



News Release

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56th ANNIVERSARY JEFF AWARDS FOR EQUITY THEATERS ANNOUNCED

Prestigious awards honor Chicago theater excellence among more than 40 dedicated artists, behind the scenes teams and theater companies during the 2023-24 Equity season

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Editor's Note:

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

SEPTEMBER 30, 2024 – CHICAGO – At the 56th anniversary celebration of Equity theater excellence, the Jeff Awards recognized 44 award recipients selected from among 193 nominees across 34 categories of excellence in theater production among shows from 36 producing entities. The awards show was co-hosted by award-winning Chicago entertainers Lillian Castillo and Kelvin Roston, Jr., with actor Janet Ulrich Brooks as announcer, in a program featuring performances from 10 nominated productions and dozens of local theater artists as presenters. Johanna McKenzie Miller directed the awards program with music direction by Carolyn Jean Brady.

The Goodman Theatre and Steppenwolf Theatre tied for the most awards for a large theater (6) and midsize theater A Red Orchid Theatre was honored with four awards. Three productions at the Goodman received awards including “The Penelopiad” – Ensemble (Play) and Original Music in a Play (Samuel Davis); “The Nacirema Society Requests the Honor of Your Presence at the Celebration of Their First One Hundred Years” – Performer in a Supporting Role (E. Faye Butler) and Scenic Design (Arnel Sancianco); and “The Matchbox Magic Flute” – Scenic Design (Todd Rosenthal) and Costume Design (Ana Kuzmanic). Steppenwolf Theatre was recognized with three awards for its productions of “Purpose” – Production (Play), Direction (Phylicia Rashad) and New Work (Brandon Jacobs-Jenkins) – and “Little Bear Ridge Road” – Direction (Joe Mantello), Performer in a Principal Role (Laurie Metcalf) and New Work (Samuel D. Hunter).

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"Turret" at A Red Orchid Theatre garnered multiple honors for Midsize theater for scenic (Grant Sabin), lighting (Mike Durst) and sound (Jeffrey Levin) designs, as well as the award for Production – Play which it shared with Shattered Globe Theatre ("A View from the Bridge").

Productions at Drury Lane Productions and Marriott Theater tied for the most awards (four). The revue "Ain't Misbehavin'" received honors for Production, Ensemble, Direction (E. Faye Butler) and Performer (Lorenzo Rush Jr.). For "Beautiful: The Carole King Musical", Marriott Theater took home awards for Production, Direction (Jessica Fisch), Performer in a Principal Role (Kaitlyn Davis) and Performer in a Supporting Role (Andrew Mueller).

Three awards for Midsize theater were presented to Mercury Theater and Shattered Globe Theatre. Honors for "Jersey Boys" at Mercury Theater included Production – Musical, Direction (L. Walter Stearns and Brenda Didier), and Performer in a Supporting Role (Adrian Aguilar). Shattered Globe Theatre's "A View from the Bridge" received recognition for Production, Direction (Louis Contey) and Scott Aiello was awarded Performer in a Principal Role.

Additional performance awards were given to Meghan Murphy for her role in "Anything Goes" at Porchlight Music Theatre, Mitchell J. Fain in "The Lehman Trilogy" at TimeLine Theatre Company, and Hershey Felder for his solo performance in "Hershey Felder as Monsieur Chopin" at Writers Theatre.

Among technical awards, "Illinoise" from Chicago Shakespeare Theater in association with ArKtype/Thomas O. Kriegsmann garnered three for Justin Peck (Choreography), Nathan Koci (Music Direction) and Timo Andres (Artistic Specialization - Music Arrangements and Orchestrations). Additional awards were presented for Lighting Design to Cat Wilson ("A Streetcar Named Desire" - Paramount Theatre), Sound Design to André Pluess ("The Lehman Trilogy" - TimeLine Theatre Company), Projection Design to Mike Tutaj ("Gods and Monsters" - Frame of Reference Productions), and Aly Greaves Amidei for Costume Design- Midsize ("Miss Bennet: Christmas at Pemberley" - Buffalo Theatre Ensemble).

In the Short Run Productions category (defined by 9-17 performances), awards were presented to Congo Square Theatre (Production) for "Welcome to Matteson!" and to Harry Lennix for Performer in "How I Learned What I Learned", a production of Congo Square Theatre in association with Goodman Theatre.

