SHEA'S PERFORMING ARTS CENTER PRESENTS



2025



Welcome to the 2025 **Shea's Wonder Awards**, a celebration of high school musical theatre in Western New York!

Tonight, we shine a spotlight on the incredible passion and dedication that these young artists have poured into the power of musical theatre. As we honor the achievements of this year's participants, nominees, and winners, we also celebrate the next generation of storytellers. Theatre is not just a creative outlet; it is an essential part of education. It teaches young people the value of working together, the courage to share their voices, and the empathy required to step into someone else's shoes. Through these experiences, students learn lessons that extend far beyond the stage. They discover the transformative power of storytelling, the strength found in community, and the beauty of creating something larger than themselves.

Tonight, we recognize not just the performances but the process—the countless hours of rehearsals, the shared triumphs and challenges, and the collective spirit that makes theatre so **WONDER-ful**. In a world that often feels fragmented, these students remind us of the power of coming together to create something meaningful.

I want to extend a major **thank you** to everyone who made this program possible. Not only the entire Arts Engagement and Education team but every volunteer, presenter, teaching artist, adjudicator and more. Thank you, enjoy the ceremony, and give these students all the love and applause you can!

Sincerely, **Jake Grear**

Program Manager of the Shea's Wonder Awards

WELCOME TO SHEA'S

Welcome to Shea's Buffalo Theatre! This historic crown jewel of Shea's Performing Arts Center opened on January 16th, 1926, nicknamed "The Wonder Theatre" by Paramount Studios because of it's exceptional beauty. A sign with this moniker was placed under the marquee on Main Street and a replica is still displayed there today and serves as an inspiration for the Shea's Wonder Awards name. The interior of our theatre and lobbies were designed by the first design director at *Tiffany & Co*, Louis Comfort Tiffany, and most of the elements are still in place today.

A few decades after opening, Shea's fell into disrepair and total abandonment during the economic woes of the 1960s and 1970s. To ensure that it could not be demolished or the contents stolen, a non-profit group, called the "Friends of the Buffalo Theatre", banded together to have the theatre listed on the National Register for Historic Places. In getting Shea's placed on this list, it would require that any work done must be in keeping with its original design standards, if not directly replacing them. The "Friends of Buffalo" were later given operating privileges of the building and undertook massive restoration through government grants and developed a performance series in the late 1970s.

In the fifty years since re-opening, Shea's Buffalo Theatre has undergone a complete volunteer-run restoration and expansion, now operating full-time as a presenting venue and Broadway touring house, shining as "the crown jewel" of the Buffalo Theatre District.

Sincerely,

Brian Higgins

President and CEO of Shea's Performing Arts Center

CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR SEMI-FINALISTS!

Cheektowaga Central High School - Mamma Mia!

Cleveland Hill UFSD High School - Shrek the Musical

East Aurora High School - The Addams Family

Fillmore Central High School - Newsies

Holland High School - The SpongeBob Musical

Jamestown High School - Les Misérables School Edition

Kenmore West High School - Anything Goes

Letchworth Central High School - Disney's The Little Mermaid

Mount St. Mary Academy - Disney's The Little Mermaid

Nardin Academy - Legally Blonde the Musical

Randolph Jr./Sr. High School - The Addams Family

Royalton Hartland High School - Mean Girls High School Version

Southwestern Central High School - Matilda the Musical

St. Francis High School - Chicago Teen Edition

St. Joseph's Collegiate Institute - Jesus Christ Superstar

St. Mary's High School - Mamma Mia!

Sweet Home Central High School - Once Upon a Mattress

Tonawanda High School - Pippin

West Seneca West High School - Les Misérables School Edition

Westfield Academy and Central School - The Wiz

PRODUCTION TEAM

ORCHESTRA

Violin	Gretchen Fisher
Cello	Katie Weissmann
Reed 1	Kenny Kuiscak
Reed 2	Craig Incontro
Trumpet	John Maguda
Trombone	Lon Gormley
Guitar	Rick Strauss
Bass	Paul Zapalowski
Piano	Rich Riederer
Drums	John Bacon

A SPECIAL THANK YOU

A special **THANK YOU** to Lyrical Pipe Creative, LLC.

