



SHEA'S
WONDER
AWARDS

SHEA'S PERFORMING ARTS CENTER
HIGH SCHOOL MUSICAL THEATRE AWARDS

**ARTS ENGAGEMENT
AND EDUCATION**

2025 Shea's Wonder Awards
Participation Handbook

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ABOUT THE PROGRAM

The Wonder Awards is a dynamic initiative designed to celebrate and support the arts in high schools, foster excellence in musical theatre, and provide valuable educational opportunities for students. This program is deeply committed to nurturing young talent, promoting collaboration, and building a strong sense of community within the world of musical theatre. Though this program is competitive in nature, our hope is to introduce as much celebration into the program as possible through educational opportunities, award categories, and more. The Wonder Awards is named after the title that Paramount Studios designated to Shea's in the 1920s for its exceptional beauty: The Wonder Theatre.

PROGRAM PARTICIPATION REQUIREMENTS

There are a handful of requirements in order to participate in the Shea's Wonder Awards. Some of these requirements come from participating in the National High School Musical Theatre Awards program (The Jimmy Awards). The requirements are as follows:

1. Your school is a public, private, parochial or charter school within the counties of Allegany, Cattaraugus, Chautauqua, Erie, Genesee, Niagara, or Wyoming.
2. You are producing a full-length musical production. This includes "School" and "Teen" editions but not Broadway Junior or TYA shows.
3. Participating casts are made up of at least a 50% or more majority of students in grades 9-12.
4. Participating programs must acquire a proper licensing for their production and let the licensing house know that they are participating in this program.
5. Your production must occur within the program's adjudication window of November 2024-March 2025.
6. Produce a musical production recognized for eligibility by the National High School Musical Theatre Awards competition (The Jimmy Awards). The list of **NON**-eligible roles/shows can be found [here](#).
7. Participating schools must commit to ALL dates and deadlines.
8. You must have every participating student submit the Permission Release Form.
9. You must provide 2 complimentary tickets to each of the 5 adjudicators attending your production.
10. Agree to put the provided full-page full-color playbill advertisement in your program free of charge.
11. You must submit at least 10 production photos that you are happy with being featured in slideshows, social media, ceremony projections, etc.
12. Submit a completed production form no later than within 2 weeks of your opening night.
13. Complete a feedback survey following the ceremony.

REGISTRATION PROCEDURES

Due to capacity limitations, the Shea's Wonder Awards can only accommodate up to 20 schools to participate in its program each year. Registration for the program is FREE of charge and is completed through an online form.

Registrations are accepted on a first come, first served basis if 20 or less eligible schools register. However, if more than 20 schools register, all participating schools will be selected based on a lottery chosen at random to keep the selection fair.

THE JIMMY AWARDS

Shea's Performing Arts Center is proud to announce that we are once again participating in The Jimmy Awards! The Jimmy Awards costs \$15,000 to participate in and the Shea's AE&E department covers the entire cost (including airfare, artistic preparation, a staff chaperone, extra expenses, etc.) so that the two (2) nominated students can participate completely free of cost. Eligible students that wish to be considered for The Jimmy Awards must audition for and participate in The STAGE program. Please refer to the audition and program details in the STAGE sections. The 2025 Jimmy Awards will take place June 13th-24th, 2025, in New York City.

AWARD CATEGORIES

There are three (3) different kinds of award categories: Adjudicated, Submitted, or Spirit of Wonder. The adjudicated categories are the award categories that are scored by the adjudicators of the Shea's Wonder Awards. The submitted categories are the award categories that are submitted for consideration by the show's production team, the winners are selected based on submission. The Spirit of Wonder categories are the award categories aimed to celebrate adversity, storytelling, and community engagement; the winners are selected based on the information in the comment section of a show's Production Information Form, the submission of a director's note, and feedback from the adjudicators that attended the production.

All of the 23 award categories represented in The Wonder Awards 2025 are listed below.

- Outstanding Production of a Musical (3 winners)
- Best Performance by an Actor (Jimmy Awards Nominee)
- Best Performance by an Actress (Jimmy Award Nominee)
- Outstanding Leading and Supporting Performances (3 winners)
- Outstanding Collective Ensemble Performance
- Outstanding Dance Execution
- Outstanding Collective Vocal Performance
- Outstanding Student-Led Orchestral Performance
- Outstanding Lighting Design and Execution
- Outstanding Scenic Design and Execution
- Outstanding Costume Design and Execution
- Outstanding Hair and Makeup Design and Execution
- Outstanding Direction
- Outstanding Musical Direction
- Outstanding Choreography
- The Showstopper Award
- Outstanding Execution by Crew
- All Star Cast Award (1 recipient from each school)
- Outstanding Original Poster Design
- Magic of Theatre Award
- Power of Storytelling Award
- Celebration of Community Award
- Michael Shea Award for Theatre Educator of the Year

GRANTS

There are numerous grants given to the winners of certain categories in the Shea's Wonder Awards. Last year, we awarded a total of \$12,000 in grants towards high school theatre programs. We only hope to increase this number and spread the wealth as the years continue and we secure more resources. The breakdown of the grants by category is listed below.

