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## JULIE TAYMOR TO RECEIVE “MR. ABBOTT” AWARD

### Stage Directors and Choreographers Foundation (SDCF) to honor Tony Award-Winning Director Julie Taymor for Lifetime Achievement in the Theatre

(October 19, 2017 – New York, NY) **The Stage Directors and Choreographers Foundation (SDCF)**, the not-for-profit foundation of Stage Directors and Choreographers Society (SDC), announces that acclaimed Director Julie Taymor will be honored with the distinguished 2018 “Mr. Abbott” Award for outstanding artistry and creativity over the course of her career. The Award will be presented at the Foundation’s annual gala event on April 2, 2018 in New York City, venue to be announced. Chairing the “Mr. Abbott” Award Committee are **Thomas Schumacher**, President & Producer, Disney Theatrical Productions, producer **Nelle Nugent** of The Foxboro Company (currently represented on Broadway with Taymor’s production of *M. BUTTERFLY*), and SDCF Executive Board Members **Rachel Chavkin** and **Michael Wilson**. Honorary Co-Chairs include actress **Helen Mirren** and playwright **David Henry Hwang**. Proceeds from the gala benefit the early-career programs of Stage Directors and Choreographers Foundation.

Co-Chair **Thomas Schumacher** stated “*The Lion King* would not have had its success if it were not for Julie’s extraordinary vision, continued commitment and artistry. Through her expansive body of work, she continues to push the boundaries of what’s possible on stage and I am truly honored to be a part of this special night to celebrate my dear friend. SDC could not have chosen a more deserving recipient.” SDC President **Pam MacKinnon** added, “I am so pleased that SDC Foundation is honoring Julie Taymor with this year’s “Mr. Abbott” Award. Her inventive, imaginative, and daringly theatrical work across media has inspired and touched generations of artists and audiences. Her legacy continues to be written, and I always look forward to seeing what’s next from this incomparable and history-making artist. Congratulations to you, Julie!”

The “Mr. Abbott” Award, presented by SDCF on behalf of directors and choreographers to one of their peers, is named in honor of the late renowned director **George Abbott**. It is presented in recognition of extraordinary contributions to the field. Past recipients represent the best of the profession and include Michael Bennett, Arvin Brown, Graciela Daniele, Gordon Davidson, Agnes de Mille, Bob Fosse, Garson Kanin, James Lapine, Kathleen & Rob Marshall, Lynne Meadow, Jerry Mitchell, Mike Nichols, Trevor Nunn, Jack O’Brien, Harold Prince, Lloyd Richards, Donald Saddler, Gene Saks, Susan Stroman, Daniel Sullivan, Tommy Tune, George C. Wolfe, Jerry Zaks, and last year’s awardee Kenny Leon.

**Joy Abbott**, the widow of George Abbott, noted, “SDC Foundation’s continued stewardship of Mr. Abbott’s legacy through this award warms the heart. George and I met Julie about 25 years ago in Philadelphia, and even then he recognized her creative talent, her originality, and vision. I think that George would have been deeply moved to

know Julie is being honored with his namesake award. She is truly a renaissance woman of the theatre, cut from a similar mold as Mr. Abbott.”

**About JULIE TAYMOR**

As a Tony®, Emmy®, and Grammy® winning and Oscar® nominated filmmaker, Julie Taymor has changed the face of Broadway with her innovative direction.

Her Broadway adaptation of *The Lion King* debuted in 1997. An instant sensation, it received 11 Tony® Award nominations, with Julie receiving awards for Best Director and Costume Designer. She was the first woman in theatrical history to receive the award for Best Direction of a Musical. In addition to her Tony® Awards, she also received awards for her puppet, costume, and mask designs. *The Lion King* has gone on to become the most successful stage musical of all time; 24 global productions have been seen by more than 90 million people. The show has played over 100 cities in 19 countries, and its worldwide gross exceeds that of any entertainment title in box office history.

Her credits also include the play *Grounded*, starring Anne Hathaway, at the Public Theater and a cinematic version of William Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, filmed during her critically acclaimed, sold-out stage production at Theatre for a New Audience in Brooklyn. Also, Broadway's *Spider-Man: Turn Off the Dark*, *The Green Bird*, and *Juan Darien: A Carnival Mass*, which earned five Tony Award nominations including one for her direction. Operas include *Oedipus Rex*, with Jessye Norman, *The Flying Dutchman*, *Salome*, *Die Zauberflote* (in repertory at the Met), *The Magic Flute* (the abridged English version, which inaugurated a PBS series entitled “Great Performances at the Met”); and Elliot Goldenthal’s *Grendel*. Film credits include *Titus*, starring Anthony Hopkins and Jessica Lange; *Frida* starring Salma Hayek; *Across the Universe*, and *The Tempest*, starring Helen Mirren. Taymor is a recipient of the 1991 MacArthur “Genius” Fellowship, as well as a 2015 inductee into the Theater Hall of Fame for Lifetime Achievement in the American Theater, the recipient of the 2015 Shakespeare Theatre Company’s William Shakespeare Award for Classical Theatre, and a 2017 Disney Legends Award honoree. She is currently directing *M BUTTERFLY* starring Clive Owen on Broadway.

For more information about the “Mr. Abbott” Award and other SDC Foundation programs, please visit <http://sdcfoundation.org/recognition-advocacy/the-mr-abbott-award/>.

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**About SDC FOUNDATION**

Founded in 1965, **Stage Directors and Choreographers Foundation** exists to foster, promote, and develop the creativity and craft of stage directors and choreographers. SDC Foundation’s mission is to create access to the field, to connect artists, and to honor the theatrical legacy of these artists. The centrality of the director’s/choreographer's role in theatre and the impact that they have on other artists' careers—from playwrights to designers to actors—makes SDC Foundation’s services essential to the theatre industry's health and continued vitality. [www.sdcfoundation.org](http://www.sdcfoundation.org)

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