Matt Gould, founder of Lyrical Pipe Creative LLC, provided video production services to all 20 schools participating in the Shea's Wonder Awards program this year. He created sizzle reels, interview videos, our nomination ceremony video, and every video that you will see tonight during the ceremony. Matt has been instrumental in the process of bringing this program to life and we cannot thank him enough for all the work that he has done for us this year.

Matt, we thank you for your incredible hard work and dedication to celebrating all of these productions!



www.lyricalpipe.com The official video production company of the Shea's Wonder Awards

MEET THE HOSTS

Matthew Crehan Higgins



Matthew Crehan Higgins got his start in the performing arts through West Seneca Central Schools' Continuing Education program as an elementary student in the early 1990s, then through continued participation in music and drama activities at West Seneca East Middle and High Schools. At the same time, he learned a tremendous amount through productions with the Aurora Players and Lancaster Youth Bureau.

Following college at Niagara University with a minor in theater, he became involved with Buffalo United Artists as an actor and playwright. His original play Confessions, was the most honored offering at the 2004 National Gay and Lesbian Theater Festival.

He has written seven additional full length plays, including Conversations with Eligible Voters in Pennsylvania, available for free on all major podcast platforms.

As an actor he has additionally worked with Torn Space, Theatre Jugend, and Ujima. Next May, he will appear in Pure Glitter with Second Generation Theatre. By day, he has worked in the field of HIV treatment/prevention and LGBTQ health for 23 years. He was named to Buffalo Business First's 40 under 40 in 2017 and as one of Buffalo Spree's Influencers Under 40 in 2019. In 2022, he received the NYSDOH Commissioner's Special Recognition Award for service in HIV. He can also juggle while at the same time eating an apple.

MEET THE HOSTS

Talia Mobley



Talia Mobley is so excited to be back at Shea's Performing Arts
Center to Co-Host the Shea's Wonder Awards following her Kenny
Award win for "Best Leading Actress" in 2021 and getting the
opportunity to attend the National Jimmy Awards.

Talia has been singing at her church, Mt. Olive Missionary Baptist Church, since she was five years old and it eventually inspired her love for theatre and music. While in high school Talia took part in two outside regional productions including, *Hairspray* (Lil Inez) at The Kavinoky Theatre. She also has worked with MusicalFare on a live high school showcase hosted by Dudney Joseph Jr. and has also sang during the intermission for a live night with Zachary Noah Piser and Adam Rothenberg.

Talia is currently finishing up her BFA degree in Acting at SUNY Fredonia University where she has learned so much, not only about her acting, but the type of performer she is and the performances she wants to give her audiences. And she cannot wait to use her new techniques for Shea's 710 Theatre's upcoming production of DREAMGIRLS where she will be playing the role of Deena and she couldn't be more grateful! Talia is so eager to get back into the Buffalo theatre community and she is so appreciative that she was asked to Co-Host this amazing event.

ARTS EDUCATION & ENGAGEMENT STAFF



Victoria Pérez-Maggiolo
VP of Arts Engagement & Education
Department Leader, Collaborations
& New Programming



Jake Grear
Arts Education Coordinator
Shea's Wonder Awards, The STAGE
Program & Camps



Alicia Rainey
Arts Engagement Coordinator
Junior Theatre Celebration, On School Time
Series & Community Outreach



Alejandro Gómez Lead Teaching Artist Workshops, Residencies & Curriculum

THE STAGE PROGRAM

The **STAGE**, or the "Student Talent and Growth Experience" is a pre-requisite program for students that are eligible and interested in participating in the National High School Musical Theatre Awards in New York City, The Jimmy Awards. This year 40 eligible students auditioned for this program and 16 semi-finalists were selected to participate.

