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DRAMA CRITICS CIRCLE AWARDS

By SYLVIE DRAKE,
Times Staff Writer

It was quite an event. In a clean sweep Monday, South Coast Repertory's production of "The Playboy of the Western World" won eight Los Angeles Drama Critics Circle Awards for all eight of its nominations, making this Orange County theater the biggest winner at the 15th annual awards for distinguished achievement in Los Angeles theater for 1983.

The L.A. Stage Co. West's "Cloud 9," a splendid show that struggled for survival last summer, followed South Coast's example, winning four out of four—including an ensemble award for its acting company of seven.

Three awards—all in technical areas—went to the Center Theatre Group/Mark Taper Forum's "A Month in the Country" (costume, lighting and set design).

Two each went to the Shubert's "Dreamgirls," the Victory Theatre's "On the Money," the Huntington Hartford's "Torch Song Trilogy" and the Bill Arlen production of "Merrily We Roll Along," which played the Roland Dupree Studio Theatre. (Musical director Steven Smith, recipient of one of "Merri-

ly's" two awards, also served as musical director for the circle's tribute to Stephen Sondheim—the other "Merrily" awardee).

Of a total of 30 awards, 22 were shared by eight Equity productions and eight were distributed among six Equity Waiver shows. (This is almost an exact reversal of 1982 when, of 29 awards, six went to Equity stagings and 23 to Waiver productions.)

Among Equity theaters honored, South Coast Repertory received eight awards; the L.A. Stage Co. and Mark Taper four (counting one for "The Regard of Flight" at the Taper, Too); the Shubert, Hartford and Westwood Playhouse two. Waiver theaters honored were the Back Alley, the Victory, the Fountain, Roland Dupree, the Beverly Hills Playhouse and Theatre 40.



Barbara Rush, above, responds to loudest acclaim;

The loudest audience acclaim greeted Barbara Rush, who won an award for her outstanding performance in "A Woman of Independent Means," the Elizabeth Forsythe Hailey stage adaptation of her novel of the same name, which is headed for Broadway in May.