- Outstanding Production of a Musical (GOLD) - \$5,000
- Outstanding Production of a Musical (SILVER) - \$2,500
- Outstanding Production of a Musical (BRONZE) - \$1,000
- Outstanding Student-Led Orchestral Performance - \$500
- Outstanding Collective Vocal Performance - \$500
- Outstanding Dance Performance - \$500
- Outstanding Costume Design and Execution - \$500
- Outstanding Hair and Makeup Design and Execution - \$500
- Outstanding Lighting Design and Execution - \$500
- Outstanding Scenic Design and Execution - \$500

Each school must complete a W-9 form in order to receive any grant that they win.

CHECK PRESENTATION

The three (3) winners of Outstanding Production of a Musical (Gold, Silver, and Bronze) are invited to attend the official check presentation ceremony on **Monday, June 2nd, 2025 (5:00pm-8:00pm)** at the Shea's 710 Theatre with their production teams, students, and any teachers that would like to attend. We invite each of the three (3) schools to speak on behalf of their program and encourage you to have student speakers. There will be news outlets present to cover this huge accomplishment. In this ceremony, we will also provide medals of accomplishment for each student present. All W-9 forms must be completed by Sunday, May 24th, 2025 (11:59pm) in order to receive their checks for the presentation.

PERMISSION RELEASE FORM

All students participating in the Shea's Wonder Awards must complete a permission release form in order to participate. This form includes a photo release which allows your production photos to be featured as well as video content around your show to be created. The permission release form can be submitted online and can be accessed [here](#). All permission release forms must be submitted AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.

REMIND

New! This year we are incorporating the "Remind" app for students to receive important updates regarding the Shea's Wonder Awards such as approaching deadlines for STAGE auditions or award categories and more. We encourage every single student to opt in to receive notifications. To sign up, students should text the message "@sheasae" to the number "81010". A document of instructions can also be found [here](#).

IMPORTANT DATES

The Wonder Awards has many important dates and deadlines that are important for participation in the program. Please review these dates carefully and do not hesitate to contact Arts Education Coordinator, Jake Gear (jgear@sheas.org) if you have any questions or concerns.

DATE	TIME	EVENT	LOCATION
Tuesday, October 1st, 2024	4:00pm-5:00pm	Pre-Registration Informational Session	Zoom
Friday, October 4th, 2024	4:00pm	Registration Opens	Virtual Submission
Tuesday, October 8th, 2024	11:59pm	Registration Closes	Virtual Submission
Friday, October 11th, 2024	3:00pm	Participating Schools Announced	Email & Social Media
Monday, October 21st, 2024	5:00pm-7:00pm	Welcome Meeting	Zoom
Monday, March 31st, 2025	9:00am	STAGE Auditions Open	Virtual Submission
Friday, April 4th, 2025	5:00pm	STAGE Auditions Close	Virtual Submission
Wednesday, April 16th, 2025	4:00pm-8:00pm	Social Event	Shea's Buffalo Theatre
Thursday, April 17th, 2025	3:00pm	Nomination Video Premiere	YouTube
Saturday, May 3rd, 2025	10:00am-3:00pm	CENTER STAGE: with John Clay III	Sheas 710 Theatre
Monday, May 5th, 2025	5:30pm-10:30pm	The STAGE Program - Day 1	Shea's Rehearsal Halls
Tuesday, May 6th, 2025	5:30pm-10:30pm	The STAGE Program - Day 2	Shea's Rehearsal Halls
Wednesday, May 7th, 2025	5:30pm-10:30pm	The STAGE Program - Day 3	Shea's Rehearsal Halls
Thursday, May 8th, 2025	5:30pm-10:30pm	The STAGE Program - Day 4	Shea's Rehearsal Halls
Friday, May 9th, 2025	5:30pm-10:30pm	The STAGE Program - Day 5	Shea's Rehearsal Halls
Saturday, May 10th, 2025	12:00pm-3:00pm	The STAGE Program - Day 6	Shea's Rehearsal Halls
Friday, May 16th, 2025	3:00pm-5:00pm	STAGE Semi-Finalists Tech Rehearsal	Shea's Buffalo Theatre
Saturday, May 17th, 2025	9:00am-5:00pm	Ceremony Performance Rehearsals	Shea's Buffalo Theatre
Saturday, May 17th, 2025	7:00pm-10:00pm	Shea's Wonder Awards Ceremony	Shea's Buffalo Theatre
Monday, June 2nd, 2025	5:00pm-7:00pm	Check Presentation Ceremony	Shea's 710 Theatre
Friday, June 13th, 2025 - Tuesday, June 24th, 2025	N/A	The Jimmy Awards	Julliard, New York City
Monday, June 23rd, 2025	7:30pm	The Jimmy Awards Ceremony	The Minskoff Theatre

