

CSUEB Theatre Professor Selected for Award

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Marc Jacobs Marc Jacobs, Cal State East Bay assistant professor of theatre and dance, has been selected for a Bay Area Drama Critics Circle Award for directing the musical "Show Boat" in April 2007 at the San Mateo County Performing Arts Center. Winners of the Drama Critics Circle Award will be announced in April.

"This was one of the most challenging shows I've ever directed," Jacobs said. "It's truly an epic and requires both a white and an African-American chorus as it takes a realistic family of characters from 1887, shortly after the South's disastrous Reconstruction period, up to 1927, the height of the roaring '20s and just two years before the stock market crash would again change everything in America. The characters in the show are three-dimensional human beings who struggle to preserve a sense of family."

Jacobs' production of "Show Boat" was nominated for seven Bay Area Drama Critics Circle Awards, including best musical, best direction, best choreography, best principal male, best principal female, best supporting actor and best supporting actress.

According to Jacobs, "Show Boat"-originally produced in 1928 on Broadway-not only changed the way society looks at musicals but how an epic story could be told in musical terms.

"I hope the community realizes that they don't have to go to the peninsula to see Marc's work," said Tom Hird, chair of the CSUEB Department of Theatre and Dance. "His latest production, 'Urinetown, the Musical,' was performed on our stage March 7-9."

Jacobs said the original production of "Show Boat" was a landmark in musical theatre, "literally inventing the modern musical, as we know it." "Show Boat" tackled serious subject matter such as race relations, broken marriages and 40 years of U.S. history.

The show broke the color barrier in its casting, and, for the first time, songs moved the plot forward and were specific to the characters who sang them, according to Jacobs.

Jacobs had previously directed "My Fair Lady" and "Fiddler on the Roof" for Broadway by the Bay, a Burlingame theater company with 7,000 subscribers.