The 16 semi-finalists received coaching in singing, acting, dancing, storytelling, and branding from professional coaches for 6 days. At the end of the week, the semi-finalists had a final audition presenting all of the material they worked on during the week. This audition was adjudicated by the coaching panel and TONIGHT we will announce the 8 finalists! These 8 finalists will perform one solo song that they worked on during the STAGE program for the audience and a brand new panel of adjudicators. The scores will then be tabulated during the course of tonight's performances and the winners will be announced at the end of the ceremony.

Congratulations to all 16 of the semi-finalists, we are so proud of you! We wish you the best of luck on this new exciting chapter, wherever you may end up.



"Be seen, be heard, be remembered, be present, be you."

- Michael Oliver-Walline

THE STAGE SEMI-FINALISTS



Abigail Holmes Reno in Anything Goes Kenmore West High School



Eddie Bratek Billy Flynn in Chicago St. Francis High School



Evie Cox Katherine in Newsies Fillmore High School



Faith Flattery Fantine in Les Misérables West Seneca West High School



Gracie Fuqua Winifred in Once Upon a Mattress Sweet Home High School



James Hines Donkey in Shrek the Musical Cleveland Hill UFSD



Jane Hereth Velma in *Chicago* St. Francis High School



Jonah Higgins Javert in Les Misérables West Seneca West High School



Kyra Vest Fiona in Shrek the Musical Cleveland Hill UFSD



Lily Patterson Mary in Jesus Christ Superstar St. Joseph's Collegiate Institute



Maceo Rodriguez Jesus in Jesus Christ Superstar Jean Valjean in Les Misérables St. Joseph's Collegiate Institute



Michael Duffy West Seneca West High School



Milo Dettbarn Moonface in Anything Goes Kenmore West High School



Naomi Lawley Elle in Legally Blonde Nardin Academy



Nathan Tanner Jack in Newsies Kenmore West High School



Shamus Hill Callahan in Legally Blonde Nardin Academy

THE STAGE COACHES



Michael Oliver-Walline Creative Director/Song Coach



Victoria Pérez-Maggiolo Song Coach



Zach Carr Vocal Technician



Alejandro Gómez Acting Technician



Beth Polito Choreographer



Jake Grear *Program Manager*



Ann Mosner
Accompanist



Karen Saxon Accompanist



Kathleen Dunne Assistant Vocal Technician



Anne Gerace Creative Assistant

ADJUDICATORS

Andrea Letcher || Annalise Casciano || Clara Tan
Danielle Green || Diane Jones || Eric Van Pyrz
Gabriella McKinley || Heather Arcand || Jackie Gould
James Beaudry || Jay Marks || Jeannine VanWey
Jennifer Horton || Jennifer Mysliwy || Jill Anderson
John Vines || Kathleen Dunne || Kyle VanZandt
Lana Sugarman || Leah Berst || Linda Appleby
Lissette DeJesús || Lucinda Karstedt || Meagan Millar
Melissa Kate Miller || Moriah Armstrong || Nathan Andrew Miller
Nicholas Czaplicki || Nicolette Navarro || Rhiannon Needham
Rita Sirianni || Robin Bishop || Zoe Goñez



LEARN MORE ABOUT OUR ADJUDICATORS
BY SCANNING THE QR CODE BELOW



AE&E COMMITTEE

Adam Bett | Anna Tantillo Chandra Fern | Cindy Ripley Cassandra Wright || Gaitrie Subryan Gianna Cotto || Guy Tomassi Heidi Salva || Jake Grear Jim Eagan || Joan Ricca Julie Stoll | Keith Ersing Laverne Mosey-Murphy | Margaret Kaiser Matt Gould | Mathew Refermat Meg Quinn | Michael Oliver-Walline Michele Agosto || Naila Ansari Renee Obringer | Rita Sirianni

