



News Release

Contact:

Paulette Petretti
Chair
chair@jeffawards.org

Brittany Chhutani
Non-Equity Wing Chair
nonequitywing@jeffawards.org

Suzanne Ross
Communications Chair
suzanne@suzanne-ross.com
312-953-6987

Editor's Note:

A complete list of nominees can also be found online in the Non-Equity and News and Events sections at www.jeffawards.org.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

THE JEFF AWARDS ANNOUNCES NOMINATIONS FOR THE 52nd ANNIVERSARY NON-EQUITY THEATER AWARDS

(February 4, 2026 - Chicago, IL) – Celebrating its 52nd anniversary awarding recognition for Non-Equity theater, the Joseph Jefferson Awards announces its nominations for theater excellence among Non-Equity theater during the 2025 season. In keeping with governing Jeff Awards procedures, ballots compiled throughout the entire Non-Equity season are comparatively analyzed to determine the nominees who will be represented in each category. This year's Non-Equity awards spotlight 147 theater artists across 26 categories of excellence in theater production among shows from 26 companies. During the most recent season, which ran from January 1, 2025, to December 31, 2025, Jeff Awards members attended 102 Non-Equity productions. From these, 47 productions became *Jeff Recommended* and, therefore, eligible for award nominations.

Theaters well known for their musicals garnered the most total nominations. Theo Ubique Cabaret Theatre led the awards with 20 nominations for three productions, including "Diana: The Musical" (10), "Urinetown" (9) and "Tell Me On A Sunday" (one). Kokandy Productions received a total of 17 nominations for "Jekyll and Hyde" which is tied for the largest number for a single production (10) with Theo Ubique's "Diana: The Musical", and an additional seven nominations for "Amélie". Multiple productions at both Invictus Theatre Company and Red Theater earned their institutions 14 and 8 nominations, respectively.

Among New Work, five world premiere plays are in award consideration. In addition, Short Run Productions (nine to 17 performances) have nominees for Production, Direction, New Work, Performers in Principal and Supporting Roles and Design.

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“Continuing our mission to recognize artistic and technical excellence on theater stages across Chicagoland we are thrilled to announce the nominees for the upcoming Non-Equity Awards,” said Paulette Petretti, Jeff Awards Chair. “As one of the most active and engaged theater awards organizations in the country, The Jeff Awards is professionally independent and voting members of the committee are unaffiliated with any theater companies or producing organizations. For decades, The Jeff Awards has judged thousands of plays and musicals and honored theatrical work across dozens of categories for eligible theater companies which have invited the organization to evaluate for awards consideration. We are honored to share this year’s nominations.”

2025 NON-EQUITY JEFF AWARD NOMINEES

PRODUCTION – PLAY

“Angels in America” – Invictus Theatre
“At the Wake of a Dead Drag Queen” – The Story Theatre
“Girls & Boys” – Griffin Theatre Company
“One Party Consent” – First Floor Theater
“The Pilon” – Red Theater
“The School for Scandal” – Idle Muse Theatre Company

PRODUCTION – MUSICAL

“Amélie” – Kokandy Productions
“Diana: The Musical” – Theo Ubique Cabaret Theatre
“Jekyll & Hyde” – Kokandy Productions
“Urinetown” – Theo Ubique Cabaret Theatre

ENSEMBLE – PLAY

“Angels in America” – Invictus Theatre Company
“The Pilon” – Red Theater
“The School for Scandal” – Idle Muse Theatre Company
“Shakin’ the Mess Outta Misery” – Pegasus Theatre Chicago
“Strange Cargo: The Doom of the Demeter” – City Lit Theater Company in association with Black Button Eyes Productions

ENSEMBLE – MUSICAL

“Amélie” – Kokandy Productions
“Diana: The Musical” – Theo Ubique Cabaret Theatre
“Jekyll & Hyde” – Kokandy Productions
“Urinetown” – Theo Ubique Cabaret Theatre

NEW WORK

Zach Barr – “The Pilon” – Red Theater
Susan H. Pak – “The F*ck House” – Strawdog Theatre Company
Omer Abbas Salem – “One Party Consent” – First Floor Theater
Lisa Sanaye Dring – “Kairos” – Red Theater
Chase Wheaton-Werle – “The Curious Circumstances of Louis Le Prince” – The Factory Theater

