
PRESS RELEASE

BIG APPLE PERFORMING ARTS



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JERRY MITCHELL, AWARD WINNING DIRECTOR AND CHOREOGRAPHER AND JASON HAYES, FOUNDER AND ORGANIZER OF DISARM HATE TO BE HONORED AT HARMONY, A GALA BENEFITING NEW YORK CITY GAY MEN'S CHORUS AND YOUTH PRIDE CHORUS

NEW YORK, February 2, 2016 – Big Apple Performing Arts (BAPA), the home of New York City Gay Men’s Chorus and Youth Pride Chorus, today announced the recipients of the **Arts in Action Award** and **Gary Miller Award** for 2017 to be presented at Harmony, New York City’s most fabulous gala and party to benefit NYCGMC and YPC on **February 17, 2017** at the **Diamond Horseshoe** (235 West 46th Street). Award-winning director and choreographer, **Jerry Mitchell**, is this year’s Arts in Action Award recipient. Mr. Mitchell’s resume includes the incomparable Broadway shows *Kinky Boots*, *Legally Blonde*, *Hairspray*, in addition to being the creator of the legendary *Broadway Bares*, which has raised money for Broadway Cares/Equity Fights AIDS since 1992. Founder and National Organizer of Disarm Hate which gathered over 10,000 people in Washington DC this past August, **Jason Hayes**, will be this year’s Gary Miller Award recipient.

BAPA’s Arts in Action Award—now in its second year—is given to an artist who has found success in the field of entertainment and then used that success to inspire change. The first recipient was *Fun Home*’s creator, Lisa Kron, in 2016. For 2017, Mr. Mitchell was selected because of his body of work, both on the stage and in support of the LGBTQ community, and because he has been a high-profile role model for BAPA’s core values.

“Jerry Mitchell epitomizes the values we hope to champion with the Arts in Action Award,” said Willis Goodmoore, Chair of BAPA’s Board of Directors. “For his entire celebrated career as a dancer, choreographer, director, and producer, he has changed hearts and minds through musical theater. Without exception, his work celebrates diversity—fearlessly promoting that what makes us different, makes us special. That monumental achievement alone qualifies Jerry Mitchell for our Arts in Action Award.”

Goodmoore continued, “But, Jerry does much more than his work on stage. He has taken arts advocacy and philanthropy to an unprecedented level. His creation, *Broadway Bares*, the world-famous event that benefits Broadway Cares/Equity Fights Aids, has raised more than \$14.3 million dollars to support people living with HIV/AIDS. His passion for the impact that the arts can have certainly shows no signs of slowing.” The 27th production of *Broadway Bares* will be held on June 18 at Manhattan’s Hammerstein Ballroom.

The Gary Miller Award is given to someone who has made a significant contribution to LGBTQ community and is named after the first conductor of the New York City Gay Men’s Chorus. Jason Hayes is the third recipient following Garry Miller himself and Maria-Elena Grant who received the award last year.

“Jason is an exceptionally talented artist who has galvanized the LGBTQ community in the wake of the attack in Orlando with a campaign to *Disarm Hate*. This combination of artistry and activism is celebrated throughout the work of BAPA,” said Goodmoore. “We look forward to showering his good work with praise on Feb 17 at *Harmony*.”

For more information about BAPA, NYCGMC, YPC, Harmony, Jerry Mitchell, Jason Hayes and how to purchase tickets, click [here](#).

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About Jerry Mitchell

Jerry Mitchell (Director/Choreographer) is currently represented on Broadway as the Director of the Gloria Estefan bio-musical, *On Your Feet*, having previously received TONY Awards in recognition of his choreography for the 2013 TONY-Award winning Best Musical, *Kinky Boots*, for which he was also nominated as Director and the 2005 revival of *La Cage Aux Folles*. He was nominated for an Olivier Award for his choreography in *Dirty Rotten Scoundrels*, which he also directed and co-produced in the West End. In the 35 preceding years, Jerry has been involved with over 50 Broadway, Off-Broadway, West End and touring productions, starting as a dancer for Agnes De Mille in *Brigadoon* and thereafter assisting Michael Bennett and Jerome Robbins. His Broadway debut as Choreographer, *You're A Good Man, Charlie Brown*, was followed by *The Full Monty* (TONY nomination), *The Rocky Horror Show*, *Hairspray* (TONY nomination), *Gypsy* (starring Bernadette Peters), *Never Gonna Dance* (TONY nomination), *Dirty Rotten Scoundrels* (TONY nomination), *Imaginary Friends*, *Legally Blonde* (TONY nomination), which he also directed, *Catch Me If You Can* and *Kinky Boots* (also currently running in London, Australia, Japan, Korea and on a U.S. tour, with Germany up next.) He also choreographed both the Off-Broadway productions and films of *Hedwig & The Angry Inch* and *Jeffrey*, the National Tour of *Jekyll & Hyde*, Paper Mill Playhouse's critically acclaimed *Follies*, featuring Ann Miller and *Love Never Dies*, Sir Andrew Lloyd Webber's sequel to his *Phantom of the Opera*, for the West End and supervised the Broadway production of *Priscilla, Queen of the Desert*. Jerry's memorable film work includes *In and Out*, *Scent of a Woman*, *Jeffrey*, *Drop Dead Gorgeous* and *Camp*. For television, he recently choreographed the NBC live production of *Hairspray*, as well as several seasons of *The Rosie O'Donnell Show*, was nominated for an Emmy for his choreography created for *The Drew Carey Show*, was featured as the host of *Step It Up and Dance* and appeared in his role as Director/Choreographer of *Legally Blonde* in *The Search for Elle Woods* and of *Peepshow* in *Ice Loves Coco*. Jerry expanded his activities as a theatre producer by forming a partnership with one of the most active and respected West End producers and theatre owners, Ambassador Theatre Group, with the goal of developing musicals for the West End and Broadway stages. Twenty-seven years ago, Jerry conceived and created *Broadway Bares*, a comedy burlesque show performed annually for the charity Broadway Cares/Equity Fights AIDS. He continues to serve as Executive Producer of *Broadway Bares*, with a book, website and satellite productions in Fire Island Pines, Las Vegas (*Peepshow*, which enjoyed a five-year run of continuous performances) and London (*West End Bares*). Most recently, Jerry received the Drama League's Founders' Award for Excellence in Directing and the George Abbott Lifetime Achievement Award from his peers, the latter being especially meaningful to him in that he was directed by the 96-year-old Mr. Abbott in the Broadway revival of *On Your Toes*. A native of Paw Paw, Michigan, Jerry attended Webster Conservatory in St. Louis, from which he received an Honorary Doctorate.