PERFORMANCES

Opening Number"Magic To Do" from Pippin	
The STAGE Finalist Performance#1	
The STAGE Finalist Performance#2	
The STAGE Finalist Performance#3	
The STAGE Finalist Performance#4	
The STAGE Finalist Performance#5	
The STAGE Finalist Performance#6	
The STAGE Finalist Performance#7	
The STAGE Finalist Performance#8	
St. Francis High School	
Cleveland Hill UFSD	
Kenmore West High School	
West Seneca West High SchoolLes Misérables School Edition Directors: Keith Ersing and Michael Deeb-Weaver.	
St. Mary's High School	
Nardin AcademyLegally Blonde the Musical Directors: Jennifer Kiener and Jamie Gangemi.	
East Aurora High School	
Royalton Hartland High School	
Fillmore Central High School	
Jamestown High School	
St. Joseph's Collegiate Institute	
Closing Number"This Is Our Story" from Shrek the Musical	

Intermission - 15 Minutes

All-Star Cast Award

Awarded to 1 student from each of the 20 semi-finalist productions chosen by their director(s).

Michael Shea Award for Theatre Educator of the Year

Awarded based on submissions from students and/or staff from semi-finalist school.

The Showstopper Award

Fillmore Central High School - "The World Will Know" from Newsies

Mount St. Mary Academy - "Under the Sea" from Disney's The Little Mermaid

Nardin Academy - "Bend and Snap" from Legally Blonde the Musical

Southwestern High School - "Revolting Children" from Roald Dahl's Matilda the Musical

St. Mary's High School - "Voulez Vous" from Mamma Mia!

West Seneca West High School - "One Day More" from Les Misérables School Edition

Outstanding Dance Execution

Fillmore Central High School - Newsies
Nardin Academy - Legally Blonde the Musical
Southwestern Central High School - Roald Dahl's Matilda the Musical
St. Francis High School - Chicago: Teen Edition
St. Joseph's Collegiate Institute - Jesus Christ Superstar
St. Mary's High School - Mamma Mia!

Outstanding Hair & Makeup Design and Execution

East Aurora High School - The Addams Family Musical
Kenmore West High School - Anything Goes
Letchworth Central High School - Disney's The Little Mermaid
Randolph Jr./Sr. High School - The Addams Family Musical
Southwestern Central High School - Roald Dahl's Matilda the Musical
St. Francis High School - Chicago: Teen Edition

Outstanding Direction

Fillmore Central High School - Newsies

Jamestown High School - Les Misérables School Edition

Nardin Academy - Legally Blonde the Musical

St. Francis High School - Chicago: Teen Edition

St. Mary's High School - Mamma Mia!

West Seneca West High School - Les Misérables School Edition

Outstanding Scenic Design and Execution

Jamestown High School - Les Misérables School Edition
Kenmore West High School - Anything Goes
Royalton Hartland High School - Mean Girls High School Version
Southwestern Central High School - Roald Dahl's Matilda the Musical
St. Francis High School - Chicago: Teen Edition
West Seneca West High School - Les Misérables School Edition

Outstanding Original Poster Design

Awarded based on submissions from qualifying schools. Poster must be designed by a student, production, or faculty member involved with their production.

Outstanding Lighting Design and Execution

Jamestown High School - Les Misérables School Edition Kenmore West High School - Anything Goes Mount St. Mary Academy - Disney's The Little Mermaid Nardin Academy - Legally Blonde the Musical St. Francis High School - Chicago: Teen Edition St. Joseph's Collegiate Institute - Jesus Christ Superstar

Outstanding Choreography

East Aurora High School - The Addams Family Musical
Fillmore Central High School - Newsies
Nardin Academy - Legally Blonde the Musical
Southwestern Central High School - Matilda the Musical
St. Francis High School - Chicago: Teen Edition
St. Mary's High School - Mamma Mia!