PRODUCTION INFORMATION FORM

Each production must complete and submit a personalized Production Information Form **no later than 2 weeks before the opening of their production**. This form contains vital information that the adjudicators need to review prior to attending your production so it is vital to submit this form on time. Arts Education Coordinator, Jake Gear (jgear@sheas.org), will email a blank version of the form to each school after registrations have been confirmed. You will submit the completed form by emailing a PDF of this back to Jake Gear **no later than 2 weeks before the opening of your production**.

WEIGHTED SCORING

Each production's overall score (the score from every adjudicated category combined) is weighted to put a majority focus on the performance aspect of the production rather than the production value and high budget of the design categories. The overall score is used to determine which schools win Outstanding Production of a Musical. 70% of the overall score is made up of the performance categories (Leading and Supporting Performances, The Showstopper Award, Student-Led Orchestra, Collective Vocal Performance, Dance Execution, and Collective Ensemble Performance). 30% of the overall score is made up of the design and execution categories (Hair and Makeup Design and Execution, Scenic Design and Execution, Lighting Design and Execution, Costume Design and Execution). All other award categories do not count towards the overall score. The weight puts an emphasis on storytelling and performance rather than how flashy and extravagant a production is.

RUBRICS

The scoring process for each adjudicated category is dependent on a rubric that each adjudicator must complete within 72 hours of attending a production. The rubric provides inclusive and constructive prompts for the adjudicators to follow in order to provide a score of 1-5 for each category.

Once all of the scoring rubrics have been completed by the adjudicators for each production, the scores are then compiled and properly weighted by an auditor. The nominations and winners for each adjudicated category are solely decided based on the scores from the adjudicators. The 6 highest scores in each category receive a nomination and the highest score receives the win.

You can find a PDF version of the adjudication rubric [here](#).

ADJUDICATORS

The group of adjudicators for The Wonder Awards is comprised of thirty-five (35) highly experienced theatre educators and professional theatre practitioners with many years of experience. A list of this year's adjudicators can be found [here](#) and their headshots and bios can be found [here](#). The selected adjudicators go through a training process detailing an overview of the program, how scoring and rubrics work, and additional extensive training in how to provide valuable feedback. During the adjudication period, scoring will consider each participating school's unique resources and challenges. The comment section of the Production Information form, director's note, budget information, facilities notes, and any other additional information provided will all be taken into account by adjudicators. Five (5) adjudicators are scheduled to attend each semi-finalist production. Adjudicators will **NOT** be assigned to a school where there is a conflict of interest.

ADJUDICATOR TICKETS

Each of the five (5) adjudicators attending your production will be entitled to two (2) complimentary tickets. The date(s) that adjudicators will attend your production will be decided in late fall once all schedules have been confirmed. The dates will be sent to you as soon as they are available so that you can set their tickets aside.

ADJUDICATOR ABSENCE PROCEDURES

In the event that an adjudicator, who is scheduled to attend a production, has an emergency and they can no longer attend, there are four (4) procedures in place to be sure that your scores are not affected negatively due to an absence. The procedures are as follows.

Procedures:

1. Arts Education Coordinator, Jake Grear, will reach out to the entire pool of adjudicators to see if anyone will be available to substitute in their place.
2. In the event that no adjudicators are available, Arts Engagement and Education staff will attend to act as a substitute in the place of an adjudicator.
3. In the event of staff being unavailable, your production staff will receive an email inquiring about whether or not your production was recorded. If the production was recorded, Shea's AE&E staff will obtain the recording from your production staff and send it to an adjudicator to view, score, and provide feedback using the recording. We strongly advise each production to provide Shea's with a production recording in the event of this procedure needing to take place.
4. In the event that there is no production recording, the missing score will be provided by using the average score that the adjudicators which attended gave to your production in each category. This way, your scores for each category will not be affected in a positive or negative way. This is always our last resort option to only be used if all other procedures have failed.

