



MICHELLE LAUTO TO HOST 52ND ANNUAL EQUITY JEFF AWARDS

AIRING NOVEMBER 9TH

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October 28, 2020 – Chicago – Award-winning actress and singer Michelle Lauto is host of this year's Jeff Awards celebrating Equity theater in a virtual program scheduled to stream Monday, November 9, 2020. With theater stages dark and the pandemic preventing live gatherings, the Jeff Awards follows its move online for the annual recognition program that began with the Non-Equity awards last June.

Lauto will lead the evening program honoring theater excellence among a talented group of nominees including 142 theater artists and their behind the scenes teams across 30 artistic and technical categories. This year, nominees are featured in 37 productions at the home of 28 Equity theater companies.

Seen in film and on many Chicago stages, including Porchlight Music Theatre, Marriott Theatre and the Royal George Theater, Lauto is known for her emotionally intense and comedic acting as well as sensational singing. Both a past Jeff Award winner and a nominee, she has been called "spectacular," "ebullient," and a "Broadway-quality performer" in major reviews.

The 52nd Annual Jeff Awards program will stream at 7:00pm (CST) on Monday, November 9. The virtual awards ceremony recognizes theater excellence over the past Equity season and honors the dedicated artists, behind the scenes teams and theater companies so significantly impacted during these challenging times. Access is available for free on the [Jeff Awards YouTube channel](#) at <https://bit.ly/JeffAwards>. An alert of when the program starts is available by subscribing to the Jeff Awards channel.

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To learn more about this program and the Jeff Awards, visit www.jeffawards.com. Information can also be found on social media including Facebook (Jeff Awards), Instagram (@thejeffawards) and Twitter (@josephjefferson).

SPECIAL NOTICE TO NEWS MEDIA

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.

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.

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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