The Jeff Awards New Work category recognized authors of two new productions, both premiered at Steppenwolf Theatre. They included Samuel D. Hunter ("Little Bear Ridge Road") and Branden Jacobs-Jenkins ("Purpose").

The 56th Equity Special Awards were presented to Charles Newell and Roche Schulfer, arts leaders whose influence has extended beyond Chicago to the national stage including Tony Awards for their respective theaters. Newell has been part of Court Theatre for more than three decades as a director, the Marilyn F. Vitale Artistic Director and now Senior Artistic Consultant. He has played a vital role in Court becoming a nationally recognized cultural institution and has an extensive list of local, regional and national directing credits, collaborations and industry honors for how he has helped transform the regional arts landscape. Schulfer has long been known for his leadership, artistic vitality, advocacy and generosity to the community. He spent over four decades at the Goodman Theatre overseeing more than 400 productions with nearly 200 premieres. During his tenure, the theater received numerous awards for excellence, recognition by *Time* magazine as the "Best Regional Theatre" in the U.S., the Pulitzer Prize for Lynn Nottage's *Ruined* and many Jeff Awards for outstanding achievement in Chicago area theater, as well as completing a decade long process to relocate the Goodman to the Theatre District in 2000 where his name is part of the theater's "Walk of Stars."

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In its 56th Anniversary season, July 1, 2023 through June 30, 2024, the Jeff Awards membership judged the opening nights of 99 productions. From these, 82 productions became "Jeff Recommended" which made them eligible for award nominations.

The 56th Anniversary Equity Award recipients are:

Production – Play (Large)

- "Purpose" - Steppenwolf Theatre Company

Production – Play (Midsize)

- "Turret" - A Red Orchid Theatre
- "A View from the Bridge" - Shattered Globe Theatre

Production – Musical (Large)

- "Beautiful: The Carole King Musical" - Marriott Theatre

Production – Musical –(Midsize)

- "Jersey Boys" - Mercury Theater Chicago

Production - Revue

- "Ain't Misbehavin'" - Drury Lane Productions

Director – Play (Large)

- Joe Mantello - "Little Bear Ridge Road" - Steppenwolf Theatre Company
- Phylicia Rashad - "Purpose" - Steppenwolf Theatre Company

Director – Play (Midsize)

- Louis Contey - "A View from the Bridge" - Shattered Globe Theatre

Director – Musical (Large)

- Jessica Fisch - "Beautiful: The Carole King Musical" - Marriott Theatre

Director – Musical (Midsize)

- L. Walter Stearns and Brenda Didier - "Jersey Boys" - Mercury Theater Chicago

Director - Revue

- E. Faye Butler - "Ain't Misbehavin'" - Drury Lane Productions

Ensemble – Play

- "The Penelopiad" - Goodman Theatre

Ensemble – Musical

- "Ain't Misbehavin'" - Drury Lane Productions

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Performer In A Principal Role – Play

- Scott Aiello - "A View from the Bridge" - Shattered Globe Theatre
- Laurie Metcalf - "Little Bear Ridge Road" - Steppenwolf Theatre Company

Performer In A Principal Role – Musical

- Kaitlyn Davis - "Beautiful: The Carole King Musical" - Marriott Theatre
- Meghan Murphy - "Anything Goes" - Porchlight Music Theatre

Performer In A Revue

- Lorenzo Rush, Jr. - "Ain't Misbehavin'" - Drury Lane Productions

Solo Performance

- Hershey Felder - "Hershey Felder as Monsieur Chopin" - Writers Theatre

Performer In A Supporting Role – Play

- E. Faye Butler - "The Nacirema Society Requests the Honor of Your Presence at the Celebration of Their First One Hundred Years" - Goodman Theatre
- Mitchell J. Fain - "The Lehman Trilogy" - TimeLine Theatre Company

Performer In A Supporting Role – Musical

- Adrian Aguilar - "Jersey Boys" - Mercury Theater Chicago
- Andrew Mueller - "Beautiful: The Carole King Musical" - Marriott Theatre

New Work

- Samuel D. Hunter - "Little Bear Ridge Road" - Steppenwolf Theatre Company
- Branden Jacobs-Jenkins - "Purpose" - Steppenwolf Theatre Company

