



NOMINEES FOR THE 52ND ANNUAL EQUITY JEFF AWARDS ARE ANNOUNCED

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Editor's Note:

A complete list of nominees can also be found online at the Equity section at www.jeffawards.org.

September 15, 2020 – Chicago – The Jeff Awards announces the nominees for the 52nd annual awards for theater excellence that include 142 theater artists across 30 artistic and technical categories. The awards will be presented in an online program on Monday, November 9, 2020 at 7:00PM.

The traditional Equity season runs August 1st through July 31st; however, this year, it ended March 13th due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Over the course of the 2019-2020 season, Jeff Awards members attended the openings of 78 productions. From these, 64 productions became "Jeff Recommended." With two productions having runs so short (due to the pandemic shutdown), a total of 62 productions became eligible for 2020 award nominations.

This year, the work of 28 Equity theater companies is showcased with 37 productions receiving one or more nominations. Musicals led the nominations with "An American in Paris" (12) and "Duke Ellington's Sophisticated Ladies" (8). Five productions tied with seven nominations including "The Boys in the Band," "Bug," "Grey House," "King Hedley II," and "The Color Purple." Among theater companies, Drury Lane Productions captured the most nominations with 22, followed by Paramount Theatre (13), Porchlight Music Theatre, Court Theatre and Steppenwolf Theatre Company (all with 11), TimeLine Theatre (10), and eight nominations each for A Red Orchid Theatre, Windy City Playhouse and Writers Theatre.

The virtual awards ceremony will be presented on November 9th to recognize theater excellence over the past Equity season, announce recipients and honor the dedicated theater companies so significantly impacted during these challenging times. Details on accessing the free online program will be available in late October.

The 2020 Equity nominees are:

Production – Play (Large)

- “Bug” - Steppenwolf Theatre Company
- “The First Deep Breath” - Victory Gardens Theater
- “King Hedley II” - Court Theatre
- “The King’s Speech” - Chicago Shakespeare Theater
- “Oslo” - TimeLine Theatre Company
- “Stick Fly” - Writers Theatre

Production – Play (Midsize)

- “The Boys in the Band” - Windy City Playhouse
- “Grey House” - A Red Orchid Theatre
- “His Shadow: A Parable” - 16th Street Theater
- “The Leopard Play, or Sad Songs for Lost Boys” - Steep Theatre Company
- “Sheepdog” - Shattered Globe Theatre

Production – Musical or Revue (Large)

- “An American in Paris” - Drury Lane Productions
- “Beauty and the Beast” - Paramount Theatre
- “The Color Purple” - Drury Lane Productions
- “Duke Ellington’s Sophisticated Ladies” - Porchlight Music Theatre
- “Into the Woods” - Writers Theatre
- “Something Rotten!” - Marriott Theatre

Production – Musical or Revue (Midsize)

- “Always...Patsy Cline” - Firebrand Theatre
- “Monty Python’s Spamalot” - Mercury Theater Chicago
- “Verböten” - The House Theatre of Chicago

Ensemble – Play

- “The Boys in the Band” - Windy City Playhouse
- “The First Deep Breath” - Victory Gardens Theater
- “Grey House” - A Red Orchid Theatre
- “How to Defend Yourself” - Victory Gardens Theater
- “Kill Move Paradise” - TimeLine Theatre Company
- “The Leopard Play, or Sad Songs for Lost Boys” - Steep Theatre Company
- “Stick Fly” - Writers Theatre

Ensemble – Musical or Revue

- “An American in Paris” - Drury Lane Productions
- “The Color Purple” - Drury Lane Productions
- “Duke Ellington’s Sophisticated Ladies” - Porchlight Music Theatre
- “Into the Woods” - Writers Theatre
- “Something Rotten!” - Marriott Theatre

New Work

- Lee Edward Colston II - "The First Deep Breath" - Victory Gardens Theater
- Steven Dietz - "How a Boy Falls" - Northlight Theatre
- Gordon Greenberg and Steve Rosen, Michael Mahler and Alan Schmuckler - "The Secret of My Success" – Paramount Theatre
- Lauren Gunderson and Margot Melcon - "The Wickhams: Christmas at Pemberley" - Northlight Theatre
- Levi Holloway - "Grey House" - A Red Orchid Theatre
- Jason Narducy and Brett Neveu - "Verböten" - The House Theatre of Chicago
- Douglas Post - "Howards End" - Remy Bumppo Theatre Company
- Fouad Teymour - "Twice, Thrice, Frice..." - Silk Road Rising in association with International Voices Project
- Loy A. Webb - "His Shadow: A Parable" - 16th Street Theater

