

Robert Israel wins the American Theatre Wing Award for "The Hunger Artist"

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UCSD STAGE DESIGNER ROBERT ISRAEL WINS THE AMERICAN THEATRE WING AWARD

America's most prestigious theatre design award, the American Theatre Wing Award, was awarded to Robert Israel for the set and costumes designed for the off-Broadway production of "The Hunger Artist," on Oct. 22, in New York City.

Israel, a professor of theatre, heads the theatre design program for the Department of Theatre at the University of California, San Diego.

The American Theatre Wing Award, previously known as the Joseph Maharam Foundation Award, is considered to be the foremost theatre design award in the country, as the award embraces Broadway, off-Broadway, and off-off-Broadway productions for works originating in New York.

Nominees are chosen by a panel of theatre designers, rather than critics, unlike the Tony or Obie awards. The judges for the Theatre Wing Awards, however, are critics. Judges for this year's awards are: Edward Cook, lighting consultant; Julius Novick, theatre critic; Tish Dace, theatre critic; Patricia MacKay, publisher/editor, Theatre Crafts; and Chairman Henry Hewes, coordinator, American Theatre Critics Association.

Other American Theatre Wing Award winners are: for scenic design, James D. Sandefur, "Fences"; for costume design, John Napier, "Starlight Express"; for lighting design, Paul Gallo, "The Hunger Artist"; for lighting design, Jennifer Tipton, "Worstward Ho"; and a design for noteworthy unusual effects was given to Tom Kamm, a former UCSD theatre design student, and Robert Wilson for "the CIVIL warS, Act V."

"The Hunger Artist," directed by Martha Clarke, is based on the unhappy life of the Czech writer Franz Kafka, whose posthumously published novels include "The Trial," and "The Castle." In his books he expresses the anxieties and aberrations of 20th century man.

"The Hunger Artist" this year captured four Obies, with Israel winning one for set design and costumes. Last year, Israel won the Maharam/American Theatre Wing Award for his stage and costume designs for the acclaimed off-Broadway production of "Vienna: Lusthaus." He is the recipient of two grants from the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA), and received an invitation to take part in the Prague Quadrennial of Theatre Design, to exhibit designs he created for "Vienna: Lusthaus," and "The Hunger Artist."

Israel's recent design work includes a production of "Mahagonny," directed by Johnathan Miller, for the Los Angeles Music Center Opera; a new production with Martha Clarke which will be performed in New York, Paris and Spoleto, Italy, and a recent production of "Fiery Angel," by Sergei Prokofiev, for performance at the Dorothy Chandler Pavillion in Los Angeles, at the Geneva Opera and the English National Opera.

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