DIRECTOR – PLAY

Charles Askenaizer – “Angels in America” – Invictus Theatre
Mikael Burke – “At the Wake of a Dead Drag Queen” – The Story Theatre
Jessica Love – “The Pilon” – Red Theater
Nadya Naumaan – “One Party Consent” – First Floor Theater
Robin Witt – “Girls & Boys” – Griffin Theatre Company

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DIRECTOR – MUSICAL

Fred Anzevino & Brenda Didier – “Diana: The Musical” – Theo Ubique Cabaret Theatre
Danny Kapinos – “Urinetown” – Theo Ubique Cabaret Theatre
Derek Van Barham – “Amélie” – Kokandy Productions
Derek Van Barham – “Jekyll & Hyde” – Kokandy Productions

PERFORMER IN A PRINCIPAL ROLE – PLAY

Kirk Anderson (Hamm) – “Endgame” – Facility Theatre
William Delforge (Gary) – “Gary: A Sequel to Titus Andronicus” – Redtwist Theatre
Terry Guest (Courtney / Anthony) – “At the Wake of a Dead Drag Queen” – The Story Theatre
Ryan Hake (Prior Walter) – “Angels in America” – Invictus Theatre
Brookelyn Hébert (Hedda Gabler) – “Hedda Gabler” – The Artistic Home
Lenin Izquierdo (Angel Cruz) – “Jesus Hopped the ‘A’ Train” – City Lit Theater Company
Olivia Lindsay (Steff) – “The F*ck House” – Strawdog Theatre Company
David Lovejoy (Galileo) – “Galileo” – Trap Door Theatre
Seoyoung Park (Eliza) – “Tom & Eliza” – TUTA Theatre
Bradford Stevens (Lucius Jenkins) – “Jesus Hopped the ‘A’ Train” – City Lit Theater Company
Scott Westerman (Arthur Pryzbyszewski) – “Superior Donuts” – The Artistic Home

PERFORMER IN A PRINCIPAL ROLE – MUSICAL

Jesús Barajas (Pablo) – “Kid Prince and Pablo” – Lifeline Theatre
Evan Bradford (Giorgio Bachetti) – “Passion” – Blank Theatre Company
Brittney Brown (Fosca) – “Passion” – Blank Theatre Company
Teah Kiang Mirabelli (Charity Hope Valentine) – “Sweet Charity” – Blank Theatre Company
David Moreland (Dr. Henry Jekyll and Mr. Edward Hyde) – “Jekyll & Hyde” – Kokandy Productions
Kate McQuillan (Diana) – “Diana: The Musical” – Theo Ubique Cabaret Theatre
Luke Nowakowski (Bobby Strong) – “Urinetown” – Theo Ubique Cabaret Theatre
Aurora Penepacker (Amélie Poulain) – “Amélie” – Kokandy Productions
Joshua Zambrano (Kid Prince) – “Kid Prince and Pablo” – Lifeline Theatre

SOLO PERFORMER

Cynthia Marker (Woman) – “Girls & Boys” – Griffin Theatre Company
Dani Pike (Emma) – “Tell Me on a Sunday” – Theo Ubique Cabaret Theatre

PERFORMER IN A SUPPORTING ROLE – PLAY

Patrick Blashill (Clarence Seward / Thomas Edison) – “The Curious Circumstances of Louis Le Prince” – The Factory Theater
Amber Dow (Paulina) – “The Winter’s Tale” – Invictus Theatre Company
Caty Gordon (Lady Teazle) – “The School for Scandal” – Idle Muse Theatre Company
Michael D. Graham (Roy M. Cohn) – “Angels in America” – Invictus Theatre Company
Dakota Hughes (Liza Minnelli) – “Queen for a Day” – Hell in a Handbag Productions
Delia Kropp (Rhonda) – “The Pilon” – Red Theater
Cynthia Marker (Wendy Lee Evans) – “One Party Consent” – First Floor Theater
Hannah Rhode (Janice) – “Gary: A Sequel to Titus Andronicus” – Redtwist Theatre
Paul Michael Thomson (Vickie / Hunter) – “At the Wake of a Dead Drag Queen” – The Story Theatre
Anne Trodden (Harper Amaty Pitt) – “Angels in America” – Invictus Theatre Company
Todd Wojcik (Jorge Tessman) – “Hedda Gabler” – The Artistic Home