Director – Play (Large)

- Nick Bowling - "Oslo" - TimeLine Theatre Company
- Wardell Julius Clark - "Kill Move Paradise" - TimeLine Theatre Company
- David Cromer - "Bug" - Steppenwolf Theatre Company
- Ron OJ Parson - "King Hedley II" - Court Theatre
- Vanessa Stalling - "Roe" - Goodman Theatre

Director – Play (Midsize)

- Laura Alcalá Baker - "The Leopard Play, or Sad Songs for Lost Boys" - Steep Theatre Company
- Wardell Julius Clark - "His Shadow: A Parable" - 16th Street Theater
- Wardell Julius Clark - "Sheepdog" - Shattered Globe Theatre
- Carl Menninger - "The Boys in the Band" - Windy City Playhouse
- Shade Murray - "Grey House" - A Red Orchid Theatre
- Nick Sandys - "Howards End" - Remy Bumppo Theatre Company
- Randy White - "Midsummer (A Play with Songs)" - The Greenhouse Theater Center

Director – Musical or Revue (Large)

- Lili-Anne Brown - "The Color Purple" - Drury Lane Productions
- Brenda Didier & Florence Walker-Harris - "Duke Ellington's Sophisticated Ladies" - Porchlight Music Theatre
- Gary Griffin - "Into the Woods" - Writers Theatre
- Lynne Kurdziel-Formato - "An American in Paris" - Drury Lane Productions
- Scott Weinstein - "Something Rotten!" - Marriott Theatre

Director – Musical or Revue (Midsize)

- Nathan Allen - "Verböten" - The House Theatre of Chicago
- Brigitte Ditmars - "Always...Patsy Cline" - Firebrand Theatre
- L. Walter Stearns - "Monty Python's Spamalot" - Mercury Theater Chicago

Performer in a Principal Role – Play

- Carrie Coon (Agnes White) - "Bug" - Steppenwolf Theatre Company
- Chaon Cross (Helena) - "Midsummer (A Play with Songs)" - The Greenhouse Theater Center
- Charles Andrew Gardner (Teeny) - "His Shadow: A Parable" - 16th Street Theater
- Harry Hadden-Paton (Bertie) - "The King's Speech" - Chicago Shakespeare Theater
- Patrick Mulvey (Bob) - "Midsummer (A Play with Songs)" - The Greenhouse Theater Center

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(Performer in a Principal Role – Play – cont.)

- Kelvin Roston, Jr. (Hedley) - "King Hedley II" - Court Theatre
- Leslie Ann Sheppard (Amina) - "Sheepdog" - Shattered Globe Theatre
- Julia Siple (Jenny) - "Mosquitoes" - Steep Theatre Company
- Namir Smallwood (Peter Evans) - "Bug" - Steppenwolf Theatre Company
- Eliza Stoughton (Margaret Schlegel) - "Howards End" - Remy Bumpo Theatre Company
- Bri Sudia (Mona Juul) - "Oslo" - TimeLine Theatre Company

Performer in a Principal Role – Musical

- Josh Drake (Jerry Mulligan) - "An American in Paris" - Drury Lane Productions
- Leigh-Ann Esty (Lise Dassin) - "An American in Paris" - Drury Lane Productions
- Lucy Godinez (Nancy) - "Oliver!" - Marriott Theatre
- Beth Stafford Laird (Belle) - "Beauty and the Beast" - Paramount Theatre
- Eben K. Logan (Celie) - "The Color Purple" - Drury Lane Productions
- Emilie Lynn (Mary Poppins) - "Mary Poppins" - Drury Lane Productions
- Alex Prakken (Jack Kelly) - "Disney's Newsies" - Paramount Theatre
- Hollis Resnik (Norma Desmond) - "Sunset Boulevard" - Porchlight Music Theatre
- Billy Harrigan Tighe (Brantley Foster) - "The Secret of My Success" - Paramount Theatre
- Jonah D. Winston (King Arthur) - "Monty Python's Spamalot" - Mercury Theater Chicago

Solo Performance

- Deirdre O'Connell (Dana H.) - "Dana H." - Goodman Theatre
- Rebecca Spence (Narrator) - "Every Brilliant Thing" - Windy City Playhouse

