

Camera, Point Hayes, Boyer Voted 2d Place

Gray, Lang, Others Poll 2d-5th Leads In Rest of Categories

NEW YORK, June 14.—While only 27 candidates can win the Donaldson gold keys and scrolls each year, there are always others whose achievements during a Broadway season put them high up in the running. For the benefit of their co-workers in the theater, who cast a substantial vote in their favor, the names of those who scored highest in the balloting from second thru fifth place is herewith included for the record.

As noted elsewhere, "The Shrike" won handily as the best play of the year, but "I Am a Camera" drew hefty support for second place honors, with Mary Chase's "Mrs. McThing" only a few votes behind for third choice. Jan de Hartog's fine comedy, "The Fourposter" was solidly in fourth place. "Point of No Return" and "The Grass Harp" tied for fifth slot honors.

Of the 17 authors to get a play on Broadway for the first time, Joseph Kramm ran away with the decision for "The Shrike." However, Truman Capote had a lot of backers to put his "Grass Harp" in second place, and the fine comedy-melo, "Stalag 17," drew almost as many votes to score third in the running. George Tabori's "Flight into Egypt" was a fourth place favorite, and Sigmund Miller's "One Bright Day" made a good fifth.

Ferrer Record

Jose Ferrer made something of a record for himself in the direction field. Not only did his staging of "Shrike" bring him more than twice the vote of "Camera's" director, runner-up John Van Druten, but his pacing of "Fourposter" brought him to a tie with Harold Clurman ("Desire Under the Elms") for third place standing, and his similar chore for "Stalag" rated him fifth. Fourth choice was Robert Lewis' direction of "Grass Harp."

Rated second to Ferrer's big win as the season's best dramatic actor for his memorable portrait of the tortured patient in "Shrike"

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TOP SHOWS IN '51-'52 VOTE

- Best Play **THE SHRIKE**
- Best "First" Play **THE SHRIKE**
- Best Musical **PAL JOEY**

FACTS, FIGURES

Statistics Re 73 Offerings On the Stem

NEW YORK, June 14.—Voters in the Ninth Annual Donaldson Awards had a total of 73 productions from which to select their choices of "best." That's the number of openings on Broadway between May 1, 1951, and April 30, 1952, the official Donaldson Award season.

The total represents a rather sharp decline from the previous season. But the total for 1950-'51 was swollen to a great extent by several play series, such as the D'Oyle Carte Opera Company and the Arena Theater, that did not appear this season. And it is still way ahead of the total of 63 openings for the 1949-'50 season.

There were 14 musical productions during the 1951-'52 season, a decline of seven from the previous season. Three of them were revues, two of which were in the Yiddish vein. Five of the musical works had previously been seen on the Stem. Two of those were performed this season by their national companies.

Old and New

There was a fair share of both revivals and "first" plays. Authors who had never previously been represented on Broadway were responsible for the scripting of 17 of the straight plays. And there were 15 revivals. The American National Theater and Academy play series included three of the revivals, and the New York City Center sponsored six of them. In the 1950-'51 season there were 30 revivals listed in the Donaldson Eligibility List, but that too was undoubtedly hyped by the several play series that season. The season before that, 1949-'50, there were a dozen revivals, more comparable to the present stanza.

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BB Bows to Donaldson Committees; Awards' History, Purpose Reviewed

NEW YORK, June 14.—Just about everybody connected with the legitimate theater is familiar by now with the aims and operation of the Donaldson Awards. However, since new faces join legitimate ranks every year, it seems a good idea to give an annual recapitulation of their purpose and history.

Prior to nine years ago, awards for theatrical accomplishments stemmed solely from limited, or frequently self-perpetuating groups. With one exception, they still do. But back in 1943, The Billboard decided to break away from tradition by sponsoring a unique series of awards for seasonal achievement in the Broadway theater, the winners of which would be selected in the most

democratic manner possible. These accolades would be voted by that great majority which had hitherto had no voice in such matters, the craftsmen who work in and for the theater, and who are best able to recognize true excellence in their co-workers.

