

Everyone should have won at Okanagan Arts Awards!

What a great night at the Okanagan Arts Awards last Thursday. Because I volunteer on the advisory committee that produces the awards, I can't gush too much, but really, it went so well and the quality of nominees this year was such that I don't know how the judges were able to narrow it down. In some categories, I think I would have declared them all winners and to heck with what the envelope said.

The evening opened with drumming by Westbank First Nation drummers and a prayer by Elder Wilfred Barnes. Performances by harpist Kate Gibson, Oswald and the Company B dancers, along with a reading by John Lent and video by Jim Elderton, were interspersed in between the awards.

What capped the evening off, however, was Roslyn Fraitz performing DeBussy's Claire de Lune. Like the perfect sunset at the end of a wonderful day, it was magical to listen to.

Here's a list of the winners:

Music, Anna Jacyszyn; Visual Arts, Gary Pearson; Dance, Tanya Bakala; Literary Arts, Nancy Holmes; Theatre, Louise Sjoquist; Arts Educator, Leroy Wiens; Supporter of the Arts, Jody Lafontaine; and Lifetime Achievement: Geert Maas.

Congratulations to all the finalists and winners and to all the volunteers who worked so hard to keep these awards running and mostly, to Sharon McCoubrey who keeps us all roped in and organized. She is truly inspiring and deserving of an award herself for all she does.