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**LAURA BENANTI AND JASON JONES**  
**TO HOST THE 33<sup>rd</sup> ANNUAL LUCILLE LORTEL AWARDS**

**New York, NY (March 13, 2018)** – The Off-Broadway League today announced that **Laura Benanti** and **Jason Jones** will host the 33<sup>rd</sup> Annual Lucille Lortel Awards on Sunday, May 6, 2018 at NYU Skirball Center for Performing Arts. Benanti was last seen on Broadway in Steve Martin’s *Meteor Shower* and can be seen on TBS’s “The Detour,” the dysfunctional family comedy created by Jones, as Edie. Jones created “The Detour” with wife Samantha Bee. Its third season premiered on January 23.

Benanti and Jones will join previously announced honorees Eve Ensler (Lifetime Achievement Award), WP Theater (Body of Work Award), and composer Michael Friedman, who will be posthumously inducted onto the Playwrights’ Sidewalk outside the Lucille Lortel Theatre.

**Lucille Lortel Awards Important Dates**

March 31, 2018	2017-2018 Off-Broadway season ends
April 3, 2018	Nomination Meeting – Nominations announced
April 3, 2018	Public tickets go on sale
April 25, 2018	Nominees’ Breakfast at Playwrights Horizons
May 6, 2018	Award Ceremony at NYU Skirball Center

The Off-Broadway League’s Lortel Awards Producing & Administration Committee (Pamela Adams, Terry Byrne, Margaret Cotter, Carol Fishman, George Forbes, Danielle Karliner Naish, Michael Page, Catherine Russell, Lindsey Sag, Seth Shepsle, and Casey York) produces the Lortel Awards Ceremony. Acclaimed writer/director Michael Heitzman returns to direct the Lortel Awards for the ninth consecutive year. The Lucille Lortel Awards are produced by special arrangement with the Lucille Lortel Foundation. Additional support is provided by TDF.

Representatives of the Off-Broadway League, Actors’ Equity Association, Stage Directors & Choreographers Society, the Lucille Lortel Foundation, in addition to theatre journalists and academics and other Off-Broadway professionals, serve on the Voting Committee.

For updates and news about the ceremony and media releases, please visit [www.LortelAwards.org](http://www.LortelAwards.org). Follow the Lortel Awards (#LortelAwards) on Twitter at <https://twitter.com/OffBroadwayNYC> and like on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/LortelAwards>.

## **ABOUT OUR HOSTS**

### **LAURA BENANTI**

Laura Benanti is a Tony® Award-winning actress who began her Broadway career at the age of 18, starring opposite Richard Chamberlain in *The Sound of Music*. Since then, Laura has appeared in 9 Broadway shows (including *Gypsy* and *She Loves Me*), been nominated for 5 Tony® Awards (winning for *Gypsy*), and continues to have a flourishing television career. Her recent TV appearances include “The Detour” as a current series regular, “Nashville,” “Supergirl,” “The Good Wife,” and frequent appearances as Melania Trump on “The Late Show with Stephen Colbert.”

### **JASON JONES**

Writer, producer, director, and actor Jason Jones rose to fame during his decade-long stint as a correspondent on Comedy Central’s Emmy® and Peabody Award-winning program “The Daily Show with Jon Stewart,” where his interviews garnered him critical and audience attention. As the longest serving male correspondent, he holds the record for most field pieces, most lawsuits, and most people put in prison.

Jones left “The Daily Show” in 2015 to create and star in TBS’s “The Detour.” The show is currently the number one cable comedy in America. Alongside writing, directing, and executive producing “The Detour,” Jones also serves as Executive Producer on “Full Frontal with Samantha Bee.”

Jones’s other credits include recurring roles on CBS’s “How I Met Your Mother,” NBC’s “Law and Order,” and Amazon’s “Creative Galaxy.”

On the big screen, Jones has appeared in *Date Night*, *Pitch Perfect*, *Pitch Perfect 2*, *The Art of the Steal*, *Hot Tub Time Machine 2*, *Goon 2*, and a whole bunch of other crap you haven’t heard of.

## **ABOUT THE LUCILLE LORTEL AWARDS**

The Lucille Lortel Awards for Outstanding Achievement Off-Broadway were created in 1985 by the Off-Broadway League. The Lortel Awards recognize excellence in Off-Broadway by honoring the invaluable contribution of artists to the theatre community. Representatives of the Off-Broadway League, Actors’ Equity Association, Stage Directors & Choreographers Society, the Lucille Lortel Foundation, in addition to theatre journalists and academics and other Off-Broadway professionals, serve on the Voting Committee. Awards may be given in the following categories: Play, Musical, Solo Show, Revival, Alternative Theatrical Experience, Director, Choreographer, Lead Actor and Actress in a Play and Musical, Featured Actor and Actress in a Play and Musical, Scenic, Costume, Lighting, Sound, and Projection Design. The following honorary awards may also be given: Lifetime Achievement Award, Body of Work (awarded to an institution), the Edith Oliver Service to Off-Broadway Award and induction onto the Playwrights’ Sidewalk in front of the historic Lucille Lortel Theatre in New York City. For more information, please see [www.LortelAwards.org](http://www.LortelAwards.org).

## **ABOUT THE LUCILLE LORTEL FOUNDATION**

Lucille Lortel Foundation was created by Lucille Lortel to foster excellence and diversity in the theatre, as well as to faithfully preserve the rich history and support the continued prosperity of Off-Broadway. The Foundation has several major programs, including its general operating support program that has provided millions of dollars to small to mid-size theatres in New York City, universities, and theatre service organizations. The Foundation created and maintains the Internet Off-Broadway Data Base ([www.IOBDB.com](http://www.IOBDB.com)). For a listing of all the Foundation’s programs, previous Lortel Award nominees and recipients, information on the Lucille Lortel Theatre and Playwrights’ Sidewalk, and much more, please visit [www.lortel.org](http://www.lortel.org).

## **ABOUT NYU SKIRBALL CENTER**

NYU Skirball, located in the heart of Greenwich Village, is one of New York City’s major presenters of international work, and has been the premier venue for cultural and performing arts events in lower Manhattan since 2003. The 860-seat theater, led by Director Jay Wegman, provides a home for internationally renowned artists, innovators and thinkers. NYU Skirball hosts over 300 events annually, from

re-inventions of the classics to cutting-edge premieres, in genres ranging from dance, theater and performance art to comedy, music and film.

### **ABOUT TDF**

Now in its 50<sup>th</sup> year of service, TDF is a not-for-profit service organization for the performing arts, dedicated to bringing the power of the performing arts to everyone. TDF's mission is to sustain live theatre and dance by engaging and cultivating a broad and diverse audience and eliminating barriers to attendance.

TDF fulfills its mission with a variety of programs that expand access, cultivate communities, and support the makers of the performing arts. Best known for its theatre going programs (including the TKTS Discount Booths and TDF Membership Program), net revenue generated by TKTS helps support TDF's accessibility (including open captioned, audio described and Autism Friendly performances), school (serving over 10,000 New York City students annually), community engagement and information programs – as well as the TDF Costume Rental and Research Programs – and have introduced millions of people to the theatre and helped make the unique experience of theatre available to everyone.

TDF envisions a world where the transformative experience of attending live theatre and dance is essential, relevant, accessible and inspirational. To learn more about TDF, go to [www.tdf.org](http://www.tdf.org).

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