

## ***No Exit* Finds an Entrance to the Jessie Awards**

**Innovative Live-Cinematic Interpretation Leads Small Theatre Category With Eight Nominations**

The Virtual Stage and Electric Company Theatre's highly acclaimed co-production of Jean-Paul Sartre's classic existential play *No Exit* found itself a leader in the Small Theatre category – and a close second in overall nominations – when the finalists for the 27<sup>th</sup> Annual Jessie Richardson Awards were announced at a nomination ceremony at the New Review Stage on Granville Island.

The cutting-edge live-performed film, hailed as “brilliant” in the press for its integration of both cinematic and theatrical elements, bagged a whopping eight nominations, including nods for Outstanding Production and Outstanding Direction (Kim Collier, who was also nominated for the same award in the Large Theatre category). Vancouver Sun theatre critic Peter Birnie announced during the ceremony that *No Exit* has also been short-listed for the coveted Critics' Choice Innovation Award, a special prize awarded by a jury of local theatre critics for excellence in production. In the design categories, Kirsten McGhie was acknowledged for Outstanding Costume Design, John Webber for Outstanding Lighting Design and emerging designer Jay Gower Taylor was nominated for Outstanding Set Design. Laara Sadiq received a nomination for Outstanding Performance by an Actress in a Supporting Role. The Virtual Stage's Artistic and Managing Director Andy Thompson and filmmaker Bojan Bodruzic were jointly awarded a nomination for Significant Artistic Achievement for Video Design and Editing.

Ruby Slippers Theatre was also awarded eight nominations in the Small Theatre category for its production of *Life Savers*. Only one production in the entire theatre season received more award nominations: Playhouse Theatre Company's *The Drowsy Chaperone* in the Large Theatre category, which received nine.

“It's very rewarding and a tremendous honour to be acknowledged in such a manner,” Thompson said. “It is interesting also to note that at one point, we were seriously entertaining the possibility that this show would do poorly; because of the degree of risk that we were taking, we had no clue how it might be received. In fact, we hedged our bets early in the process and cut a week of performances to save on expenses in the event that it didn't do well – a decision we later regretted, of course! The whole experience just proves to me that we should continue to take huge creative risks. I would like to extend a whole-hearted thank you to our inspirational director Kim Collier, our co-production partners at Electric Company Theatre, and the amazingly dedicated team of artists, designers, supporters, donors and volunteers who threw their hearts – and souls – into this interpretation of Sartre's hell with us.”

*No Exit* will be touring Canada next season.

The eight *No Exit* nominations bring the total The Virtual Stage has received in its history to fourteen, with two wins thus far. As well, the company is associated with two Most-Promising Newcomer Award winners, who received their awards the years they worked on The Virtual Stage's shows. This year's winners will be announced at the Jessies' 27th Anniversary Celebration on June 15th at the Commodore Ballroom. Tickets are available through Ticketmaster: [www.ticketmaster.ca](http://www.ticketmaster.ca) and 604-280-4444.

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