

Voices Behind Books Get Their Due at Ceremony

The audiobook industry honored its best at the 17th annual Audie Awards gala on Tuesday night at the New-York Historical Society. Winners like Tina Fey, William Shatner and Jane Fonda weren't there, but the stars of the audiobook world — narrators like Katherine Kellgren (seven nominations), Simon Vance and Dion Graham (four each) — were greeted with loud applause.

Teri Hamilton Garrett, a reader-listener with no professional connection to audiobooks, was one of those clapping. She flew in from Iowa City for the event, to meet Tavia Gilbert, who was nominated for her reading of "The Dirty Life," a memoir by Kristin Kimball.

Ms. Garrett, who grew up in Los Angeles but has lived in Iowa for more than 20 years, began listening to audiobooks three years ago to pass the time while exercising. After getting hooked, she wrote a thank-you note to Ms. Gilbert — who has recorded more than 100 books so far — which prompted a continuing correspondence. The two had lunch before the ceremony.

Initially the Audies were handed out during a casual afternoon hosted by an industry

insider, said Michele Cobb, the president of the Audio Publishers Association, which puts on the event. Now it's a formal evening, preceded by cocktails and followed by Champagne and dessert.

Ms. Cobb said that a category would sometimes be added to respond to trends in publishing. This year included a paranormal award, won by Larry Correia's "Hard Magic," read by the actor Bronson Pinchot. (He wasn't there to accept.) But

with 30 awards given out the association also keeps an eye out for bloat. Only the winners of the last five categories took the stage to say thanks. The rest of the winners simply stood at their seats and soaked in a few moments of applause.

In an interview before the show the actor Dylan Baker, who was nominated for his reading of Walter Isaacson's biography of Steve Jobs, explained that he got his start in the business when a friend of a friend needed someone

to read a novel about the Civil War, which turned out to be Charles Frazier's mammoth-selling "Cold Mountain."

"I love doing audiobooks because I got into acting to tell stories," Mr. Baker said. "I thought I was going to be a writer for a while."



Steve Jobs by Walter Isaacson

