

For immediate release.

**MAT DIAFOS SWEENEY RECEIVES THE
2020 DOROTHY AND RICHARD E. SHERWOOD AWARD**
Center Theatre Group's \$10,000 Award Supporting Innovative L.A. Theatre Artists

Mat Diafos Sweeney is the recipient of the **2020 Dorothy and Richard E. Sherwood Award** announced at the 2020 Ovation Awards on Monday January 13, 2020. Given in memory of Dorothy and Richard E. Sherwood, the \$10,000 award aims to cultivate innovative theatre artists working in Los Angeles who push formal and aesthetic boundaries and demonstrate dedication to improving their respective artistic fields. The two additional finalists, Sigrid Gilmer and Alexandra Meda, will each receive a \$1,000 honorarium.

Mat Diafos Sweeney is an Ovation Award-winning performance maker from Los Angeles. His practice includes directing, choreographing, designing, composing music and writing/collaging texts to make new theatre. He creates through-composed performance work for multi-disciplinary ensembles, often devised and staged in non-theatrical venues. He has been independently producing work as four larks since 2008, with an evolving coterie of collaborators across the US and Australia. His most recent projects include "undine," a New Music USA-supported ecofeminist songspiel in a converted flower shop downtown, and "katabasis," a processional opera staged around the grounds and gardens of the Getty Villa, styled after ancient mystery rites. In the coming year, he will continue his ongoing series of site-specific performance activations for the Los Angeles Chamber Orchestra, present his participatory installation song cycle "hymns" and premiere his new adaptation of Mary Shelley's "Frankenstein" at the Wallis.

Since 1996, Center Theatre Group has recognized and celebrated local theatre artists with the Richard E. Sherwood Award. In 2018 Dorothy Sherwood, Richard's wife and fellow champion of innovative and adventurous theatre artists, passed away. To honor the passion and dedication of both patrons of the arts, the award was renamed the Dorothy and Richard E. Sherwood Award.

Dorothy and Richard E. Sherwood were patrons of the arts with a special appreciation for artists who are in the vanguard of theatre. Richard was president and then chairman of the Center Theatre Group Board of Directors from 1980 until his passing in 1993. The award is established as an endowed fund at Center Theatre Group by their family, friends, colleagues and fellow board members, to honor the family's passionate commitment to theatre. Dorothy Sherwood was deeply involved in the curation and selection process, hosting salons at her home for many of the artists, traveling to

theatres around Los Angeles to support new work, and ensuring that the award would truly help recipients.

Past recipients of the Dorothy and Richard E. Sherwood Award include set and projection designer Hana S. Kim (who designed the August Wilson Monologue Competition at the Taper), lighting designer Pablo Santiago (“Zoot Suit” and “Valley of the Heart”), lighting designer Christopher Kuhl (“The Nether” and “Appropriate”), costume designer Ann Closs-Farley (“Women Laughing Alone With Salad,” “Zoot Suit”), director Lars Jan (“The White Album”), director/performer/choreographer Ameenah Kaplan (“The Royale,” “Facing Our Truth”), playwright John Belusso (“The Body of Bourne”) and director Robert O’Hara (“In the Continuum,” “Eclipsed”) among others.

Center Theatre Group, one of the nation’s preeminent arts and cultural organizations, is Los Angeles’ leading nonprofit theatre company, which, under the leadership of Artistic Director Michael Ritchie, Managing Director Meghan Pressman and Producing Director Douglas C. Baker, programs seasons at the 736-seat Mark Taper Forum and 1600 to 2100-seat Ahmanson Theatre at The Music Center in Downtown Los Angeles, and the 317-seat Kirk Douglas Theatre in Culver City. In addition to presenting and producing the broadest range of theatrical entertainment in the country, Center Theatre Group is one of the nation’s leading producers of ambitious new works through commissions and world premiere productions and a leader in interactive community engagement and education programs that reach across generations, demographics and circumstance to serve Los Angeles.

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January 14, 2020