Performer in a Revue

- Harmony France / Christina Hall (Patsy Cline / Louise Seger) - "Always...Patsy Cline" - Firebrand Theatre
- Donica Lynn (The Chanteuse) - "Duke Ellington's Sophisticated Ladies" - Porchlight Music Theatre
- Lorenzo Rush Jr. (The Raconteur) - "Duke Ellington's Sophisticated Ladies" - Porchlight Music Theatre

Performer in a Supporting Role – Play

- Kierra Bunch (Tonya) - "King Hedley II" - Court Theatre
- Lisa Dawn (Jen) - "The Cake" - Buffalo Theatre Ensemble
- Anish Jethmalani (Ahmed Qurie) - "Oslo" - TimeLine Theatre Company
- Dan Klarer (Egbert Bakewell) - "Jeeves Saves the Day" - First Folio Theatre
- James Leaming (Ronald Reagan) - "Five Presidents" - American Blues Theater
- Marcus D. Moore (Kodak/Man) - "His Shadow: A Parable" - 16th Street Theater
- Deanna Reed-Foster (Pearl Thomas) - "The First Deep Breath" - Victory Gardens Theater
- Sadieh Rifai (Eva) - "Do You Feel Anger?" - A Red Orchid Theatre
- James Seol (Wen Chang) - "The Great Leap" - Steppenwolf Theatre Company
- A.C. Smith (Elmore) - "King Hedley II" - Court Theatre
- John Tufts (Edmond Rostand) - "Bernhardt/Hamlet" - Goodman Theatre
- Celeste Williams (Ruth Jones) - "The First Deep Breath" - Victory Gardens Theater
- Larry Yando (Constant Coquelin) - "Bernhardt/Hamlet" - Goodman Theatre

Performer in a Supporting Role – Musical

- Ephie Aardema (Harriet Smith) - "Emma" - Chicago Shakespeare Theater
- Larry Adams (Max von Mayerling) - "Sunset Boulevard" - Porchlight Music Theatre
- Skyler Adams (Adam Hochberg) - "An American in Paris" - Drury Lane Productions

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(Performer in a Supporting Role – Musical – cont.)

- Sydney Charles (Shug Avery) - "The Color Purple" - Drury Lane Productions
- Erica Evans (Milo Davenport) - "An American in Paris" - Drury Lane Productions
- Jackson Evans (Lumiere) - "Beauty and the Beast" - Paramount Theatre
- Jason Grimm (Hines) - "The Pajama Game" - Theatre at the Center
- Nicole Michelle Haskins (Sofia) - "The Color Purple" - Drury Lane Productions
- Heidi Kettenring (Vera Prescott) - "The Secret of My Success" - Paramount Theatre
- Ross Lehman (Nostradamus) - "Something Rotten!" - Marriott Theatre
- Meghan Murphy (Lady of the Lake) - "Monty Python's Spamalot" - Mercury Theater Chicago

Scenic Design - Large

- William Boles - "Disney's Newsies" - Paramount Theatre
- William Boles - "The Wickhams: Christmas at Pemberley" - Northlight Theatre
- Linda Buchanan - "Stick Fly" - Writers Theatre
- Regina Garcia - "King Hedley II" - Court Theatre
- Takeshi Kata - "Bug" - Steppenwolf Theatre Company
- Jeffrey D. Kniec - "Beauty and the Beast" - Paramount Theatre

Scenic Design - Midsize

- Kurtis Boetcher - "Grey House" - A Red Orchid Theatre
- William Boles - "The Boys in the Band" - Windy City Playhouse
- José Manuel Díaz-Soto - "Twice, Thrice, Frice..." - Silk Road Rising in association with International Voices Project
- Angela Weber Miller - "Sherlock's Last Case" - First Folio Theatre
- Joe Schermoly - "The Gulf" - About Face Theatre

Costume Design - Large

- Karl Green - "An American in Paris" - Drury Lane Productions
- Theresa Ham - "Beauty and the Beast" - Paramount Theatre
- Theresa Ham - "Duke Ellington's Sophisticated Ladies" - Porchlight Music Theatre
- Theresa Ham - "Something Rotten!" - Marriott Theatre
- Robin L. McGee - "Mary Poppins" - Drury Lane Productions
- Alison Siple - "The Mousetrap" - Court Theatre

Costume Design - Midsize

- Uriel Gomez - "The Boys in the Band" - Windy City Playhouse
- Kristy Leigh Hall - "Howards End" - Remy Bumppo Theatre Company
- Rachel Lambert - "Jeeves Saves the Day" - First Folio Theatre

