

## DAILY ARTS

# Everything Is Exemplary

## The 2014-15 Austin Critics Table Awards

BY ROBERT FAIRES, 8:01PM, WED. JUN. 3



For 22 years, the critics have been the ones handing out the honors at their annual presentation of awards for outstanding artistic achievements, but this year the Critics Tables were turned, so to speak. **Los Outsiders**, in accepting their award for Outstanding Group Gallery Exhibition, dispensed awards of their own creation to the critics.



Margo Sawyer, accepting her award for Artist of the Year

PHOTO BY JOHN ANDERSON

The "You Write Good" awards, recognizing articles that the local arts writers had "successfully published" – zing! – and printed on the same cheap office-supply store certificates that the critics have always favored – zing zing! – were issued by the Silver Harddrive Ingenuity Table, and if you haven't already gotten that joke, just take a minute to let that august body's acronym sink in.



PHOTO BY ROBERT FAIRES

It was just one instance in which art insinuated itself into this year's ceremony. The winner for Outstanding Independent or Public Project went to *Ahöm*, a massive project in which 60-plus artists transformed the 7,500-square-foot Museum of Human Achievement space into an Ikea knockoff, and when it was announced, artist **Manik Raj Nakra** shuffled to the stage, handing out Ahöm fliers. Wearing a blond wig, blue polo shirt, and corporate ID badge, he shyly introduced himself as junior sales trainee Oörk Hjälmär Oörk and spent the entire acceptance speech in character, awkwardly plugging the company.

Most of the time, the art at the awards came in the form of dance, erupting spontaneously from those at the mic: Austin Arts Hall of Fame inductee **Heloise Gold**, who vibrated with excitement to the music of house band the **Invincible Czars**; members of the **A'lante Flamenco Dance Ensemble** (including Critics Table member **Claire Spera**) giving a furious sample of the stamping and clapping that won the company Outstanding Ensemble, Dance; and the very young son of retiring Ballet Austin ballerina **Michelle Thompson**, who joined his mother on the stage when she accepted her Outstanding Dancer award for her work in *Belle Redux* and shook his preschool booty for all it was worth, proving the apple hasn't fallen far

from that family tree.



Retiring Ballet Austin dancer Michelle Thompson and her fan club

PHOTO BY JOHN ANDERSON

The displays of creativity by awards recipients was just further evidence of what the Critics Table Awards have always been about: celebrating the inventiveness and artistic drive that fills this community. This year, the in formal association of arts writers from the *Chronicle* and *Austin American-Statesman* distributed honors in 39 categories, as well as welcoming three more local creatives – Gold, **Fidencio Duran**, and **Allen Robertson** – into the Austin Arts Hall of Fame.

**Salvage Vanguard Theater's** *Thr3e Zisters* took top honors at the 23rd Austin Critics Table Awards Monday. The irreverent riff on Chekhov was recognized in four areas, including Outstanding Production of a Comedy. Netting three awards each were **LOLA Austin's** *La Femme Bohème* and **Texas State's** *Kiss Me, Kate*. Nine projects took home two prizes apiece: **Ballet Austin's** *Belle Redux*; **Zach Theatre's** *Cenicienta*; **Half & Half Productions' Chicago**; **Hyde Park Theatre's** *The Christians*; **Theatre en Bloc's** *Cock*; **Physical Plant Theater's** *Everything Is Established*; the **Austin Classical Guitar/Conspirare/Texas Performing Arts** collaboration *How Little You Are*; **Performa/Dance's** *Ignite: Three Works*; and **Trouble Puppet Theatre's** *The Wars of Heaven, Part I*.

For a gallery of images from the ceremony, go [here](#).

## THEATRE

### Production, Drama

*Cock*, Theatre en Bloc

## **Production, Comedy (tie)**

*Everything Is Established*, Physical Plant Theater

*Thr3e Zisters*, Salvage Vanguard Theater

## **Production, Musical**

*Kiss Me, Kate*, Texas State University Department of Theatre and Dance

## **Direction**

Derek Kolluri, *Cock/Jacob's Ladder*

Yuri Umov, *Thr3e Zisters*

## **Acting in a Leading Role**

Jacques Coliman, *Bright Now Beyond*

Leslie Hollingsworth, *Chicago* (Half & Half)

Marc Pouhé, *Cyrano de Bergerac/The Mountaintop/The Taming of the Shrew*

Gricelda Silva, *Changelings/Simple Sundries/Cenicienta*

## **Acting in a Supporting Role**

Melvin Abston, *All the Way*

Joey Hood, *The Christians*

Jessica Hughes, *The Christians*

## **Ensemble Performance**

*Everything Is Established*, Physical Plant Theater

## **Music Direction**

John VanderGheynst, *Chicago* (Half & Half)