The project was named the Annual Donaldson Awards, as a memorial to William H. Donaldson, founder of The Billboard and a particularly beloved figure in theater circles of a generation ago. Its purpose was a single one—to make possible recognition of the best contributions to a Broadway season, stemming from a consensus of all segments of the theater.

No Ads

One point was essential. Since the awards were to be sponsored

by a trade paper, there might be some suspicion of commercialism. The Billboard therefore stipulated that no advertising would be either solicited or accepted from any play or individual award winner, a policy which has been rigidly adhered to over the past nine years. The Billboard has no axe to grind, save that of engendering general good will. It has merely assumed responsibility for prize, printing, distribution and tabulation and general administration.

So back in 1943 a first committee comprised of prominent representatives of the theatrical trades enthusiastically set up the machinery. A suitably inscribed gold key and accompanying scroll were selected as the official individual prize. A balloting system was mapped out, whereby everyone from stagehands to producers would have opportunity to vote. The Donaldson Awards were to be in every sense the theater's own recognition of its own.

The Booklet

It was agreed to include with each ballot an eligibility list comprising cast and credits in booklet form of all seasonal Broadway productions. Any listed play, actor or technician was declared eligible for honors in any of 22 categories in which his contribution placed him.

Such was the original plan, and in general there has been little deviation from it over the years. The committee changes somewhat from year to year, but always its make-up includes the most prominent representatives of the crafts. In the 1945-'46 season the current committee added five more categories to the original 22, in order to stimulate new writing and performing talent. The new classifications included authors with a play reaching Broadway for the first time, and male and female debut performances in both drama and musical divisions. Various minor adjustments for more efficient operation have been made from time to time, but the essential aim and purpose is exactly what it was in the beginning.

Trade Votes

Each year about 6,000 ballots are distributed to voters, directly to their theaters, if they are working, or via their various trade unions, if they are not. Somewhere around half this number are returned for tabulation, a tally which gives a pretty fair cross-section of theatrical opinion—and one which carries certainly to the recipients of keys and scrolls a broader satisfaction than honors conferred by a self-appointed group. Such is the means and the end of the Annual Donaldson Awards.

The Billboard again takes this opportunity for a ninth successive time to thank the Donaldson Awards Committee for its splendid support, and also the various theatrical trades for their assistance in reaching the voters. Once more, particular thanks are do to the stage managers of the Broadway

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Legit Awards "Joey" Record 11 Honors; "Shrike," Best Play

Top Acting: Harris, Segal, Ferrer, Silvers; Staging, Ferrer, Alexander

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straight play of the season, but likewise the best "first play by an author to reach Broadway." The Kramm melo-tragedy wound up with a substantial majority over "I Am a Camera," its nearest competitor, but in the "first play" sector quadrupled the vote of Truman Capote's "The Grass Harp," the runner-up.

Anyone who saw "Shrike" should likewise agree with the voters' choice of Jose Ferrer for dual seasonal honors, not only as having given the best performance of the season in it, but also for the top job of seasonal direction. It is a play, performance and production that will long be remembered. It might be remembered, also, that Ferrer was one of the first award winners back in 1943-'44 for his lag in the Theater Guild's "Othello."

"Camera" also comes in for honors via the splendid contribution of Julie Harris, who won a Donaldson key and scroll for her supporting performance in "Member of the Wedding" back in 1949-'50. "Camera" not only elevated her to stardom, but has brought her the accolade for best performance of the year by an actress. Outstanding, too, is something of a record vote for Marian Winters in the same play. A nose count gives her nearly five times as many votes as her nearest rival for the year's best supporting performance.

Hodiak & Hepburn

Lest it should be thought that the voters' attention was completely intrigued by "Shrike" and "Camera," it may be pointed out that John Cromwell, since Hollywood-bound, was practically a two-to-one favorite in the balloting for best supporting performance by an actor, via his stint in "Point of No Return." Best play debuts on the Stem were voted to pic actor John Hodiak, for his troubled sheriff in "The Chase," and to young Audrey Hepburn, for her creation of a joyous hoyden in "Gigi."

