FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT: Laura Peete, Foundation Director
P: 646.524.2226
lpeete@sdcfoundation.org
321 W. 44th Street, STE 804, New York, NY

DIRECTOR DAVID MENDIZÁBAL AND CHOREOGRAPHER RICKEY TRIPP NAMED 2026 JOE A. CALLAWAY AWARD WINNERS DIANE PAULUS, JOSH RHODES, AND LEIGH SILVERMAN RECOGNIZED AS FINALISTS

(October 26, 2026 – New York, NY) Stage Directors and Choreographers Foundation (SDCF), the not-for-profit foundation of Stage Directors and Choreographers Society (SDC), today announced that the 2026 Joe A. Callaway Awards will be awarded to director David Mendizábal for Excellence in Direction for *Mexodus* at the Audible's Minetta Lane Theatre and Rickey Tripp for Excellence in Choreography for *The Monsters* at Manhattan Theatre Club. Callaway finalists for Excellence in Direction are Diane Paulus for *Masquerade*, Off Broadway's immersive *Phantom of the Opera* experience, and Leigh Silverman for *The Unknown* at Studio Seaview. The Callaway finalist for Excellence in Choreography is Josh Rhodes for his work on *Beau the Musical* at St. Luke's Theatre.

The Callaway Awards Party will be held on Sunday, December 6th, 2026, at The Dickens in New York City at 6pm EST.

The Callaway Awards, first presented in 1989, are the only peer-given awards recognizing excellence in the arts of stage direction and choreography. They are presented for work in each New York City Off-Broadway season.

The 2026 Callaway Committee was chaired by Paige Price and included Joe Calarco, Ryan Dobrin, Marcia Milgrom Dodge, Kenny Ingram, Deidre Goodwin, Kenny Ingram, Gerry McIntyre, Danny Sharron, Daniela Varon, and Lorna Ventura. "The artists celebrated by the Joe A. Callaway Awards this year contributed to one of the richest and most eclectic Off-Broadway seasons on record," said Price. "We on the Callaway Committee are honored to consider the profound accomplishments of our peer directors and choreographers. Weare thrilled to celebrate David and Rickey as awardees and extend our deepest congratulations to Diane, Josh, and Leigh as this year's finalists."

Excellence in Direction winner David Mendizábal said, "It's such an honor to receive the Joe A. Callaway Award for *Mexodus* and to be recognized by my fellow directors, choreographers, and SDCF. Sometimes directing can feel lonely, but this is a reminder of the incredible community I feel so blessed to be a part of. I am also beyond grateful to Brian Quijada and Nygel D. Robinson for entrusting me with this singular work of extraordinary theatrical craft. It is truly one of the greatest joys of my career, and this recognition makes it all the more meaningful."

"There is nothing like being honored and respected by your peers," said Excellence in Choreography winner Rickey Tripp. **"***The Monsters* was an experience that I had no idea what I was getting myself into.

Yet, it turned into a moment that continues to shape my artistic expression and curiosity to date. I will forever hold it and everyone attached to it in my heart. Grateful."

To learn more visit: https://sdcfoundation.org/jcallaway/

ABOUT THE 2025-2026 JOE A. CALLAWAY AWARDEES

DAVID MENDIZÁBAL

David Mendizábal is a Helen Hayes and Lucille Lortel Award-winning director, designer, and the Associate Artistic Director / Director of In Dialogue at Berkeley Repertory Theatre. They serve as one of the Producing Artistic Leaders of the Obie Award-winning The Movement Theatre Company and is a founding collective member of the Obie Award-winning Sol Project. Select directing credits include *In the Heights* (NY City Center), *Mexodus* (Audible/P3), *The Cook* (Berkeley Rep), *All My Sons* (Berkeley Rep), *Don't Eat the Mangos* (Huntington Theatre), *the bandaged place* (Roundabout), and *Notes on Killing…* (Soho Rep). David is the recipient of a Princess Grace Award Honoraria. They are an alum of Soho Rep Project Number One, Ars Nova Vision Residency, Drama League Directors Project, Labyrinth Intensive Ensemble, Lincoln Center Theatre Directors Lab, TCG Leadership U, and art Equity. B.F.A. – NYU Tisch School of the Arts at Playwrights Horizons Theatre School. @its_daveed | davidmendizabal.com

RICKEY TRIPP

Director-Choreographer: *Rent*, Boston Conservatory at Berklee. Choreographer: *Ain't Too Proud* (The MUNY), *A Wonderful World*: *The Louis Armstrong Musical* (Broadway,Chita Rivera Award nominee), *The Monsters* (MTC and Two River Theater, Lucille Lortel and Outer Critics Awards nominee), *X: The Life and Times of Malcolm X* (MET Opera), *Shoshana Bean* at Carnegie Hall, '25, *Ephraim Sykes: Blessins' 'n' Lessons* (54 Below), *A Wonderful World* pre-Broadway Tour (New Orleans, Chicago), *Little Shop of Horrors* (Denver Center for the Performing Arts), *A Raisin in the Sun* (Public Theater) *Kinky Boots* (Broadway at Music Circus), *Rent* (Signature Theatre), *In the Heights* (Dallas Theater Center and Broadway at Music Circus '19/'25), *Dreamgirls*, (DTC, Irma P. Hall Black Theatre Award). TV/Film: *CONFLUENCE* (Berlin Film Festival, Los Angeles Dance Festival-Winner), "*Legs*"- Vanessa Williams, *Eileen* ((Sundance Film Festival 2023), *A Thousand and One* (Sundance Film Festival U.S. Grand Jury Prize 2023), *The Roll Call: The Roots to a Strange Fruit* (Emmy nominated, National Black Theater, WNET), *Encore*! (Disney), *It's Quiet Uptown* (BTC Inc.). Assistant Director: Daniel J. Watts, *The Jam: Only Child* (Signature Theatre) Associate Choreographer: *Hell's Kitchen* (Broadway/First National Tour), *The Hippest Trip* (A.C.T.), *Once on This Island* (2018 Tony Award for Best Musical Revival, National Tour 2018). Teaching: He has taught Master Classes and set choreography for dance studios and schools around the world. Currently on faculty for Immersive Artist Experience. Zena Rommett Method™, Certified Mentor. B.A. in Dance, San Jose State University. Jer 29:11

***

About SDC Foundation

Founded in 1965, **Stage Directors and Choreographers Foundation (SDCF)** celebrates, develops, and supports professional stage directors and choreographers throughout every phase of their careers. We work to build a theatrical community that reflects the cultural, racial, and gender diversity of our nation by creating opportunities for artists of all backgrounds to bring their full, authentic selves to their work as creative leaders in the theatre. www.sdcfoundation.org.

# # #