



## THE 47<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL NON-EQUITY JEFF AWARDS ARE ANNOUNCED

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Editor's Note:

*A complete list of award recipients and nominees can also be found online in the non-Equity section at [www.jeffawards.org](http://www.jeffawards.org). The site also includes all previous year recipients and nominees.*

June 22, 2020 – Chicago – As part of the annual recognition of theater excellence, the 47<sup>th</sup> Non-Equity Jeff Awards today announced honorees in 21 artistic and technical categories. Recipients included 27 theater artists whose work was featured at 14 theater companies during the 2019-2020 season.

With respect for current times calling for reflection, conversation and action towards issues of social justice, commemoration of the annual awards was postponed until June 22<sup>nd</sup>. At the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic and as restrictions on public gatherings began, video program honoring this year's nominees was recorded for release in early June. However, following the lead of the theater community, a larger celebration was paused for time to listen more closely and learn what plans organizations should make to become most effective in addressing systemic racism so the storytellers of Chicago theater can survive and thrive.

Leading the 47<sup>th</sup> Non-Equity Jeff Awards, Red Tape Theatre collected six honors for its production of "All Quiet on the Western Front", including Production (Play). Boho Theatre received five awards, including Production (Musical) for "Big Fish." "P.Y.G. or The Mis-Education of Dorian Belle" also captured multiple awards for Jackalope Theatre Company, garnering three artistic and technical awards.

"All Quiet on the Western Front" from Red Tape Theatre was awarded honors for both Play and Ensemble. Matt Foss also received the award for New Work for the production. Additionally, the artistic team of Dan Poppen (Sound Design), Stephen Sakowski (Lighting Design) and Leah Urzendowski (Choreography) received award recognition.

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BoHo Theatre's "Big Fish" took home honors for Musical, as well as Director for Steve Schellhardt, Musical Direction for Michael McBride, and two Performers in a Supporting Role – Musical for Kyrie Anderson (Sandra Bloom) and Jeff Pierpoint (Will Bloom).

Lili-Anne Brown received the Director (Play) award for "P.Y.G. or The Mis-Education of Dorian Belle" at Jackalope Theatre Company. Sharing the company spotlight, Eric Gerard was also recognized as a Performer in a Principal Role as was Paul Deziel for Projection Design.

Performers also honored included Brookelyn Hébert (Ada Byron Lovelace) in "Ada and the Engine" at The Artistic Home for Performer in a Principal Role (Play). Among musicals, Will Lidke (Hedwig) in "Hedwig and the Angry Inch" at Theo Ubique Cabaret Theatre and Amanda Raquel Martinez (Pearl, The Victim, Lady Usher, Soldier, Scheherazade) in "Ghost Quartet" at Black Button Eyes Productions earned Performer in a Principal Role (Musical) awards. Scott Gryder (Alex More) in "Buyer & Cellar" at Pride Films and Plays was presented with the Solo Performance award. In the Performer in a Supporting Role (Play) category, awards went to Renee Lockett (Aunt Mama) for "Sugar In Our Wounds" at First Floor Theater and Michael Turrentine (Geedi, Wamwara, Hassan Abdulla) in "Mlima's Tale" at Griffin Theatre Company.

Creative teams at six additional theater companies were recognized for artistic work. They included Alan Donahue for "Middle Passage" at Lifeline Theatre (Scenic Design), Mieka van der Ploeg for "First Love is the Revolution" at Steep Theatre Company (Costume Design), Breon Arzell - "Head Over Heels" - Kokandy Productions (Choreography) in a tie with Leah Urzendowski (mentioned earlier) for "All Quiet on the Western Front" at Red Tape Theatre, and Maya Vinice Prentiss and Casey Hoekstra for "EthiopianAmerica" at Definition Theatre Company (Fight Choreography). Awards also went to Ben Chang in "The Hound of the Baskervilles" at City Lit Theatre for Original Music in a Play, and to Keith Ryan for Artistic Specialization (Wig Design) in "Hedwig and the Angry Inch" at Theo Ubique Cabaret Theatre.