ADJUDICATOR FEEDBACK

Each adjudicator that attends your production is required to submit a narrative feedback for each award category that they score. The adjudicators receive training on how to make their feedback as constructive as possible while highlighting elements that they thought were successful. The unique and specialized feedback adjudicators provide is focused on uplifting a students' strengths and suggesting future areas of improvement. Theatre and art are subjective, so we always remind students and teachers to use what is useful to their storytelling. This feedback is reviewed and/or edited by the Arts Engagement and Education department before being sent to each school. Each production team will receive their adjudication report, in PDF form, which includes feedback highlights and a scoring overview for your production before the announcement of the awards nominations in April. Please note that the adjudicator feedback is subjective and based on the opinions and experiences of each person.

ADJUDICATION REPORT

After each production closes, all of the adjudicator scores and feedback are compiled into one adjudication report to be sent to each school. This report provides each school with information about how they fared in each category in terms of scoring, what their top scores categories were, detailed feedback from adjudicators, and more. Each school will receive this report via email once it is ready. If a school would like to receive all of the feedback that adjudicators submitted for their production, they can email Arts Education Coordinator, Jake Grear. He will compile all of the feedback into a document and share it with you. An example of the adjudication report can be found [here](#).

NOMINATIONS

The nominees for all of the adjudicated categories are made up of the six (6) highest scoring productions in each category. The nominations are announced approximately one (1) month before the awards ceremony via video announcement. The social event on Tuesday, April 22nd, 2025, will conclude in the official premiere of the nomination video. The nomination video will go live on social media the following day at 3:00pm.

MEDLEYS

The ten (10) schools nominated for Outstanding Production of a Musical are invited to perform a medley of songs from their production during the Shea's Wonder Awards ceremony. There is a strict time limit of five (5) minutes for this medley performance. Your production's conductor **must** conduct your medley performance. The contractor of the orchestra, Lon Gormley, will reach out to each nominated school to schedule a rehearsal day at Shea's Performing Arts Center prior to the ceremony. All music cuts/music selections/etc. must be provided to Lon Gormley **prior** to your orchestra medley rehearsal. Please also refer to the "Musical Accompaniment for Ceremony" section of this handbook.

OPENING/CLOSING NUMBER

The opening and closing numbers are performed by the ten (10) schools not nominated for Outstanding Production of a Musical. There will be five (5) schools represented in the opening number and five (5) schools represented in the closing number. Each school is allotted fifteen (15) performers to participate in the performance. Each school should select their fifteen (15) performers keeping in mind that these students will be required to attend a mandatory rehearsal for this musical number on the day of the ceremony. You will receive all details including the song selection, sheet music, instructional videos, and a sign-up form following the nomination announcement.

SOCIAL EVENT

We will be hosting a social event on April 22nd, 2025, intended for all interested students in the program to attend. There will be fun activities, a theatre event tabling fair, snacks, and we will premiere the official nomination video at the end. The nomination video will also be posted on our YouTube page and website the following day. Your school must submit an RSVP in order to attend, which can be accessed [here](#). The deadline to submit your RSVP is Wednesday, March 19th, 2025, at 11:59pm.

AWARD RECIPIENTS

During the ceremony, we invite one representative from your production to accept an award, should you win your category. We strongly encourage the representative to be a student. Each school is allowed one recipient PER CATEGORY. Each recipient can be the same individual or a different individual per category. These recipients will be seated in the first few rows of the orchestra section to allow for easier access to the stage. Details regarding this will be sent following the nominations.

THE STAGE PROGRAM

The STAGE is an acronym for the “Student Talent And Growth Experience”. This program is for all students that wish to be in consideration for The Jimmy Awards.

Interested students must meet the qualifying role requirements provided by The Jimmy’s. The qualifying role requirements can be found on the Jimmy Awards website or [here](#).

Program Breakdown:

The STAGE is a six (6)-day long intensive program focused on acting, singing, dancing, and storytelling. The participating students will work with professional and highly qualified coaches in their respective areas of expertise to develop and hone their performance skills and the material that they choose to bring to the program.

Auditions are REQUIRED to participate in this program. Each audition is adjudicated and the sixteen (16) highest scoring auditions (eight (8) actors and eight (8) actresses) will be selected to participate.

At the end of the week, the sixteen (16) semi-finalists undergo a final audition presenting the material they worked on all week which is scored by a panel of adjudicators to determine the top eight (8) finalists. The top eight (8) finalists will be announced at the awards ceremony and these finalists will perform their song of choice for the audience and a brand new panel of adjudicators to determine the winner.

The dates and times for the STAGE program are detailed below.

