

The graphic features the NTC logo at the top left, followed by the text '2021 Virtual Conference' and the tagline 'Connecting, Supporting, and Advocating for America's Theatres - Since 1925'. Below this is a large 'NTC' logo. To the right, text reads 'More information about the 2021 Conference, Award recipients & new members available online at: NationalTheatreConference.org'. At the bottom, three black and white portraits of the award recipients are shown: Sanaz Toossi, Kenny Leon, and Jack Reuler.

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2021 Award Recipients: Sanaz Toossi, Kenny Leon, Jack Reuler

NTC 2021 CONFERENCE PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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THE NATIONAL THEATRE CONFERENCE ANNOUNCES ITS 2021 AWARD RECIPIENTS:

TONY AWARD WINNER **KENNY LEON** IS PERSON OF THE YEAR,
MIXED BLOOD THEATRE IS THE OUTSTANDING THEATRE,
SANAZ TOOSSI WINS THE STAVIS PLAYWRITING AWARD FOR *WISH YOU WERE HERE*,
MIRANDA HAYMON RECEIVES THE PAUL GREEN AWARD,
ANNA ROBINSON RECEIVES THE EMERGING PROFESSIONAL AWARD

(New York, NY, September 30, 2021) – The National Theatre Conference (NTC), is an organization of theatermakers that connects, supports, and advocates for the field. Each year, leading theatre professionals and academics gather in New York City to engage in the essential questions of our art. NTC also honors new and long-time organizations and individuals who affect and inspire the field, and has named the recipients of its 2021 awards. Due to COVID-19, NTC will hold its annual national gathering online Friday, December 3, Saturday, December 4, and Sunday, December 5, 2021.

Kenny Leon, Tony and Obie Award-winning and Emmy-nominated Broadway and Television director, is NTC's Person of the Year. Most recently, Leon directed Lifetime's Emmy-nominated

Robin Roberts Presents: Mahalia. Currently on Netflix, Kenny directed *Amend: The Fight for America*, a six-part docu-series hosted by Will Smith. Last year, he directed the Broadway premiere of Charles Fuller's Pulitzer Prize-winning masterpiece *A Soldier's Play* starring Blair Underwood and David Alan Grier at Roundabout Theatre Company, for which he received the Tony Award for Best Director. He also directed the acclaimed production of *Much Ado About Nothing* at the Delacorte/Shakespeare in the Park. Broadway credits also include the recent productions of *American Son* starring Kerry Washington and Steven Pasquale, which was also adapted for Netflix, the revival of *Children of a Lesser God*, the Tupac musical *Holler If Ya Hear Me*, *A Raisin in the Sun* starring Denzel Washington (Tony Award for Best Direction of a Play and Best Revival of a Play), *The Mountaintop* starring Samuel L. Jackson and Angela Bassett, *Stick Fly* produced by Alicia Keys, August Wilson's *Fences* (which garnered ten Tony nominations and won three Tony Awards, including Best Revival of a Play), *Gem of the Ocean* and *Radio Golf*, as well as *A Raisin in the Sun* starring Sean "P. Diddy" Combs, Phylicia Rashad, and Audra McDonald. He also directed *Smart People* and *The Underlying Chris* for Second Stage. Leon's television work includes "Hairspray Live!", and "The Wiz Live!" on NBC. He recently released his memoir *Take You Wherever You Go*. He is the recipient of the 2016 Mr. Abbott Award for Lifetime Achievement in Directing and the 2010 Award for Excellence in Directing from the Drama League. Leon serves on the board of New York's Public Theater and is Artistic Director Emeritus of Atlanta's Kenny Leon's True Colors Theatre Company. He is currently serving as Senior Resident Director at Roundabout Theatre Company.

Mixed Blood Theatre, Jack Reuler, Executive Artistic Director, will receive NTC's Outstanding Theatre Award. It is a special thrill for NTC to recognize Mr. Reuler's extraordinary leadership. He founded Mixed Blood in 1976 and has guided the company for the past 45 years, through strategic programming at its own Alan Page Auditorium, within its Cedar Riverside neighborhood, and in off-site locations throughout the Twin Cities Metro area and the State of Minnesota. Courtney Sale, Chair of the Outstanding Theatre Award committee, states "Mixed Blood leads the way with compassion, profound inclusivity, and a desire to ensure theatre is ever-transforming to reflect a core value of radical hospitality. Their work has offered audiences and admirers alike an extraordinary contribution to the way we understand ourselves. We are honored to recognize this legacy with the Outstanding Theatre Award."