During the 2019-2020 Chicago non-Equity theater season, the Jeff Awards recognized 52 productions as "Jeff Recommended" which subsequently became eligible for award nominations. The season's nominees included the work of 31 non-Equity theater companies featuring 44 productions.

## **The 2020 Award Recipients are:**

### **Production – Play**

- "All Quiet on the Western Front" - Red Tape Theatre

### **Production – Musical**

- "Big Fish" - BoHo Theatre

### **Ensemble**

- "All Quiet on the Western Front" - Red Tape Theatre

### **New Work**

- Matt Foss - "All Quiet on the Western Front" - Red Tape Theatre

### **Director – Play**

- Lili-Anne Brown - "P.Y.G. or The Mis-Education of Dorian Belle" - Jackalope Theatre Company

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**Director – Musical**

- Stephen Schellhardt - "Big Fish" - BoHo Theatre

**Performer in a Principal Role – Play**

- Eric Gerard (Blacky Blackerson) - "P.Y.G. or The Mis-Edumacation of Dorian Belle" - Jackalope Theatre Company
- Brookelyn Hébert (Ada Byron Lovelace) - "Ada and the Engine" - The Artistic Home

**Performer in a Principal Role – Musical**

- Will Lidke (Hedwig) - "Hedwig and the Angry Inch" - Theo Ubique Cabaret Theatre
- Amanda Raquel Martinez (Pearl, The Victim, Lady Usher, Soldier, Scheherazade) - "Ghost Quartet" - Black Button Eyes Productions

**Solo Performance**

- Scott Gryder (Alex More) – “Buyer & Cellar” - Pride Films and Plays

**Performer in a Supporting Role - Play**

- Renee Lockett (Aunt Mama) - "Sugar In Our Wounds" - First Floor Theater
- Michael Turrentine (Geedi, Wamwara, Hassan Abdulla) - "Mlima's Tale" - Griffin Theatre Company

**Performer in a Supporting Role – Musical**

- Kyrie Anderson (Sandra Bloom) - "Big Fish" - BoHo Theatre
- Jeff Pierpoint (Will Bloom) - "Big Fish" - BoHo Theatre

**Scenic Design**

- Alan Donahue - "Middle Passage" - Lifeline Theatre

**Costume Design**

- Mieka van der Ploeg - "First Love is the Revolution" - Steep Theatre Company

**Sound Design**

- Dan Poppen - "All Quiet on the Western Front" - Red Tape Theatre

**Lighting Design**

- Stephen Sakowski - "All Quiet on the Western Front" - Red Tape Theatre

**Choreography**

- Breon Arzell - "Head Over Heels" - Kokandy Productions
- Leah Urzendowski - "All Quiet on the Western Front" - Red Tape Theatre

**Original Music in a Play**

- Ben Chang - "The Hound of the Baskervilles" - City Lit Theatre

**Musical Direction**

- Michael McBride - "Big Fish" - BoHo Theatre

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### **Fight Choreography**

- Maya Vinice Prentiss & Casey Hoekstra - "EthiopianAmerica" - Definition Theatre Company

### **Projection Design**

- Paul Deziel - "P.Y.G. or The Mis-Education of Dorian Belle" - Jackalope Theatre Company

### **Artistic Specialization**

- Keith Ryan (Wig Design) - "Hedwig and the Angry Inch" - Theo Ubique Cabaret Theatre

### **Awards by Company**

- Red Tape Theatre – 6
- BoHo Theatre – 5
- Jackalope Theatre – 3
- Theo Ubique Cabaret Theatre – 2
- The Artistic Home – 1
- Black Button Eyes Productions – 1
- City Lit Theatre – 1
- Definition Theatre – 1
- First Floor Theatre – 1
- Griffin Theatre – 1
- Kokandy Productions – 1
- Lifeline Theatre – 1
- Pride Films and Plays – 1
- Steep Theatre – 1

### **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. Each year, the Jeff Awards judges over 300 theatrical productions and hosts two awards ceremonies.

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