About Jason Hayes

Jason Hayes is an award winning wig and hair designer specializing in film and stage productions. His work is highly sought after and he designs and builds wigs for top artists and celebrity clients including: Angelica Huston, Debra Messing, Toni Colette, Dylan McDermott, Felicity Huffman, Jennifer Hudson, Liza Minelli, Sean Hayes, Josh Lucas, Megan Fox, Antonio Banderas, Mary Stuart Masterson, Cherry Jones, Angela Lansbury, Laura Linney, Phillip Seymour Hoffman, Macauley Culkin, Marilyn Manson, Harvey Fierstein, Paul Rudd, Patrick Stewart, T.R Knight. Jason is a 2016 Drama Desk Award Nominee for Outstanding Wig & Hair Design for his work on *The Legend of Georgia McBride*. Hayes is currently Hair Supervisor for *The Present* starring Cate Blanchett. Broadway Theatrical design credits include *Casa Valentina*, *The Realistic Jones's*, *Spring Awakening*, *Blithe Spirit*, *13 The Musical*, and *Radio City Christmas Spectacular* (nine consecutive years). TV credits include *The Mysteries of Laura*, *Smash*, *Hostages*, *30 Rock*, *Mercy*, *Gossip Girl*. Film credits include *Transamerica*, *Camp*, *The Savages*, and *Party Monster*.

About the New York City Gay Men's Chorus

New York City Gay Men's Chorus is a world-class, world-renowned New York institution and a pioneering voice for the LGBTQ community. NYCGMC is comprised of more than 250 talented singers of various ages, backgrounds, and experiences. Together, we produce a vibrant sound and energy that audiences can feel and connect with. Through the power of this sound, and our spectacular performances, we are fearless champions for love, equality, and acceptance. Founded in 1980, NYCGMC has formed a strong bond with devoted followers and continues to make lasting connections with new and diverse audiences. We sing in every style from classical to pop, Broadway to gospel, and from cultures all over the world. As artists, we listen to the changing world around us and transform what we hear into music. We sing to challenge perceptions of the LGBTQ community, to combat fear and hatred, encourage compassion and human connection, and to thrill with the superb quality of our sound. Through our music, audiences mourn losses, cheer victories, find unconditional acceptance, and celebrate life. We perform in a variety of settings, including special, private, and corporate events, concerts, television appearances, festivals, Broadway/theatre productions, conferences, weddings, parties, fundraisers, and community events. nycgmc.org

About the Youth Pride Chorus

New York City's Youth Pride Chorus harnesses the power of the performing arts to engage lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and straight young people ages 13-22 as agents of change. YPC fights homophobia, bullying, and all forms of hate by boldly asserting—through music—the joy, diversity, strength, and pride of today's youth. YPC singers discover their own power by empowering others in schools, online, and in the broader community through electrifying, high caliber singing and performances. youthpridechorus.org

About Big Apple Performing Arts

Big Apple Performing Arts is the non-profit management company for the New York City Gay Men's Chorus and Youth Pride Chorus. With over thirty years of history, innovative programs, and service to the LGBTQ community, Big Apple Performing Arts is renowned for producing legendary performances, commissioning new works, and taking a leading role in the movement for social justice. From Carnegie Hall to City Hall, from the AIDS crisis to the struggle for marriage equality, as well as today's gender and identity politics, the choruses of BAPA have been leaders and activists in the New York City community since 1980.

Here are links for more information on the following:

[NYCGMC](#)