Sound Design - Large

- Mikhail Fiksel - "Dana H." - Goodman Theatre
- Christopher M. LaPorte - "King Hedley II" - Court Theatre
- Jeffrey Levin - "Kill Move Paradise" - TimeLine Theatre Company
- André Pluess and Christopher LaPorte - "Oedipus Rex" - Court Theatre
- Josh Schmidt - "Bug" - Steppenwolf Theatre Company

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Sound Design - Midsize

- Grover Hollway - "Verböten" - The House Theatre of Chicago
- Christopher Kriz - "Sheepdog" - Shattered Globe Theatre
- Jeffrey Levin - "Grey House" - A Red Orchid Theatre
- Sarah D. Espinoza - "The Boys in the Band" - Windy City Playhouse

Lighting Design - Large

- Lee Fiskness - "An American in Paris" - Drury Lane Productions
- Lee Fiskness - "Into the Woods" - Writers Theatre
- Heather Gilbert - "Bug" - Steppenwolf Theatre Company
- Jesse Klug - "Beauty and the Beast" - Paramount Theatre
- Keith Parham - "The Great Leap" - Steppenwolf Theatre Company
- Keith Parham - "Oedipus Rex" - Court Theatre

Lighting Design - Midsize

- Erik S. Barry - "The Boys in the Band" - Windy City Playhouse
- Mike Durst - "Howards End" - Remy Bumppo Theatre Company
- Mike Durst and Claire Chrzan - "Grey House" - A Red Orchid Theatre
- David Goodman-Edberg - "His Shadow: A Parable" - 16th Street Theater
- Rachel Levy - "The Gulf" - About Face Theatre
- Jason Lynch - "Sheepdog" - Shattered Globe Theatre

Choreography

- Joshua Blake Carter - "Disney's Newsies" - Paramount Theatre
- Brenda Didier & Florence Walker-Harris - "Duke Ellington's Sophisticated Ladies" - Porchlight Music Theatre
- Linda Fortunato - "Irving Berlin's White Christmas" - Theatre at the Center
- Lynne Kurdziel-Formato - "An American in Paris" - Drury Lane Productions
- Alex Sanchez - "Something Rotten!" - Marriott Theatre

Original Music in a Play

- John Gromada - "The King's Speech" - Chicago Shakespeare Theater
- Pornchanok Kanchanabanca - "The Great Leap" - Steppenwolf Theatre Company
- Ladysmith Black Mambazo - "Lindiwe" - Steppenwolf Theatre Company
- Jeffrey Levin - "Kill Move Paradise" - TimeLine Theatre Company
- Joanna Lynne Staub - "Bernhardt/Hamlet" - Goodman Theatre

Musical Direction

- Matt Deitchman - "Into the Woods" - Writers Theatre
- Jermaine Hill - "The Color Purple" - Drury Lane Productions
- Jermaine Hill - "Duke Ellington's Sophisticated Ladies" - Porchlight Music Theatre
- Chris Sargent - "An American in Paris" - Drury Lane Productions
- Andra Velis Simon - "Always...Patsy Cline" - Firebrand Theatre
- William Underwood - "Almost Heaven: John Denver's America" - Theatre at the Center

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Projection Design

- Anthony Churchill - "Sunset Boulevard" - Porchlight Music Theatre
- Hana Kim - "The King's Speech" - Chicago Shakespeare Theater
- Kevan Loney - "An American in Paris" - Drury Lane Productions
- Kevan Loney - "Mary Poppins" - Drury Lane Productions
- Mike Tutaj - "Oslo" - TimeLine Theatre Company
- Mike Tutaj - "The Secret of My Success" - Paramount Theatre

Artistic Specialization

- Breon Arzell (Movement Choreographer) - "Kill Move Paradise" - TimeLine Theatre Company
- Steve Cuiffo (Illusion and Lip Sync Consultant) - "Dana H." - Goodman Theatre
- Micah Figueroa (Intimacy & Violence Director) - "The Leopard Play, or Sad Songs for Lost Boys" - Steep Theatre Company
- Matt Hawkins (Fight Choreography) - "How to Defend Yourself" - Victory Gardens Theater
- Wendy A. Huber and Margaret Garofalo (Properties Design) - "Sherlock's Last Case" - First Folio Theatre
- Erin Kilmurray (Movement Design) - "Oedipus Rex" - Court Theatre

By Company with multiple nominations:

