery Company**

Wimberley Players, Wimberley

#### **Improvised Production**

*Orphans!*, The Hideout Theatre



*Norman Blumensaadt comments on his induction into the Austin Arts Hall of Fame at the 2018 Austin Critics Table Awards. (Photo by John Anderson)*

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## **DESIGN**

### **Set**

Stephanie Busing, *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time*  
Chris Conard & Zac Thomas, *Pocahontas*

### **Costume**

Buffy Manners, *Shakespeare in Love*

### **Lighting**

Rachel Atkinson, *Scheherazade/TWENTYEIGHT/Catalina de Erauso/The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time/con flama*

### **Sound**

Lowell Bartholomee, *Grounded*

### **Digital**

Lowell Bartholomee, *The Effect/Wakey Wakey/The Repentance of Saint Joan/Grounded*  
Robert Mallin, *ENRON*

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*Jennifer Hart accepts the award for Best Choreographer at the 2018 Austin Critics Table Awards. (Photo by John Anderson)*

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## **DANCE**

### **Concert**

*(Re)current Unrest*, Charles O. Anderson/Fusebox Festival

### **Short Work**

"Four Mortal Men," Ballet Austin

### **Choreographer**

Jennifer Hart, "Fellow Travelers"/"Murmuration"

### **Dancer**

Anika Jones, *Belonging, Part One*

Rosalyn Nasky, "Come In!!!"/"Pod"/*There's No Such Thing as a Single Stripe*

Jun Shen, *Belonging, Part One*

### **Ensemble**

*Exit Wounds/Masters of Dance*, Ballet Austin

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## **CLASSICAL MUSIC**

### **Concert/Opera**

*Southwest Voices*, Chorus Austin

### **Chamber Performance**

*Golden Hornet Young Composers Concert*, Golden Hornet



**Ensemble**

Invoke, Beerthoven/*Golden Hornet Smackdown IV*

**Instrumentalist**

Bruce Colson, *It's About Time: Companions*

Artina McCain, *Black Composers Concert: The Black Female Composer*

**Singer**

Marina Costa-Jackson, *La Traviata*

Jenifer Thyssen, *An Early Christmas/It's About Time: Companions/Complaints Through the Ages*

Veronica Williams, "Songs of Remembrance and Resistance"



*Jenifer Thyssen accepts the award for Best Singer at the 2018 Austin Critics Table Awards. (Photo by John Anderson)*

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**VISUAL ART****Solo Gallery Exhibition**

"Claude van Lingen: Timekeeper," Co-Lab Projects

**Group Gallery Exhibition**

"Yo soy aqui / I am here," ICOSA

**Museum Exhibition**

"The Open Road: Photography and the American Road Trip," Blanton Museum of Art

**Independent Project**

2017 Texas Biennial

## **Gallery, Body of Work**

Co-Lab Projects

## **Artist**

Michael Anthony Garcia

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## **SPECIAL CITATIONS**

### **John Bustin Award for Conspicuous Versatility**

Mary Agen Cox, Jeff Mills

### **Deacon Crain Award for Outstanding Student Work**

Connor Barr, Kat Lozano, University of Texas;  
Ben Toomer, Texas State University

### **Outstanding Music Direction Award**

Austin Haller for *Ragtime*

### **Outstanding Choreography Award**

Natasha Davison for *The Drowsy Chaperone*

### **Horn of Plenty Award**

Benjamin Taylor Ridgeway & Jennifer Rose Davis for the masks in *Rhinoceros*

### **Jurassic Spark Award**

The Hatchery at the University of Texas for creating the raptors in *ENRON*

### **Dream Come True Award**

Bonnie Cullum for conceiving *Performance Park*

### **Mt. Everest Award**

Vortex Repertory Company for realizing *Performance Park*

### **Good Enough to Eat Award**

Melissa Vogt for her portrayal of Baba Yaga in *Performance Park*

### **Future of Theatre Award**

Bonnie Cullum and the Vortex Family for *Performance Park*

### **One Singular Sensation Award**

Kaitlin Hopkins for the Texas State University Musical Theatre Program

### **Always a Safe Flight Award**

Barry Wilson & Team for their rigging design and execution in *Belonging, Part One*

### **Outstanding Touring Show, Dance**

Johnny Cruise Mercer and Fusebox Festival for *plunge in/to 534*

### **Architecture Is Art Award**

Blanton Museum of Art for Ellsworth Kelly's *Austin*

### **Flip the Table Award**

David Wyatt & John Riedie for meritorious service to the Austin Critics Table Awards

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Kleins, Hamrick, Naimpally, and Blumensaadt to be inducted

ROBERT FAIRES, APRIL 16, 2018

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Actor/director Norman Blumensaadt, dance artists Kathy Dunn Hamrick and Anuradha Naimpally, and philanthropists Jeanne and Michael Klein join the ranks of cultural heroes

MAY 25, 2018

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### KEYWORDS FOR THIS POST

Austin Critics Table Awards, Austin Critics Table, Vortex Repertory Company, Performance Park, Texas State University Department of Theatre and Dance, Kaitlin Hopkins, Street Corner Arts, Blue Lapis Light

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