



**Strictly Embargoed until 21.00 GMT Sunday 13 March 2011**

## **2011 OLIVIER AWARDS WITH MASTERCARD WINNERS ANNOUNCED**

The winners of the 35<sup>th</sup> Olivier Awards with MasterCard, the UK's highest stage honours, were announced tonight, **Sunday 13 March 2011**, at a star-studded ceremony held at London's historic Theatre Royal, Drury Lane.

The National Theatre swept the board with seven wins across two productions. Thea Sharrock's production of *After the Dance* won four awards for Best Revival, Best Actress for Nancy Carroll, Best Actor in a Supporting Role for Adrian Scarborough and Best Costume Design for Hildegard Bechtler at the Lyttleton. Howard Davies received Best Director for his production of *The White Guard* which also won Best Lighting Design for Neil Austin and the XL Video Best Set Design for Bunny Christie.

The Royal Court Theatre, under the artistic direction of Dominic Cooke, continues its role as a powerhouse of new writing: The MasterCard Best New Play Award went to Bruce Norris's *Clybourne Park*, which transferred to the West End following a sell-out season at the Royal Court last year. Other Royal Court wins include Michelle Terry as the Best Actress in a Supporting Role for her performance in *Tribes* and Leon Baugh as the Best Theatre Choreographer for his work on *Sucker Punch*, both in the Jerwood Theatre Downstairs at the Royal Court.

The musical awards were dominated by the hit show *Legally Blonde – The Musical*, which picked up Best New Musical at the Savoy, Best Performance in a Supporting Role in a Musical for Jill Halfpenny and Best Actress in a Musical for Sheridan Smith with her mischievous turn as Elle Woods. Sheridan Smith earned her first Olivier nomination for the Menier's *Little Shop of Horrors*. It was on the strength of her performance in a song from that show at the 2008 Olivier Awards, that led to American director Jerry Mitchell casting her as his leading lady in the London production of *Legally Blonde*.

In the hotly contested Best Actor category, Roger Allam won for his portrayal of Falstaff in *Henry IV Parts 1 and 2* at Shakespeare's Globe, beating off stiff competition from Sir Derek Jacobi, Rory Kinnear, Mark Rylance and David Suchet for their extraordinary performances on stage.

The Society of London Theatre's Special Award was presented by Sir Cameron Mackintosh and Angela Lansbury, who flew into London especially for the occasion, to the celebrated

American composer and lyricist, Stephen Sondheim. The finale of the evening was a tribute to Sondheim featuring Adrian Lester and Angela Lansbury, singing on the London stage for the first time in many years, joined by a cast of 360 students from accredited national drama schools performing *Our Time*, with solo performances by Oliver Eyre, Alex Young and Fra Fee.

Other performances on the evening included *Copacobana* by the legendary Barry Manilow and *Look to the Rainbow* as a duet with West End leading lady, Kerry Ellis, who has starred in *Wicked* and *We Will Rock You*. Alfie Boe performed *Some Enchanted Evening* and, as a special tribute to celebrate 25 years of *The Phantom of the Opera*, one of the world's most popular musicals, Sierra Boggess and John Owen Jones performed the title song.

In one of the surprise stories of the night, OperaUpClose's debut production of *La Bohème*, which originally played to 35 people in The Cock Tavern, won the Best New Opera Production in a David and Goliath battle with five international opera companies. *La Bohème* became a sell-out at the 150-seat Soho Theatre and the innovative production of Puccini's classic became one of the highest-grossing shows in the venue's history.

Sean Holmes' production of *Blasted* by Sarah Kane earned the Lyric Hammersmith the award for Outstanding Achievement in an Affiliate Theatre, and the award for Best Entertainment went to *The Railway Children*, staged in the unique environment of Waterloo Station, which will see its return this coming summer.

Regent's Park Open Air Theatre continued its Olivier success with Best Musical Revival for Sondheim's *Into The Woods* and another Sondheim classic, *Passion*, earned David Thaxton the award for Best Actor in a Musical.

The BBC Radio 2 Audience Award for Most Popular Show, presented by Elaine Paige, was won by *We Will Rock You* and its co-creators, Brian May and Roger Taylor, came on stage to accept the award.

The award for Outstanding Achievement in Opera was given to Christian Gerhaher for his performance in the Royal Opera's *Tannhäuser* at the Royal Opera House. *Babel (Words)* by Eastman vzw and Theatre Royal de la Monnaie at Sadler's Wells picked up the two dance awards: Best New Dance Production, choreographed by Sidi Larbi Cherkaoui and Damien Jaklet and the Outstanding Achievement in Dance award was given to internationally renowned artist Antony Gormley for his set design. Best Sound Design went to Adam Cork for *King Lear* at the Donmar.

For the first time The Olivier Awards with MasterCard were broadcast live on both BBC TV, via the red button, and BBC Radio 2, with coverage of the red carpet and a special review programme on BBC TV News.

President of SOLT, Nica Burns said of the winners: 'The Olivier Awards 2011 with MasterCard reflect an extraordinary year of inspiration and excellence on the stage, which attracted over 14 million people to keep the box office healthy in spite of cuts and financial gloom. London theatre leads the world, something of which we can all be proud. Congratulations to all the winners and our vibrant theatre community who have collaborated to create such wonderful productions.'

