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Workhouse Arts Center Receives Five Helen Hayes Awards Nominations Production of *Urinetown* Honored Among the Best in the Washington Area

Lorton, VA – (Jan. 30, 2024) The Helen Hayes Awards, the Washington-area theater community's equivalent of the Tony Awards, has nominated the Workhouse Arts Center's 2023 production of *Urinetown* for five Helen Hayes Awards. Theatre Washington announced the nominations for the 40th Helen Hayes Awards at a celebration held on Monday, January 22 at the ATLAS Performing Arts Center.

The Workhouse production of *Urinetown* received nominations for:

- Outstanding Ensemble
- Outstanding Lead Performer in a Musical, Amanda Mason
- Outstanding Lead Performer in a Musical, Ashton Schaffer
- Outstanding Lead Performer in a Musical, Mel Gumina
- Outstanding Musical Direction, Paige Austin Rammelkamp.

Nominees were chosen by 49 judges considering 2,005 individual pieces of work in 41 categories. Productions under consideration in 2023 included 44 musicals, 107 plays, and 36 world premieres.

"We are elated to be nominated alongside such an esteemed group of talented theatre professionals," said Joseph Wallen, Performing Arts Director for the Workhouse Arts Center. "I believe that the success of our production of *Urinetown* was the result of a great creative team and dedicated ensemble of performers. The script and music provided a solid foundation for an intriguing (and often hysterical) story to be told."

This is the second year in a row that the Workhouse Performing Arts has been honored with a Helen Hayes Awards Nomination. Jessica Barraclough, who starred in the 2022 production of *Xanadu*, received a nod for Best Lead Performer in a Musical.

About Workhouse Arts Center

The Workhouse Arts Center, a project of the Workhouse Arts Foundation, helps to grow and support a vibrant arts center that offers engaging opportunities in visual and performing arts, education classes, historical perspective, community engagement and personal enrichment. The Workhouse is located on a unique historical property—a 55-acre portion of the former DC Correctional Complex in Lorton, Virginia that dates back to 1910. After the complex's closure in 2001, Fairfax County leadership and an adaptive reuse task force transformed the site into a community arts center. Opened in 2008, the Workhouse now curates and presents dozens of art exhibitions from local, regional, and national artists and is home to more than 60 local artists who create in their on-campus open studios. The Workhouse presents nearly 300 performing arts events and offers over 300 education art classes, engaging nearly 100,000 people annually.

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