

# The Denver Post

theater

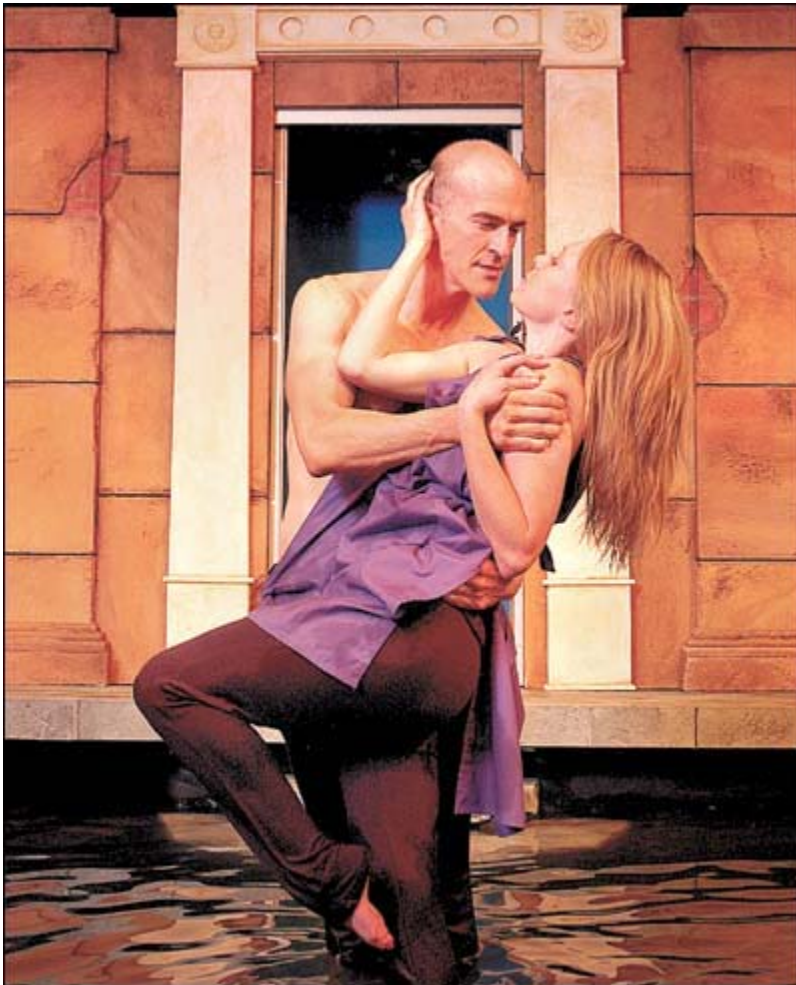
## The Denver Post's Fourth Annual Ovation Awards

By John Moore  
Denver Post Theater Critic

Sunday, December 26, 2004 -

### BEST DRAMA

The Avenue's "Metamorphoses"



Frolicking in an 1,800-gallon pool, Jeremy Cole's impeccable cast retells 12 tales by Roman poet Ovid with elegance and humor. If catharsis is the thing theater is supposed to be about, "Metamorphoses" is what theater is supposed to be. Pictured: William Hahn and Courtney Hayes as Cinyras and his lust-cursed daughter Myrrha.

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### BEST MUSICAL

### **Boulder Dinner Theater's "Cats"**



Director Stephen Bertles captured the attitude, mischief and heart of a musical so strange it was labeled "Webber's Folly." This is the gold standard against which all future local productions will be judged.

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### **BEST COMEDY**

#### **The Bug's "Waiting for Godot"**



The Bug Theatre, God(ot) bless it, not only dared to present wizard of woe Samuel Beckett's classic as a manifesto to hope, it reveled in hope in a daringly comic staging starring Brett Aune, left, and Gary Culig.

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## **BEST ENSEMBLE**

### **Curious' "Long Christmas Ride Home"**



No production required more exact and syncopated interaction among its ensemble actors, who here also had to operate in rhythm with onstage puppeteers and musicians like a dance. Pictured above is Karen Slack.