## **Movement**

Cassie Abate, *Kiss Me, Kate*

## **David Mark Cohen New Play Award (tie)**

*Am I White?*, Adrienne Dawes

*Cenicienta*, Rupert Reyes and Caroline Reck

## **DANCE**

### **Dance Concert**

*Ignite: Three Works*, Performa/Dance

### **Short Work**

"On Truth and Love," Performa/Dance

### **Choreographer**

Nicholas Kepley, *Season of Innocence*

### **Dancer**

Siobhan Cooke, *Soul/Sole Connections*

Michelle Thompson, *Belle Redux*

## Duet

Alyson Dolan & Jack Anthony Dunlap II, *Briefs: An Episodic Adventure*

## Ensemble

A'lante Flamenco Dance Ensemble, *Desplazados*

## Touring Show

Otro Teatro, Luciana Achugar, Fusebox Festival



Scenic Designer Ia Ensterä, winner of this year's John Bustin Award for Conspicuous Versatility

PHOTO BY JOHN ANDERSON

## DESIGN

### Scenic Design

Ia Ensterä, *We Play Chekhov/Detroit/The Tempest/Thr3e Zisters*

### Costume Design

Michael Raiford, *Belle Redux/Kiss Me, Kate*

### Lighting Design

Natalie George, *The Tuning Project/Gold Show Rose Show/Feast of My Heart/Thr3e Zisters/1,000 Forest Gorillas in Kansas*

## Sound Design

K. Eliot Haynes, *Once There Were Six Seasons/The Wars of Heaven, Part I*

## CLASSICAL MUSIC

### Classical Performance

Austin Symphony Orchestra with Alison Balsom

### Chamber Performance

*La Femme Bohème*, LOLA Austin

### Choral Performance

Muhly: *How Little You Are*, Austin Classical Guitar/Conspirare/Texas Performing Arts

### Singer

Emily Breedlove, *La Femme Bohème*

Julie Taylor, *La Femme Bohème*

Nick Zammit, *Bach Vs. Handel Smackdown*



Emily Breedlove (l) and Julie Taylor, accepting their awards for their performances in *La Femme Bohème*

PHOTO BY JOHN ANDERSON

## Original Composition/Score (tie)

*How Little You Are*, Nico Muhly

*The Wars of Heaven, Part I*, Justin Sherburn

## **Instrumentalist**

Sandy Yamamoto, *Franck: Sonata in A Major*

## **Ensemble**

Conspirare

## **VISUAL ART**

### **Museum Exhibition**

“Do Ho Suh,” The Contemporary Austin

### **Solo Gallery Exhibition (tie)**

“Contamination | Pollination: Elizabeth McDonald,” Pump Project

“Dave Culpepper: Wake Me When It’s Quitting Time,” Co-Lab Projects

### **Group Gallery Exhibition**

“Gently Fried,” Los Outsiders, curators; Emma S. Barrientos Mexican American Cultural Center

### **Work of Art: Independent or Public Project**

*AHOM*, Museum of Human Achievement

### **Artist of the Year**

Margo Sawyer

### **Gallery, Body of Work**

Women & Their Work

## **SPECIAL CITATIONS**

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

Ia Ensterä

### **W.H. “Deacon” Crain Award for Outstanding Student Work**

Elizabeth Brady, Texas State University

Patrick Shaw, University of Texas

### **Flight of Fancy Award**

Landmarks and Nancy Rubins for *Monochrome*

### **Making Bad Award**

Long Center for the support and development of David Krabb’s *Bad Kid*

### **That’s Entertainment Award**

Greater Austin High School Musical Theatre Awards

### **Austin Arts Hall of Fame**

Fidencio Duran

Heloise Gold

*Critics participating in this year's awards – covering the period from May 1, 2014, to April 30, 2015 – were the Austin American-Statesman's Cate Blouke (theatre), Claire Canavan (theatre), Luke Quinton (classical music/visual art), Claire Spera (dance), and Jeanne Claire van Ryzin (arts); and the Chronicle's Elizabeth Cobbe (theatre), Caitlin Greenwood (visual art), Adam Roberts (theatre/classical music), Elissa Russell (theatre), Seth Orion Schwaiger (visual art), Jonelle Seitz (dance), Natalie Zeldin (classical music), and Robert Faires (arts).*

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