Date	Time	Location
Monday, May 5th, 2025	5:30pm-10:30pm	Shea’s Rehearsal Halls
Tuesday, May 6th, 2025	5:30pm-10:30pm	Shea’s Rehearsal Halls
Wednesday, May 7th, 2025	5:30pm-10:30pm	Shea’s Rehearsal Halls
Thursday, May 8th, 2025	5:30pm-10:30pm	Shea’s Rehearsal Halls
Friday, May 9th, 2025	5:30pm-10:30pm	Shea’s Rehearsal Halls
Saturday, May 10th, 2025	12:00pm-3:00pm	Shea’s Rehearsal Halls

The audition for this program is very extensive with a lot of material to prepare and submit. Due to the intensive and competitive nature of this specific program, there are many elements that the interested student will need to prepare. We are always willing to help students and answer questions that they may have regarding the audition and the materials they need to submit. All questions can be sent to Arts Education Coordinator, Jake Gear (jgear@sheas.org).

THE STAGE PROGRAM AUDITIONS

Auditions for the STAGE program are submitted virtually through the submission of a form and self-tape video. Auditions will open on **Monday, March 31st, 2025 at 9:00am** and will close on **Friday, April 4th, 2025 at 5:00pm**. Interested and eligible students are welcomed to complete the audition form along with submitting an audition video.

Materials that will be required to submit in the audition form:

1. A bio of no more than 200 words, written in third-person format.
2. Any known conflicts for the days of the program.
3. Three (3) photos of you from your production with the photographer's name.
4. A headshot or clear photo of your face (this photo may be used on social media).
5. A resume of your theatre experience.
6. A link to your audition video.

Each audition video should include:

1. A slate stating your name, school, your Jimmy-eligible role, and what material you will be performing.
2. A 1-minute cut of a song from your Jimmy-eligible role.
3. A 1-minute cut of a Jimmy approved song of your choice.
4. A 1-minute monologue of your choice.
5. A dance call or improvised dance.

This list of Jimmy approved songs can be found here: [Jimmy Approved Songs](#)

An example audition video can be found here: [Example Audition Video](#)

The link to the 2025 STAGE audition form can be found here: [Audition Form](#)

The audition form is unable to be viewed until it opens on Monday, March 31st, 2025 at 9:00am but a PDF version of the form can be viewed here: [PDF of Audition Form](#)

Important Note: We don't want students to stress about having the most professional setups and resources for this audition. Using a YouTube track instead of live accompaniment is perfectly acceptable (even sometimes preferred), as is not having a standard headshot as long as they submit a clear photo of their face. Their resumes will not be judged or graded on how it is formatted and will not affect their participation, it is only used to learn about their previous experience.

AWARD CATEGORIES EXPLAINED

Outstanding Production of a Musical (Adjudicated Category)

This award recognizes the highest scored productions overall. The winners are determined by the highest overall scoring productions, weighted on a 70% performance based and 30% design and execution based scale. There are ten (10) nominated productions and three (3) recipients of this award: Gold, Silver, and Bronze. Each winning school wins a grant to be awarded to their school's theatre/drama department.

Best Performance by an Actor/Actress - Jimmy Awards Nominee (Adjudicated Category)

This category is the only individual performance category in our program and it announces which student will be representing Buffalo at The Jimmy Awards. In order to be considered for this category, a student must audition for and participate in The STAGE program. At the conclusion of this program, the participating students perform a final audition for a panel of adjudicators. The top eight (8) scoring individuals (four (4) actors and four (4) actresses) become the finalists and are invited to perform a solo on the mainstage during the awards ceremony where they will be scored by a brand new panel of adjudicators. The top scoring actor and actress will represent Buffalo at The Jimmy Awards in NYC.

Outstanding Leading Performances (Adjudicated Category)

This award celebrates the principal performances in semi-finalist productions as a group. The directing teams of each production are asked to submit up to five (5) performers to be considered for this category. It is important to note that this category is completely separate from being considered for the Jimmy Awards. The production team should submit the five (5) performers that they would like to submit for adjudication, no matter the size of the role. The performers submitted can be in a Jimmy eligible role **OR** a non Jimmy eligible role. The adjudicators will score and provide feedback for the performers submitted by the directing team. This category is awarded to the group of winning performers. There are three (3) winning groups in this category - Gold, Silver, and Bronze. All students in the winning groups of submitted performers receive a trophy and certificate.

Outstanding Collective Ensemble Performance (Adjudicated Category)

This award focuses on the overall collective ensemble of a production. The ensembles are adjudicated based on how they function as a unit, artistic choices, energy, choices, vocal performance, dance performance, and acting performance.