The evening was attended by Lady Olivier and Olivier Award nominees including: Roger Allam, Sir Derek Jacobi, Antony Gormley, Gina McKee, Rachael Stirling, Tamsin Grieg, Sophie Thompson, David Suchet, Rory Kinnear, Nancy Carroll, Tracie Bennett, Sahr Ngaujah, Brian May, Roger Taylor, Simon McBurney, Michelle Terry, Alex Gaumond, Jeremy Dyson, Andy Nyman, Jill Halfpenny, Sheridan Smith, Michael Xavier, Emma Williams, Ramin Karimloo, Sarah Goldberg, Elena Roger, Josefina Gabrielle, Summer Strallen, Sierra Boggess, David Thaxton, Hilton McRae, James Laurensen, Lee Ross, Adrian Scarborough and the cast of *Blasted*.

Presenters of the 2011 awards included: Sir Patrick Stewart, Benedict Cumberbatch, Anne-Marie Duff, Matthew Fox, Joss Ackland, Rupert Everett, Elisabeth Moss, Lesley Manville, Oliver Chris, Mark Gatiss, Reece Shearsmith, Amanda Holden, Es Devlin, Gok Wan, Alfie Boe, James Purefoy, Joanna Riding, Jonny Lee Miller, Elaine Paige, Tamara Rojo, Danielle Hope, Rachel Tucker, Louise Dearman, Olivia Williams and musician Dave Stewart with Caissie Levy, the lead in *Ghost The Musical*.

Up-to-the-minute news about the awards can be found at [www.olivierawards.com](http://www.olivierawards.com)

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**Notes to editors:**

- The Laurence Olivier Awards were created in 1976 as The Society of West End Theatre Awards to recognise excellence on the London stage and became the Laurence Olivier Awards in 1984 when Lord Olivier gave his name to the awards
- The Society of London Theatre is the trade association which represents the producers, theatre owners and managers of the 52 major commercial and grant-aided theatres in central London. The organisation exists in order to promote theatregoing, develop audiences, and to serve, protect and promote the interests of those engaged in theatre across London.
- The awards include 24 categories, although they are not all given each year: 18 for theatre, two for opera, two for dance, one for productions presented by SOLT's (Society of London Theatre) Affiliate members and the BBC Radio 2 Audience Award for Most Popular Show. The Society of London Theatre also presents the Special Award.
- The national drama schools represented in the choir were Central School of Speech & Drama, LIPA (Liverpool Institute for Performing Arts), Arts Educational, RADA, Guildford School of Acting, Drama Centre London, Mountview Academy of Theatre Arts and the Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Drama.

## **WINNERS FOR THE 2011 LAURENCE OLIVIER AWARDS**

**SOCIETY OF LONDON THEATRE SPECIAL AWARD** Stephen Sondheim

**BEST ACTRESS** Nancy Carroll for AFTER THE DANCE at the Lyttelton

**BEST ACTOR** Roger Allam for HENRY IV PARTS 1 & 2 at Shakespeare's Globe Theatre

**BEST ACTRESS IN A SUPPORTING ROLE** Michelle Terry for TRIBES at the Jerwood Theatre Downstairs at the Royal Court

**BEST ACTOR IN A SUPPORTING ROLE** Adrian Scarborough for AFTER THE DANCE at the Lyttelton

**BEST NEW PLAY** CLYBOURNE PARK by Bruce Norris at the Jerwood Theatre Downstairs at the Royal Court

**BEST MUSICAL REVIVAL** INTO THE WOODS at the Regent's Park Open Air Theatre

**BEST NEW MUSICAL** LEGALLY BLONDE – THE MUSICAL book by Heather Hach, music and lyrics by Laurence O'Keefe and Nell Benjamin at the Savoy

**BEST ENTERTAINMENT** THE RAILWAY CHILDREN by E Nesbit, adapted by Mike Kenny at the Waterloo Station Theatre

**BEST ACTRESS IN A MUSICAL** Sheridan Smith for LEGALLY BLONDE- THE MUSICAL at the Savoy

**BEST ACTOR IN A MUSICAL** David Thaxton for PASSION at the Donmar Warehouse

**BEST PERFORMANCE IN A SUPPORTING ROLE IN A MUSICAL** Jill Halfpenny for LEGALLY BLONDE- THE MUSICAL at the Savoy

**BEST DIRECTOR** Howard Davies for THE WHITE GUARD at the Lyttelton

**BEST REVIVAL** AFTER THE DANCE directed by Thea Sharrock at the Lyttelton

**BEST THEATRE CHOREOGRAPHER** Leon Baugh for SUCKER PUNCH at the Jerwood Theatre Downstairs at the Royal Court

**BEST LIGHTING DESIGN** THE WHITE GUARD designed by Neil Austin at the Lyttelton

**BEST SET DESIGN** THE WHITE GUARD designed by Bunny Christie at the Lyttelton

**BEST COSTUME DESIGN** AFTER THE DANCE designed by Hildegard Bechtler at the Lyttelton

**BEST SOUND DESIGN** KING LEAR designed by Adam Cork at the Donmar Warehouse

**BBC RADIO 2 AUDIENCE AWARD FOR MOST POPULAR SHOW** WE WILL ROCK YOU

**OUTSTANDING ACHIEVEMENT IN AN AFFILIATE THEATRE**

Lyric Hammersmith for BLASTED

**BEST NEW OPERA PRODUCTION** OperaUpClose and Soho Theatre's LA BOHÈME at the Soho Theatre

**OUTSTANDING ACHIEVEMENT IN OPERA** Christian Gerhaher for his performance in the Royal Opera's TANNHÄUSER at the Royal Opera House

**BEST NEW DANCE PRODUCTION** *Babel (Words)* by Eastman vzw and Royal Opera House La Monnaie at Sadler's Wells, choreographed by Sidi Larbi Cherkaoui and Damien Jalet

**OUTSTANDING ACHIEVEMENT IN DANCE** Antony Gormley for his set design of *Babel (Words)* by Eastman vzw and Theatre Royal de la Monnaie at Sadler's