Sanaz Toossi, an Iranian-American playwright from Orange County, California, will be honored with NTC's Barrie and Bernice Stavis Playwriting Award, presented annually to an outstanding emerging playwright. Her plays include *Wish You Were Here* (Williamstown Audible 2020; Playwrights Horizons 2022) and *English* (Atlantic/Roundabout 2022; Weissberger New Play Award; Kilroys' List 2019). She is currently under commission at the Atlantic Theater, Williamstown Theatre Festival, Manhattan Theatre Club, South Coast Repertory, IAMA Theatre and Oregon Shakespeare Festival (American Revolutions Cycle), is a member of Youngblood and the Middle Eastern American Writers Lab at the Lark, and an alum of Clubbed Thumb's Early Career Writers' Group. She was the 2019 P73 Playwriting Fellow and a recipient of the 2020 Steinberg Playwright Award. MFA: NYU Tisch. TV: *5 Women*; *A League of Their Own*. A proud child of immigrants, her courageous play *Wish You Were Here* will receive its world premiere directed by Gaye Taylor Upchurch at New York's Playwrights Horizons April 13 - May 22, 2022. The Stavis Playwriting Award Committee unanimously selected this work because they were drawn to the power and humanity of Toossi's characters, which we don't often see on US

stages: Iranian women. In the play, it's 1978 and protests are breaking out all across Iran, encroaching on this suburb where a tight-knit circle of girlfriends plans weddings, trades dirty jokes, and tries to hang onto a sense of normalcy. But as the revolution escalates, each woman is forced to join the wave of emigration or face an equally uncertain future at home. The Stavis Playwright Award is accompanied by a \$2,000 honorarium. *Wish You Were Here* will be read exclusively for NTC's membership during our virtual conference in December.

Kenny Leon has chosen **Miranda Haymon** to receive The Paul Green Award, which recognizes and encourages excellence in new professional theatre talent. Haymon is a Princess Grace Award-winning writer, director, and curator currently developing several projects in theatre, podcasts, TV/film, and with their production company The Hodgepodge Group.

Mixed Blood Theatre has selected **Anna Robinson** as the recipient of NTC's Emerging Professional Award. Robinson has burst onto the theatre scene as a significant Scenic Designer and Media/Projection Designer with extensive regional theatre credits and has worked on several Broadway shows since recently graduating from the UCSD Department of Theatre and Dance with an MFA in Design.

Announcing this year's awards, NTC President Randy Reinholz, who is the Co-founder and Producing Artistic Director Emeritus of Native Voices at the Autry, stated: "While our annual conference in December will remain virtual, we plan several face-to-face regional gatherings when it is safe to gather in the coming months. During our three-day online event, we will celebrate the resilience of our field and engage our membership in vital questions of our art. We are advocating for change in the theatre to reflect the culture which theatre seeks to bring to life. We are proud that we can honor Kenny Leon, Mixed Blood Theatre, and Sanaz Toossi as well as young artists Miranda Haymon and Anna Robinson. These awardees exemplify some of the bright spots for a theatre that can represent more of the country than it has in the recent past."

NTC will also induct 10 new members, leaders in theatre and the academy, into the conference. We welcome: Micha Alicia Espinosa, Mary Louise Geiger, Jennifer Holmes, Joyce J. Lu, James Nicola, Mark Russell, Sophia Skiles, Nancy Smith, Kinan Valdez, and Elizabeth Williamson.

THE NATIONAL THEATRE CONFERENCE, founded in 1925, is an organization limited to no more than 150 distinguished leaders nationwide, in commercial, nonprofit and university fields, comprising, in no particular order, playwrights, directors, dramaturgs, actors, designers, producers, critics, choreographers, fight directors, historians, teachers, and technicians. NTC is dedicated to the continued development of theatre in this country under its tag line, "Connecting, Supporting and Advocating for America's Theaters since 1925." In addition to awards recognizing and celebrating excellence in the theatre, NTC works actively to promote positive change in the American theatre. More information can be found at www.nationaltheatreconference.org.