Outstanding Dance Execution (Adjudicated Category)

This award focuses on the execution of the choreography by the student performers. The performance is adjudicated based on execution, technique, and character choices. This award does not focus on the design of the choreography, only the execution of it.

Outstanding Collective Vocal Performance (Adjudicated Category)

This award focuses on the vocal performance from all individuals in a production. This includes solo numbers, duets, and group numbers. The performance is adjudicated based on sound balance, harmonies, vocal technique, rhythm, phrasing, and character choices.

Outstanding Student-Led Orchestral Performance (Adjudicated Category)

This award focuses on the orchestra performance supporting the musical in a majority student-led group. The orchestra must be made up of at least 70% students in order to qualify for this category. The performance is adjudicated based on sound balance, tune, intonation, rhythm, dynamics, and their ability to follow their conductor and the performers.

Outstanding Lighting Design and Execution (Adjudicated Category)

This award focuses on the design and execution of the lighting. The category is adjudicated based on the overall design concept, how well it worked with the other design elements, creating a story with the design, as well as how well the cues were called, focused, and executed.

Outstanding Scenic Design and Execution (Adjudicated Category)

This award focuses on the design and execution of the scenic elements. This category is adjudicated based on the overall design concept, construction, story enhancement, consistency, functionality, as well as how smooth and brief the scene changes were executed.

Outstanding Costume Design and Execution (Adjudicated Category)

This award focuses on the design and execution of all of the production's costuming elements. This category is adjudicated based on the overall design concept, character establishment, time-period accuracy, construction, tailoring, color palette, and overall story enhancement.

Outstanding Hair and Makeup Design and Execution (Adjudicated Category)

This award focuses on the design and execution of the hair and makeup in the production. This category is adjudicated based on the overall design concept, character establishment, time-period accuracy, story enhancement, and how well maintained the styles of hair, wigs, and makeup is throughout the performance.

Outstanding Direction (Adjudicated Category)

This award focuses on the director of the musical. This category is adjudicated based on character choices, varied and creative staging, story-focused performance, developed character arcs, performers' understanding of characters and the story as a whole, as well as how all of the design elements worked together to bring the world to life based on their vision.

Outstanding Musical Direction (Adjudicated Category)

This award focuses on the music director of the musical. This category is adjudicated based on sound balance, vocal technique, consistency of rhythms, tightness of harmonies, stylistic character choices, and storytelling through song.

Outstanding Choreography (Adjudicated Category)

This award focuses on the choreographer of the musical. This category is adjudicated based on technique and stamina from the performers, how well the design was catered to the performers' abilities, reflection of the world of the show (including time-period), and innovation including the use of sets, props, and costumes through dance.

The Showstopper Award (Adjudicated Category)

This award focuses on one particular musical number submitted by the directing team for adjudicators to score. This category is adjudicated based on creative storytelling, energy, teamwork for all involved, show stopping qualities, and displaying a synergy between the performers, musicians, and crew.

Outstanding Execution by Crew (Submitted Category)

This award focuses on the crew members on a production and particularly their execution of one major technical element in the production. The directing teams are asked to submit a short video of their crew executing a technical element whether it be a fun costume change, set change, a special effect, etc. The winning crew will be chosen based on the video submissions.

All-Star Cast Award (Submitted Category)

This award is bestowed upon one student from each semi-finalist production. Each directing team is asked to submit the name of the one student in their production that showed strong work ethic, a consistently positive attitude, and was the glue that held the cast together. This student can be a leading actor, an ensemble member, and anyone in-between. Each recipient of this award makes up the All-Star Cast.

Outstanding Original Poster Design (Submitted Category)

This award focuses on the design of an original poster used as promotional material for your production. The designer must be a student, faculty member, or production team member in order to be eligible for this category. Do not submit for this category if the designer does not meet this criteria. The poster design may borrow elements from other productions but must display an overall original design.

Spirit of Wonder Award - Magic of Theatre (Submitted Category)

This award celebrates the resilience of productions that went through hardship and technical difficulties throughout their production and, through the magic of theatre, made it out the other side. The winner is chosen based on information on your production form, in your director's note, and feedback from the adjudicators that attended your production.

Spirit of Wonder Award - Power of Storytelling (Submitted Category)

This award celebrates the dedication to storytelling displayed by the performers in a production. Through the power of storytelling, the performers display unique character choices and a passion for the story they are telling. The winner is chosen based on information on your production form, in your director's note, and feedback from the adjudicators that attended your production.

