


For Immediate Release



The Bessies



Ellen Jacobs Association
611 Broadway Suite 408
New York, NY 10012 USA
T: 212.245.5100
F: 212.597.1102
info@ellenjacobs.org
www.ellenjacobs.org

**NOMINEES FOR THE 2018 BESSIE AWARDS AND
AWARDEES OF THE 2018 ANNUAL JURIED BESSIE
AWARD AND 2018 OUTSTANDING “BREAKOUT”
CHOREOGRAPHER ANNOUNCED TODAY**

Glasses clinked and cheers crowded the air as this year’s 43 Bessie nominees were announced and celebrated today, July 11, at a cocktail party/press conference at Gibney 280, along with the winners of 2018 Juried Bessie Award and the 2018 NY Dance and Performance Award for Outstanding “Breakout” Choreographer. (See attached for list of selected nominees)

Formally established 1984 as the NY Dance and Performance Awards and affectionately named “The Bessies” after the legendary and beloved dance teacher Bessie Schonberg, The Bessie, the field’s equivalent of the Oscar and Tony, is the dance world’s most coveted honor.

Nominated by the Bessie Selection Committee, comprised of 38 dance field professionals, the award is presented in five different categories: Outstanding Production, Outstanding Revived Work, Outstanding Performer, Outstanding Music Composition or Sound Design and Outstanding Visual Design. Artists from each and every corner of the dance world—ballet, hip hop, modern, postmodern, jazz, tap among others, are eligible for a Bessie.

“Like the irrepressibly vibrant and creative art form it was created to honor, The Bessies have always responded to change, be it political, social, cultural or artistic,” said Lucy Sexton, Executive Director of the NY Dance and Performance Awards. “The award has grown increasingly wide in the styles and forms of dance that it recognizes, and more determined in its commitment to bring visibility to dance happening throughout the boroughs of the city,” she continued. “This year, in response to conversations of the

dance world, the title of the “Outstanding Emerging Choreographer Award” was changed to the Outstanding ‘Breakout’ Choreographer Award in order to more clearly recognize an artist who has made an exceptional leap in their visibility in the field in 2017/18.”

In addition to The Bessie nominees, winners of the 2018 Juried Bessie Award and the Outstanding “Breakout” Choreographer Award were announced at the July 11 event. Kyle Marshall was honored with the 2018 Juried Bessie Award, which was presented to him by the 2018 Bessies Jury: Robert Battle, Stephen Petronio and Ana “Rokafella” Garcia, with a citation that read: “For exploring important ideas around race and sexuality in dances that embody rather than illustrate complicated issues. For drawing on a variety of movement styles to create accomplished, witty, and immensely engaging choreography.” The Juried Award provides touring and residency opportunities outside of New York City through partnerships including the New York State DanceForce, a statewide network of arts organizations and presenters, The Emelin Theater, and other organizations.

Mariana Valencia received the 2018 Outstanding “Breakout” Choreographer, formerly called Outstanding Emerging Choreographer Award. Her citation read: “For seamlessly blending ethnography, memoir, and observation of cross-cultural identities in choreography that engages from start to finish. For a unique vision that uses humor and sadness, reality and imagination, to push dance and performance into new territory.” The other “Breakout” nominees were Hadar Ahuvia, Lauren Lovette and Kyle Marshall.

The Bessies were established by David R. White in 1984 at Dance Theater workshop to recognize outstanding work in choreography, performance, music composition and visual design. Nominees are chosen by a Selection Committee comprised of artists, presenters, producers, and writers, which this year is comprised of Adrienne Westwood, Alexis Convento, Ali Rosa Salas, Andrea Snyder, Angela Fatou Gittens, Boo Froebel, Brinda Guha, Carrie Stern, Catherine Tharin, Celia Ipiotis, Craig Peterson, Diana Byer, Diane Grumet, Doug Post, Eleanor K. Wallace, Elise Bernhardt, George Emilio Sanchez, Harold Norris, Irène Hultman, Joseph Hall, Kay Takeda, Koosil-ja, Leah Cox, Lydia Mokdessi, Martin Wechsler, Matthew Lopez, Matthew Lyons, Maura Donohue, Muna Tseng, Parijat Desai, Rajika Puri, Risa Steinberg, Ronald Alexander, Sally Sommer, Susan Reiter, Tymberly Canale, Walter Rutledge, and William Whitener.

Responsible for setting policy and providing ongoing oversight, the 2018 Bessie Awards Steering Committee is comprised of Cora Cahan, Beverly D’Anne, Lane Harwell, Jeanne Linnes, Stanford Makishi, Nicky Paraiso, Carla Peterson, Paz Tanjuaquio, Laurie Uprichard, and Sylvia Waters.

The 34th Bessie Awards take place October 8 at 7:30pm at NYU’s Skirball Center for the Performing Arts.

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