



## MEDIA RELEASE

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# SIGNAL'S 'THE WEIR' WINS JEFF NOMINATIONS

CHICAGO, May 2, 2007 — Signal Ensemble Theatre's production of Conor McPherson's *THE WEIR* today was nominated by the Joseph Jefferson Awards Committee for three Jeff Citations, honoring excellence in non-Equity theater in Chicago. The nominations were for **Ensemble** (featuring ensemble members Melanie Keller and Joseph Stearns, with Ted Hoerl, Vincent P. Mahler and John Zinn); **Actress in a Supporting Role – Play** to ensemble member Melanie Keller for her role as Valerie; and **Scenic Design** to Melania Lancy.

This is the first Ensemble nomination for Signal, which garnered individual nominations in each of its previous two years of eligibility. It is the first nomination for Keller who, along with her *THE WEIR* Ensemble nomination is also nominated as a part of Strawdog Theatre Company's *Marathon '33* ensemble. This is the first nomination for scenic designer Lancy.

Conor McPherson's Olivier Award-winning play, *THE WEIR*, opened to critical acclaim and enthusiastic applause at the Chopin Theatre studio in February. The production became one of Signal's best-selling productions to date.

Set in a pub in rural Ireland, *THE WEIR* focuses on the bar's regulars and a young Dublin woman newly moved to the area. As the bachelors swap ghostly stories to impress her, she astonishes them with a chilling tale of her own. Both haunting and funny, this eerie play demonstrates the transcendent quality of community and appreciation and the vital need for acceptance.

"I couldn't be happier for this tremendous cast and Melania Lancy," said director Christopher Prentice, Signal's producing artistic director. "They are extremely hardworking and open artists who came together as an ensemble in the best sense of the word to create something truly magical. Mel Lancy created a beautiful environment for the cast to live in. And Melanie Keller took enormous emotional risks to create a heartbreaking portrayal of a woman in need of human connection, which she received in spades from her enormously giving castmates."

Recipients will be announced at the 34<sup>th</sup> Annual Jeff Awards Citations ceremony on June 11 at the Park West (322 W. Armitage). For more information, visit [jeffawards.org](http://jeffawards.org).

Known for its ensemble acting and producing a diverse slate of plays that range from classics to new works, Signal Ensemble Theatre uses the actor as focal point to clearly execute the playwright's vision. Founded by its three artistic directors (Ronan Marra, Christopher Prentice, Joseph Stearns), the company began producing in 2003. Its currently running production of *Hamlet*, follows *The Dumb Waiter & The Zoo Story*, *Closer* and *The Weir* in its fourth season.

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