Choreography

- Justin Peck - "Illinoise" - Chicago Shakespeare Theater in association with ArKtype/Thomas O. Kriegsmann

Original Music In A Play

- Samuel Davis - "The Penelopiad" - Goodman Theatre

Music Direction

- Nathan Koci - "Illinoise" - Chicago Shakespeare Theater in association with ArKtype/Thomas O. Kriegsmann

Scenic Design (Large)

- Todd Rosenthal - "The Matchbox Magic Flute" - Goodman Theatre
- Arnel Sancianco – "The Nacirema Society Requests the Honor of Your Presence at the Celebration of Their First One Hundred Years" - Goodman Theatre

Scenic Design (Midsize)

- Grant Sabin - "Turret" - A Red Orchid Theatre

Lighting Design (Large)

- Cat Wilson - "A Streetcar Named Desire" - Paramount Theatre

Lighting Design (Midsize)

- Mike Durst - "Turret" - A Red Orchid Theatre

Costume Design (Large)

- Ana Kuzmanic - "The Matchbox Magic Flute" – Goodman

Costume Design (Midsize)

- Aly Greaves Amidei - "Miss Bennet: Christmas at Pemberley" - Buffalo Theatre Ensemble

Sound Design (Large)

- André Pluess - "The Lehman Trilogy" - TimeLine Theatre Company

Sound Design (Midsize)

- Jeffrey Levin - "Turret" - A Red Orchid Theatre

Projection Design

- Mike Tutaj - "Gods and Monsters" - Frame of Reference Productions

Artistic Specialization

- Timo Andres - Music Arrangements and Orchestrations - "Illinoise" - Chicago Shakespeare Theater in association with ArKtype/Thomas O. Kriegsmann

Short Run Production

- "Welcome to Matteson!" - Congo Square Theatre

Short Run Production – Performer

- Harry Lennix - "How I Learned What I Learned" - Congo Square Theatre in association with Goodman Theatre

Special Award

- Charles Newell
- Roche Schulfer

Multiple Award Recipients

By Theater

Goodman Theatre	6
Steppenwolf Theatre	6
Drury Lane Productions	4
Marriott Theatre	4
A Red Orchid Theatre	4
Chicago Shakespeare Theater in association with ArKtype/Thomas O. Kriegsmann	3
Mercury Theater	3
Shattered Globe Theatre	3
Congo Square Theatre Company (1 in association with Goodman Theatre)	2
TimeLine Theatre Company	2

By Production

“Ain’t Misbehavin’”	4
“Beautiful: The Carole King Musical”	4
“Turret”	4
“Illinoise”	3
“Jersey Boys”	3
“Little Bear Ridge Road”	3
“Purpose”	3
“A View from the Bridge”	3
“The Lehman Trilogy”	2
“The Matchbox Magic Flute”	2
“The Nacirema Society Requests the Honor of Your Presence at the Celebration of Their First One Hundred Years”	2
“The Penopiad”	2

By Individual

E. Faye Butler	2
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About The Jeff Awards

The Jeff Awards is one of the most active and engaged theater awards organizations in the country evaluating hundreds of theatrical productions annually and holding two awards ceremonies highlighting work over the past Equity and Non-Equity seasons. Through recommendations, awards, and honors the organization helps foster the growth of companies, encourages artists, brings new appreciation for diverse storytelling, and cultivates civic pride in the achievements of the Chicago theater community. Originally chartered in 1968 to recognize Equity productions, the Jeff Awards Non-Equity Wing was established in 1973 to celebrate outstanding achievement in non-union theatre.

For more information, visit www.jeffawards.org.

NOTE FOR MEDIA:

*Photos from the event will be available on our website at www.jeffawards.org for download and use. Please credit **Brett Beiner Photography**.*

The Jeff Awards website lists all the award recipients and nominations as well as other Jeff Awards information and news. Visit www.jeffawards.org.

The Special Awards category has been presenting since 1969. Learn more [here](#) about previous recipients.

Names of award recipients was released immediately following the program on September 30th by email and on our website under Equity Awards at www.jeffawards.org.

Media may contact theaters and artists directly for interviews. For quotes or an interview with any Jeff Awards committee members, please call or e-mail Suzanne Ross at 312-953-6987 or suzanne@suzanne-ross.com or media@jeffaward.org.

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