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**BEST YEAR BY A COMPANY**

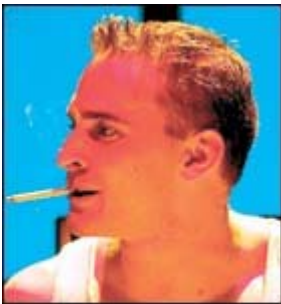
**Curious Theatre Company:** Curious took major strides in becoming a nationally recognized midlevel professional company by staging five big-time regional premieres. "Trumbo: Red, White and Blacklisted" put revolving actors in the title role for two months before touring the state. The others were "Bright Ideas," "Yellowman," "The Tricky Part" and "The Long Christmas Ride Home." Curious also beefed up its full-time staff and launched the New Voices Project for writers ages 15-21.

**BEST NEW WORK**

**LIDA Project's "Bingo Boyz: Columbine":** In a community that had grown numb to the volume of Columbine media coverage within a nation that has grown increasingly ambivalent toward violence, LIDA nobly dared to explore the disturbing escalation of retaliation as a response to bullying in our schools.

**BEST REMOUNT**

**Theatre Group's "Stop Kiss"**



**Gillette**

**BEST ACTOR, DRAMA**

**Gene Gillette, TheatreWorks' "A Streetcar Named Desire":** Gillette, the 2001 winner in this category for Curious' "Coyote on a Fence," is on the stage what Stanley is on the page - primal and dangerous, with an alternating ability to be almost boyishly tender. Gillette doesn't have the slightest inhibition diving into either extreme, sometimes transitioning between the two with such shocking speed as to draw gasps.

**BEST ACTRESS, DRAMA**

**Laura Norman, Bas Bleu/OpenStage's "Angels in America":** As the pill-popping Mormon wife of a man coming to terms with his latent homosexuality, Norman maintained an honest, affable whimsy as she teetered between her real and imagined worlds. Of the thousands of words uttered over six hours, Norman's sensitive recrimination echoes: "It's a sin, and it's killing us both."



**Norman**



**Barrett**

**BEST ACTOR, MUSICAL**

**Leonard Barrett, PHAMALY's "Guys & Dolls":** As the suave, sophisticated Sky Masterson, his was the most swaggering arrival by any area newcomer in years.

**BEST ACTRESS, MUSICAL**

**Sheryl Renee, Aurora Fox's "Hi-Hat Hattie":** In this one-woman musical about Colorado legend Hattie McDaniel, Renee showed the chops of a one-woman orchestra.



**BEST ACTOR, COMEDY**

**Brett Aune, the Bug's "Waiting for Godot":** Aune, half of a great vaudevillian team with Gary Culig, was dapper, meticulous and compassionate as this pair waged a heroic and comic duel with despair.

**BEST ACTRESS, COMEDY**

**Erin Rollman, Buntport's "Magnets on the Fridge":** Scary. Funny. Scary funny.

**SUPPORTING ACTOR, DRAMA**

**John Arp, The Avenue's "Metamorphoses":** His arc from greedy Midas to humbled father determined to walk the Earth to break his daughter's curse was arresting.

**SUPPORTING ACTRESS, DRAMA**

**Paige L. Larson, Miners Alley Playhouse's "I Never Promised You a Rose Garden":** As a pioneering therapist who rattled the drug-reliant mental-health establishment, Larson was no-nonsense, understated and focused.

**SUPPORTING ACTOR, MUSICAL**

**Wayne Kennedy, Boulder's Dinner Theatre's "Cabaret":** As love-struck Herr Schulz, a Jew who can't comprehend how his religion makes him less of a German, Kennedy delivered some of the most tender moments of a storied, three-decade career.

**SUPPORTING ACTRESS, MUSICAL**

**Shannon Steele, Arvada Center's "The 1940s Radio Hour":** With high comedy and sexy style, she emerged as a major leading lady very much coming into her own.

**SUPPORTING ACTOR, COMEDY**

**Kevin Hart, the Bug's "Waiting for Godot":** As a kind of repugnant puppeteer, he seethed cruelty with blustery indifference, while leaving open to interpretation the true identity of one of literature's great enigmas.

**SUPPORTING ACTRESS, COMEDY**

**Ethelyn Friend, Curious' "Bright Ideas":** Friend has an unlimited stable of personae, and here she produced a snobbish divorcée browbeaten into becoming a grandmotherly teacher.