- Drury Lane Productions – 22
- Paramount Theatre – 13
- Court Theatre – 11
- Porchlight Music Theatre – 11
- Steppenwolf Theatre Company – 11
- TimeLine Theatre Company – 10
- A Red Orchid Theatre – 8
- Windy City Playhouse – 8
- Writers Theatre – 8
- Goodman Theatre - 7
- Marriott Theatre – 7
- Victory Gardens Theater – 7
- 16th Street Theater – 6
- Remy Bumppo Theatre Company – 5
- Chicago Shakespeare Theater – 5
- Shattered Globe Theatre – 5
- Steep Theatre Company – 5
- Firebrand Theatre – 4
- First Folio Theatre – 4
- The House Theatre of Chicago – 4
- Mercury Theater Chicago – 4
- Northlight Theatre – 3
- The Greenhouse Theater Center – 3
- Theatre at the Center – 3
- About Face Theatre – 2
- Silk Road Rising in association with International Voices Project – 2

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By Productions with multiple nominations:

- “An American in Paris” – 12
- “Duke Ellington's Sophisticated Ladies” – 8
- “The Boys in the Band” – 7
- “Bug” – 7
- “Grey House” – 7
- “King Hedley II” – 7
- “The Color Purple” – 7
- “Beauty and the Beast” – 6
- “His Shadow: A Parable” – 6
- “Something Rotten” – 6
- “The First Deep Breath” – 5
- “Howard’s End” – 5
- “Into the Woods” – 5
- “Kill Move Paradise” – 5
- “Sheepdog” – 5
- “Oslo” – 5
- “Always...Patsy Cline” – 4
- “The King’s Speech” – 4
- “The Leopard Play, or Sad Songs for Lost Boys” – 4
- “Monty Python’s Spamalot” – 4
- “The Secret of My Success” – 4
- “Verböten” – 4
- “Bernhardt/Hamlet” – 3
- “Dana H.” – 3
- “Disney's Newsies” – 3
- “The Great Leap” – 3
- “Mary Poppins” – 3
- “Midsummer (A Play with Songs)” – 3
- “Oedipus Rex” – 3
- “Sunset Boulevard” – 3
- “The Gulf” – 2
- “How to Defend Yourself” – 2
- “Jeeves Saves the Day” – 2
- “Sherlock’s Last Case” – 2
- “Stick Fly” – 2
- “Twice, Thrice, Frice ...” – 2
- “The Wickhams: Christmas at Pemberley” – 2

Theater Artists with more than one nomination:

- William Boles – 3
- Wardell Julius Clark – 3
- Theresa Ham – 3
- Jeffrey Levin – 3
- Brenda Didier and Florence Walker-Harris – 2
- Mike Durst – 2
- Lee Fiskness – 2

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(Theater Artists with more than one nomination – cont.)

- Jermaine Hill – 2
- Lynne Kurdziel-Formato – 2
- Kevan Loney – 2
- Keith Parham – 2
- Mike Tutaj – 2

SPECIAL NOTICE TO NEWS MEDIA

The 52nd Annual Equity Jeff Awards and Community Celebration will be held virtually at 7:00PM on Monday, November 9. Details on accessing the free program will be made available in late October.

Names of award recipients will be released immediately following the virtual program on November 9th by email and on our website under Equity Awards at www.jeffawards.org.

You may contact theaters and artists directly for interviews. If you would like to include a quote or an interview with any Jeff Awards committee member, please call or e-mail Suzanne Ross at 312-953-6987 or media@jeffawards.org.

The Jeff Awards website, www.jeffawards.org, lists all the current nominees, along with previous recipients and nominees as well as other Jeff Awards information and news.

ABOUT THE JEFF AWARDS

Promoting excellence in Chicago theater, The Jeff Awards began its annual recognition program in 1968. In 1973, it expanded its scope to establish the Non–Equity Wing to celebrate outstanding achievement in non–union theater. Members include 55 individuals representing a wide variety of backgrounds in theater (including producers, directors, actors, playwrights, designers, professors of theater, entertainment lawyers and agents, and theater lovers), the Jeff Awards is committed to celebrating the vitality of Chicago area theatre by recognizing excellence through its recommendations, awards, and honors. Opening night judges include both the members as well as Artistic and Technical theater volunteers (the “AT Team”), representing Artistic Directors, producers, directors and artists from Chicago theaters. The Jeff Awards fosters the artistic growth of area theater companies and artists, and promotes educational opportunities, audience appreciation, and civic pride in the achievements of the theater community.

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