Cecil Beaton comes in for his third Donaldson key and scroll on the basis of his sets for the somewhat short-lived "Grass Harp." Beaton was a double winner in the 1946-'47 season for sets and costumes for "Lady Windermere's Fan." This time he nosed out Jo Mielziner's designs for "Flight into Egypt." Audrey

Cruddas' costumes are the voters' choice, after looking over the body-drapings for the imported "Caesar and Cleopatra." He outran himself for second place with his costumes for the twin bill of "Antony and Cleopatra."

"Joey" Record

It has not been unusual for an outstanding song-and-dancer to run off with the majority of the musical division honors. Four years ago "South Pacific" placed first in nine out of 16 musical categories. A year later "The Consul" topped in eight of them, and the following year "Guys and Dolls" had seven wins to its credit. But it remains, however, for a revival of the O'Hara-Hart-Rodgers "Pal Joey" to break all existing award records. "Joey" carries off 11 of last season's musical honors, and since it made its original bow before the Donaldson Awards were in existence, it may be regarded in every way as a brand new production.

Not only did "Joey" poll four times the number of ballots of its closest competitor, but it shed a flock of individual honors on those contributing to it. Vivienne Segal, recreating her original role of the bewitched and bewildered matron, was a runaway favorite in the best musical actress sweepstakes. David Alexander gave it the best musical direction of the year in the opinion of the voters. Helen Gallagher again demonstrated that she is one of our best up-and-coming comedienne

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THE WINNERS OF THE 9TH ANNUAL DONALDSON AWARDS

1951-1952

Straight Play Division

- Best Play **THE SHRIKE**
- Best "First" Play **THE SHRIKE**
- Best Direction **JOSE FERRER (The Shrike)**
- Best Performance—Actor **JOSE FERRER (The Shrike)**
- Best Performance—Actress **JULIE HARRIS (I Am a Camera)**
- Best Supporting Performance—Actor **JOHN CROMWELL (Point of No Return)**
- Best Supporting Performance—Actress **MARIAN WINTERS (I Am a Camera)**
- Best Debut Performance—Actor **JOHN HODIAK (The Chase)**
- Best Debut Performance—Actress **AUDREY HEPBURN (Gigi)**
- Best Scenic Designs **CECIL BEATON (The Grass Harp)**
- Best Costume Designs **AUDREY CRUDDAS (Caesar and Cleopatra)**

Musical Division

- Best Musical **PAL JOEY**
- Best Direction **DAVID ALEXANDER (Pal Joey)**
- Best Performance—Actor **PHIL SILVERS (Top Banana)**
- Best Performance—Actress **VIVIENNE SEGAL (Pal Joey)**
- Best Supporting Performance—Actor **TONY BAVAAR (Paint Your Wagon)**
- Supporting Performance—Actress **HELEN GALLAGHER (Pal Joey)**
- Best Debut Performance—Actor **TONY BAVAAR (Paint Your Wagon)**
- Best Debut Performance—Actress **OLGA SAN JUAN (Paint Your Wagon)**
- Best Dancer **HAROLD LANG (Pal Joey)**
- Best Danseuse **GEMZE DE LAPPE (Paint Your Wagon)**
- Best Book **JOHN O'HARA (Pal Joey)**
- Best Score **RICHARD RODGERS (Pal Joey)**
- Best Lyrics **LORENZ HART (Pal Joey)**
- Best Dance Direction **ROBERT ALTON (Pal Joey)**
- Best Scenic Designs **OLIVER SMITH (Pal Joey)**
- Best Costume Designs **MILES WHITE (Pal Joey)**

AWARD ADS NOT SOLICITED

The Billboard does not solicit and will not accept advertising in connection with plays and persons voted winners in the Ninth Annual Donaldson Awards.

LEADERS SERVE ON 9TH DONALDSON COMMITTEE

Following are the members of the Ninth Annual Donaldson Awards Committee. They serve in an ex-officio capacity, as representatives of their respective branches of the industry. Their signatures appear on the winners' scrolls. But the committee has no hand in the selection of the winners. The Donaldson Award winners are chosen by a democratic poll of all the people in Broadway theater.

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