Conductor wins Artist of the Year

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Picture: MARTIN JONES

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Christopher Lyndon Gee's wife, Lillian Tan, receives the Artist of the Year Award from ACT Arts Minister Bill Wood last night on behalf of her husband. Inset: Christopher Lyndon Gee.

Brilliant composer and conductor Christopher Lyndon Gee was named *The Canberra Times* Artist of the Year at the Arts Ball last night at the Albert Hall.

He took the $1000 prize plus a specially commissioned $750 artwork ahead of other finalists — dancer Padma Menon, actor Peter Damien Hayes, curator and author Wally Caruana, and glass artist Helen Aitken-Kuhnen.

Ironically, Christopher Lyndon Gee's latest triumph kept him from attending last night's ceremony — he was in Sydney conducting Canberra composer Larry Sitsky's opera *The Golem*.

Christopher Lyndon Gee's conducting of the difficult work has been universally praised by critics in Sydney and by *The Canberra Times*' W. L. Hoffmann.

A statement from the judges said, "While all the finalists were of the highest standard in their field, the choice was unanimous."

"Christopher Lyndon Gee has involved himself closely in many aspects of the Canberra music scene — from composing and conducting to teaching and writing — and has brought distinction to each."

Each of the finalists would have brought distinction to the award. "Canberra is extraordinarily fortunate in having developed such high standards over so many fields of the arts," they said.

The Canberra Critics Circle awards were also presented last night. Recipients included: Theatre — Splinters, Peter Damien Hayes, Stephen Champion, Jorge Bagnini; Dance — Paige Gordon, Janet Karin, Stephanie Burridge, Thomas Stanborough; Music — Wilfrid Holland, Angela Giblin, David Cartledge; Visual Arts — Johanna Owens, Helen Geier, Karen O'Clery, Andrew Powell.