Spirit of Wonder Award - Celebration of Community (Submitted Category)

This award celebrates the community aspect and outreach of a production's supporters. It truly takes a village to bring a production to life and we want to highlight the work of the parents, volunteers, teachers, friends (and more!) that helped throughout the process. The winner is chosen based on information in your production form, in your director's note, and feedback from the adjudicators that attended your production.

Michael Shea Award for Theatre Educator of the Year (Submitted Category)

This award celebrates a theatre educator that goes above and beyond for their students to create unique opportunities and make every student feel welcomed and accepted. From the directors working overnights to the producers committed to fundraising for the production and everybody in between, we are dedicated to recognizing the hard work of these undervalued educators. The winner is chosen based on a form submission highlighting their efforts throughout the year.

CEREMONY TICKETS

Every member of the cast, crew, orchestra, production team, and creative team of each semi-finalist production (students and adults) are eligible to receive one (1) complimentary ticket for the Shea's Wonder Awards ceremony. Each school must fill out a ticket reservation form, giving a **total** number of tickets that your school would like reserved. The reservation form can be accessed [here](#). The deadline to complete this form is Friday, April 18th, 2025, 11:59pm. There should only be one (1) form submission per school.

CEREMONY LENGTH

The length of the ceremony is highly affected by the length of the performances. If a school goes over the allotted time for their medley performance, it can drastically affect the length of the ceremony. We highly encourage each medley school to not exceed the maximum of five (5) minutes for their performance. Cuts will need to be made for any performance exceeding the maximum. Please also understand that regardless of the performance lengths, the ceremony will be over two (2) hours in length because of the number of award categories, performances, and nominees in each category. Our goal is to ensure that the ceremony's length does not exceed three (3) hours in length.

CEREMONY BACKSTAGE PROCEDURES

New! All backstage volunteers and production managers will be chosen by the Shea's AE&E staff and will be provided training in logistics, cultural competency, and individual student needs prior to the day of the ceremony. Shea's AE&E staff will also be available backstage at all times to assist with any issues.

MUSICAL ACCOMPANIMENT FOR CEREMONY

Shea's provides full orchestra accompaniment to all medley performances in the ceremony. Your production's conductor **must** conduct your medley performance. The contractor of the orchestra, Lon Gormley, will reach out to each performing school to schedule a rehearsal day at Shea's prior to the ceremony. All music cuts/music selections/etc. must be provided to Lon Gormley **prior** to your orchestra medley rehearsal. Each medley must not exceed the limit of 4-5 minutes and will be timed during the orchestra medley rehearsal. If the medley exceeds 5 minutes, cuts will need to be made on the spot. There are no exceptions to this rule. Please read the full instructional letter from Lon [here](#).

DAY OF CEREMONY

New! There will no longer be workshops held on the day of the ceremony. This has proven to be an incredibly exhausting and long day for students and teachers alike when participating in workshops mixed with rehearsals and followed by the ceremony. We have gotten feedback to split it up and we heard you! The day of the ceremony will now strictly be rehearsals for the opening number, the closing number, and the medley performances. Each performing school will receive a time slot to arrive for their rehearsal scheduled via email.

DRESSING ROOMS

Dressing rooms are used by the performers in the awards ceremony. We understand the need for gender inclusivity and encourage you to reach out if you have any special requests regarding the dressing room assignments for the ceremony performances. Feel free to email Arts Education Coordinator, Jake Gear (jgear@sheas.org) for requests.

REHEARSAL CONSULTATION

New! One of the goals of the Shea's Wonder Awards is to aid in the development of growing musical theatre programs of the participating high schools. Because of this, we are excited to offer rehearsal consultation to anyone that wishes to receive it. Our staff is made up of professional actors, directors and stage managers alike and we are happy to provide feedback to you from our professional opinion throughout your rehearsal process. If you would like our team to join you for a rehearsal and provide feedback, email Arts Education Coordinator, Jake Gear (jgear@sheas.org), to request this and we will coordinate a date to join you for a rehearsal.

PLAYBILL ADVERTISEMENT

Shea's Performing Arts Center requires one full-page full-color advertisement in your playbill as a requirement of participating in this program. This advertisement will be custom made for each production to highlight each school as a semi-finalist for the Shea's Wonder Awards. The playbill ad will be sent to each school via email from Arts Education Coordinator, Jake Gear (jgear@sheas.org), once all 20 schools have been accepted into the program. An example advertisement can be found [here](#).

DIRECTOR'S NOTE

We ask that you please submit an official director's note. In this note, we want to learn what makes your production unique and special as well as any unique struggles that you may have overcome in the process. This note will be referred to when selecting the winners of the Spirit of Wonder Awards categories. The deadline to submit your director's note is April 6th, 2025, 11:59pm. The link to submit your director's note can be found [here](#).