**BEST YOUNGER ACTOR**

**Max Posner:** LIDA Project's "Bingo Boyz: Columbine"

**BEST DIRECTOR**

**Jeremy Cole:** The Avenue's "Metamorphoses"

**BEST CHOREOGRAPHY**

**Scott Wright:** Carousel Dinner Theatre's "Cats"

**BEST SET DESIGN AND BEST COSTUMES**

**Joseph J. Egan:** Arvada Center's "The Women"

**BEST SOUND**

**Scott Anderson and Jesus Marquez:** Curious' "The Long Christmas Ride Home"

**BEST LIGHTING**

**Stephen D. Mazzeno:** PHAMALY's "Guys and Dolls"

**BEST MAKEUP**

**Erica Dreckman:** Carousel Dinner Theatre's "Cats"

### **BEST CHILDREN'S THEATER PRODUCTION**

**Arvada Center:** "BFG: The Big, Friendly Giant"

### **BEST YEAR BY A CHILDREN'S THEATER ACTOR**

**Christopher Willard:** Actor, Arvada Center's "Pinnocchio" and "The Monster Under the Bed," director of "BFG: The Big, Friendly Giant"

## **Special achievement**

**"Angels in America":** The two-part co-production with OpenStage launched Bas Bleu's new theater space in Fort Collins.

**The Avenue's "Metamorphoses" pool:** Michael R. Duran and Ben Wofford built the 1,800-gallon tank.

**"The Tricky Part":** Curious brought Denver native Martin Moran's play home direct from off-Broadway.

**Firehouse Theatre Company:** Reopened in the John Hand Theatre after the murder of their founder.

**"I Love You, You're Perfect, Now Change":** The longest-running production in Colorado history closed in its fifth year.

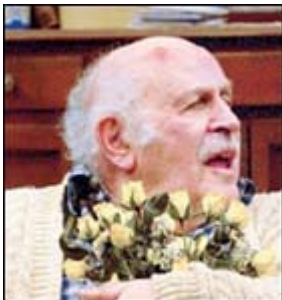
**"Menopause The Musical":** Love it or not, it has been seen by 71,000 at the New Denver Civic Theatre since June.

**North High School:** Jose Mercado brought "The Zoot Suit Riots" to the Buell Theatre.

## **Denver Center Theatre Company**

### **BEST PRODUCTION**

**"The Merchant of Venice":** Anthony Powell took a play saddled for 400 years by charges of anti-Semitism and showed that there is complicity in the prejudice and stereotyping on display by all the principal players.



Hammer

### **BEST ACTOR**

**Ben Hammer, "Visiting Mr. Green":** This precision Broadway veteran single-handedly lifted a pedantic premise into an unexpectedly complex character study.

### **BEST ACTRESS**

**January LaVoy, "The Merchant of Venice":** As Portia she was sweet and intelligent, girlish and anxious. Her immortal courtroom speech was described as "heartfelt and transcendently lucid."



**BEST SUPPORTING ACTOR**

**Mike Hartman, "Dirty Story":** Genetically meld George Bush and Charlton Heston and you have a wicked parody that only a sitting president could not love.

**BEST SUPPORTING ACTRESS**

**Jacqueline Antaramian, "Blithe Spirit":** As a ghost brought back from the dead, she was certainly larger than life.

**BEST SET**

**Michael Brown:** "A Streetcar Named Desire"

**BEST COSTUMES**

**Andrew V. Yelusich:** "John Brown's Body"

**BEST LIGHTING**

**Don Darnutzer:** "John Brown's Body"

**BEST SOUND**

**David R. White:** "John Brown's Body"

**BEST SPECIAL EFFECTS**

**Dan McNeil, Vicki Smith and crew:** "Blithe Spirit"

**BEST YEAR BY A DIRECTOR**

**Anthony Powell:** "Visiting Mr. Green," "The Merchant of Venice" and "Dirty Story"

**SPECIAL RECOGNITION**

**Donovan Marley:** 21st and final season as artistic director

**The national tours****BEST PRODUCTION**

**"Movin' Out"**

**BEST ACTOR**

**Frank Gorshin:** "Say Goodnight, Gracie"

**BEST ACTRESS**

**Carly Jibson:** "Hairspray"

**BEST SUPPORTING ACTOR**

**Julian Rebolledo:** "Heaven Help Us: The Rat Pack Musical"

**BEST SUPPORTING ACTRESS**

**Julieta Gros:** "Movin' Out"

**About the 2004 Ovation Awards**

Nominees were culled from 142 productions reviewed or observed by Denver Post critics. Winners were selected by theater critic John Moore. All shows had to have opened between Jan. 1-Dec. 31, 2004, and not been previously staged by the same company within five years. For a list of nominees,

[click here.](#)