



CITY OF KENNER

PRESS RELEASE

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RIVERTOWN THEATERS FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS WIN 5 BIG EASY AWARDS INCLUDING ENTERTAINERS OF THE YEAR

Kenner, LA. - The Rivertown Theaters for the Performing Arts won five Big Easy Theater Awards Monday night, including the prestigious Entertainers of the Year Award, given to Gary Rucker and Kelly Fouchi, artistic and managing directors of the Rivertown Theaters for the Performing Arts, at 325 Minor Street in Kenner's historic district known as Rivertown.

The comedy "Noises Off" was a big winner, picking up the award for the Best Comedy and Best Director of a Comedy for David Hoover. In addition, Best Choreography in a Musical went to Danielle Scheib and Heidi Malnar for "42nd Street" and Best Supporting Actress in a Musical went to Janie Heck for "Spamalot."

"I would say nothing was more surprising to us than the awards for "Noises Off," only because there were so many good comedies during the year," Gary Rucker said. "It really was a fabulous night."

Rucker said he and Fouchi, who took over at the Rivertown Theaters two years ago by turning in the winning proposal for a four-year management contract, had a speech prepared for their Entertainers of the Year award.

But the evening was so hectic that they forgot to bring the speech to the podium. Rucker said he doesn't remember much of what they said, although he's been told he and Fouchi were both funny and gracious. "I do remember thanking the people we absolutely knew we had to thank," he said. That group included Kenner Mayor Michael Yenni.

"The Rivertown area was dying, and the mayor came in and said this is a beautiful area and it can be special, but we have to make a change," Rucker said, recalling the pep talk from Yenni after he and Fouchi were chosen to manage the theaters.

"To hand us that kind of contract – believe me, we were certainly aware of the kind of responsibility that went with it. Kelly and I weren't even 40 years old and we were handed our dream job. For the mayor to say change has to happen – that was bold of him – and for him to award us the contract was life-changing."

Yenni said he envisioned the Rivertown Theaters as a top-quality attraction to bring in a steady flow of visitors that would then discover some of the many other businesses and attractions in the historic district. But the status quo at the theaters – or anywhere in Rivertown – wasn't going to be good enough.

“Gary and Kelly submitted a fantastic proposal and it was clear they wanted to be great,” Yenni said. “Their energy and enthusiasm has been remarkable - They tripled the number of productions, and our restaurants and other businesses are benefitting from the huge traffic increase due to the fantastic productions at the Rivertown Theaters.”

Fouchi said she and Rucker are lucky to work with “amazing people who share our vision and want to keep raising the bar with us.”

“I went through all the programs for all the shows – 16 productions - and realized we had welcomed 154 unique actors to the stage at Rivertown, 35 creative team members and five dogs.”

Season tickets are now on sale for the 2014-15 season, which opens with “Shrek the Musical” on Sept. 12 and includes “Dirty Rotten Scoundrels.” The deadline to renew season tickets and keep your current seats is March 31, though season tickets will remain on sale through the opening of Shrek. To reserve season tickets, call the Box Office at 461-9475. For more information on the Rivertown Theaters, go to <http://www.rivertowntheaters.com/#>.

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