Outstanding Costume Design and Execution

Cleveland Hill UFSD - Shrek the Musical
East Aurora High School - The Addams Family Musical
Letchworth Central High School - Disney's The Little Mermaid
Nardin Academy - Legally Blonde the Musical
St. Francis High School - Chicago: Teen Edition
West Seneca West High School - Les Misérables School Edition

Outstanding Execution by Crew

Awarded based on video submission from semi-finalist schools.

Outstanding Collective Vocal Performance

Fillmore Central High School - Newsies
Jamestown High School - Les Misérables School Edition
Nardin Academy - Legally Blonde the Musical
St. Francis High School - Chicago: Teen Edition
St. Mary's High School - Mamma Mia!
West Seneca West High School - Les Misérables School Edition

Outstanding Music Direction

Cleveland Hill UFSD - Shrek the Musical
Fillmore Central High School - Newsies
Jamestown High School - Les Misérables School Edition
St. Francis High School - Chicago: Teen Edition
St. Mary's High School - Mamma Mia!
West Seneca West High School - Les Misérables School Edition

Outstanding Student-Led Orchestra

East Aurora High School - The Addams Family Musical
Kenmore West High School - Anything Goes
Mount St. Mary Academy - Disney's The Little Mermaid
Southwestern Central High School - Roald Dahl's Matilda the Musical
Sweet Home High School - Once Upon a Mattress
West Seneca West High School - Les Misérables School Edition

Outstanding Collective Ensemble Performance

Fillmore Central High School - Newsies
Jamestown High School - Les Misérables School Edition
Nardin Academy - Legally Blonde the Musical
St. Joseph's Collegiate Institute - Jesus Christ Superstar
St. Mary's High School - Mamma Mia!
West Seneca West High School - Les Misérables School Edition

Outstanding Leading Performances

Fillmore Central High School - Newsies Nathan Tanner, Evelyn Cox, Jack Boon, and Kirra Bentley.

Jamestown High School – Les Misérables School Edition Hayden Langford, Matthew Johnson, Jolee Schultz, Rya Giuffre, and Brighton Lumia.

Nardin Academy - Legally Blonde the Musical Naomi Lawley, Mirabelle Post, Alanna St. Germain, Olivia Miles, and Jane Roussi.

St. Francis High School - Chicago: Teen Edition Faith Kelley, Jane Hereth, Eddie Bratek, Erin Hudson, and Oliver Bennett.

St. Mary's High School - Mamma Mia! Natalie Wargo, Annabelle Cruz, Charlie Kasinski, and Liam Dunne.

West Seneca West High School – Les Misérables School Edition Michael Duffy, Jonah Higgins, Sydney Sterlace, Faith Flattery and Richard Schack.

The Spirit of Wonder Awards

Awarded based on school submission and adjudicator feedback.

The Magic of Theatre Award
The Power of Storytelling Award
The Celebration of Community Award

Jimmy Awards Nominees

Winners chosen based on adjudication in the STAGE program and live adjudication at tonight's ceremony.

Best Performance by an Actor Best Performance by an Actress

Outstanding Production of a Musical

Cleveland Hill UFSD - Shrek the Musical
East Aurora High School - The Addams Family Musical
Fillmore Central High School - Newsies

Jamestown High School - Les Misérables School Edition
Kenmore West High School - Anything Goes
Nardin Academy - Legally Blonde the Musical

Royalton Hartland High School - Mean Girls High School Version
St. Francis High School - Chicago: Teen Edition
St. Mary's High School - Mamma Mia!

West Seneca West High School - Les Misérables School Edition



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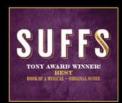


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BROADWAY'S NEXT GENERATION!

Two students from our program will join teens from across the U.S. to compete for top honors in a one-night-only showcase at the National High School Musical Theatre Awards*.



JUNE 23, 2025

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JimmyAwards.com





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Tag your photos and social media posts with #sheaswonderawards

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Erie County





Rachael Small