PRODUCTION PHOTOS

Each school is required to submit **at least** ten (10) production photos to the Production Photos Folder. Please only submit photos that you are happy with being featured. These photos may be used in slideshows, social media, ceremony projections, etc. Please do not submit your photos later than April 6th, 2025, 11:59pm. The link to upload your photos can be found [here](#). If you are having trouble accessing or uploading to the folder, email Arts Education Coordinator, Jake Gear (jgear@sheas.org) for assistance.

PRODUCTION RECORDING

If you are able to provide a video recording of your production, we **HIGHLY** encourage you to do so. There may be a situation where an adjudicator has an emergency and can no longer attend and we are unable to find coverage; this is when we can refer to the recording to make sure that the production still gets proper adjudication. Please submit an Unlisted YouTube Video link to the form [here](#) to submit your production recording. All recordings should be submitted no later than Tuesday, April 1st, 2025 (11:59pm).

MERCHANDISE

Merchandise for the Shea's Wonder Awards will be available for pre-order some time throughout the season, the official date is TBA. Pre-ordered merchandise will be available for pickup on the day of the Shea's Wonder Awards ceremony. A select quantity of merchandise will also be available for purchase on the day of the ceremony. Students will receive a link to the pre-order form through "Remind" and production staff will receive the link via email.

LYRICAL PIPE

Lyrical Pipe Creative, LLC is a video production company that has partnered with Shea's Performing Arts Center to create video content surrounding the Shea's Wonder Awards. Matt Gould, founder of Lyrical Pipe, will travel to all 20 semi-finalist productions to capture video content of your show from a dress rehearsal or performance. He will capture a few scenes or songs of your choice to be put together into a promotional video. He will also record an interview segment featuring students and staff from different parts of your production. Matt will reach out to each director individually to schedule what days you would like him to come in for video capture.

FORMER WINNER PARTICIPATION

The winner of "Outstanding Production of a Musical: Gold Achievement" from the previous year will still be eligible to participate the following year of the program. However, if any such school participates the following year, they will **NOT** be eligible for the category of "Outstanding Production of a Musical", but they **WILL** be eligible for all other award categories. This only applies for the first year after their production's win. Two years following their production's win, they will be eligible for all award categories. We want to be sure that the largest grants awarded in our program do not go to the same school every year in order to foster equitable sharing across other participating schools. The previous "Gold Winner" from the year prior will also serve as a mentor to other schools the following year by being open to provide help and feedback to other directors or schools that reach out for advice. The previous "Gold Winner" will also participate in professional development and teach a workshop during the Wonder Workshop Series for the adults attending.

FEEDBACK SURVEYS

We value your feedback greatly! Because of this, we ask for your feedback every year through survey submission. We read and take into account each and every response. We want to continue to implement the proper changes to this program to make it as celebratory and functional for each school as possible. A link to the feedback survey will be sent to you to complete following the awards ceremony in May.

CHECKLIST / IMPORTANT SUBMISSION DATES

#	Item	How to Submit	Deadline to Submit
1	Student Permission Release Form	Online Form Submission	AS SOON AS POSSIBLE
2	Sign Up for Remind	Instructions Here	AS SOON AS POSSIBLE
3	Playbill Ad	Place in your playbill/program	Before your production opens
4	Set Aside Adjudicator Tickets	Coordinate with your ticket sales representative.	AS SOON AS POSSIBLE
5	Production Information Form	Email: jgear@sheas.org	No later than 2 weeks before your production opens
6	RSVP for the Social Event	Online Form Submission	Wednesday, March 19th, 2025 (11:59pm)
7	Auditions for the STAGE Program	Online Form Submission	Monday, March 31st (9:00am)-Friday, April 4th (5:00pm), 2025
8	Michael Shea Award for Theatre Educator of the Year Submission	Online Form Submission	Tuesday, April 1st, 2025 (11:59pm)
9	Production Recording Submission	Online Form Submission	Tuesday, April 1st, 2025 (11:59pm)
10	Production Photos Submission	Photo Folder	Sunday, April 6th, 2025 (11:59pm)
11	Director's Note Submission	Online Form Submission	Sunday, April 6th, 2025 (11:59pm)
12	Reserve Ceremony Tickets	Online Form Submission	Friday, April 18th, 2025 (11:59pm)
13	Submit W-9 for Grants	Email: jgear@sheas.org	Sunday, May 25th, 2025 (11:59pm)

CONTACTS

Questions? Comments? Need more information? Please contact Arts Education Coordinator, Jake Grear, at jgrear@sheas.org. All staff contact information for the Shea's Arts Engagement and Education Department are listed below.

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