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PERFORMER IN A SUPPORTING ROLE – MUSICAL

Joe Giovannetti (Nino Quincampoix) – “Amélie” – Kokandy Productions
Jacqueline Grandt (Queen / Barbara) – “Diana: The Musical” – Theo Ubique Cabaret Theatre
Rachel Guth (Clara) – “Passion” – Blank Theatre Company
Ava Lane Stovall (Lucy Harris) – “Jekyll & Hyde” – Kokandy Productions
Emily McCormick (Emma Carew) – “Jekyll & Hyde” – Kokandy Productions
Amanda Rodriguez (Hope Cladwell) – “Urinetown” – Theo Ubique Cabaret Theatre
Jack Saunders (Charles) – “Diana: The Musical” – Theo Ubique Cabaret Theatre
Ryan Stajmiger (Officer Lockstock) – “Urinetown” – Theo Ubique Cabaret Theatre
Maya Tanaka Allwardt (Little Sally) – “Urinetown” – Theo Ubique Cabaret Theatre
Colette Todd (Camilla) – “Diana: The Musical” – Theo Ubique Cabaret Theatre
Shaina Toledo (Langhorne) – “Kid Prince and Pablo” – Lifeline Theatre Company

MUSIC DIRECTION

TJ Anderson & Anna Wegener – “Amélie” – Kokandy Productions
Carolyn Brady – “Diana: The Musical” – Theo Ubique Cabaret Theatre
Aaron Kaplan – “Passion” – Blank Theatre Company
Aaron Kaplan – “Urinetown” – Theo Ubique Cabaret Theatre
Nick Sula – “Jekyll & Hyde” – Kokandy Productions

SCENIC DESIGN

Kevin Hagan – “Hedda Gabler” – The Artistic Home
Tatiana Kahvegian – “Tom & Eliza” – TUTA Theatre
Sotirios Livaditis – “Girls & Boys” – Griffin Theatre Company
Ruby Lowe – “Strange Cargo: The Doom of the Demeter” – City Lit Theater Company in association with Black Button Eyes Productions
Manuel Ortiz – “The Pilon” – Red Theater
Kevin Rolfs – “The House That Will Not Stand” – Invictus Theatre

COSTUME DESIGN

Terri Devine – “The House That Will Not Stand” – Invictus Theatre
Patty Halajian – “Diana: The Musical” - Theo Ubique Cabaret Theatre
Victoria Jablonski – “The School for Scandal” – Idle Muse Theatre Company
Rachel Lambert – “Hedda Gabler” – The Artistic Home
Jennifer Mohr – “The Blood Countess” - Idle Muse Theatre Company
Racquel Postigilione – “At the Wake of a Dead Drag Queen” – The Story Theatre

CHOREOGRAPHY

Kasey Alfonso – “Kid Prince and Pablo” – Lifeline Theatre
Brenda Didier & Cameron Turner – “Diana: The Musical” – Theo Ubique Cabaret Theatre
Brenda Didier – “Jekyll & Hyde” – Kokandy Productions
Brenda Didier – “Urinetown” – Theo Ubique Cabaret Theatre
Lauryn Schmelzer – “Sweet Charity” – Blank Theatre Company

SOUND DESIGN

Joe Griffin – “Strange Cargo: The Doom of the Demeter” – City Lit Theater Company in association with Black Button Eyes Productions
Joe Griffin – “War of the Worlds” – Lifeline Theatre
L.J. Luthringer – “The Blood Countess” – Idle Muse Theatre Company
Matt Reich – “Jekyll & Hyde” – Kokandy Productions
Petter Wahlbäck – “Angels in America” -Invictus Theatre

LIGHTING DESIGN

Brenden Marble – “At the Wake of a Dead Drag Queen” – The Story Theatre
G. "Max" Maxin IV – “Amélie” – Kokandy Productions
G. "Max" Maxin IV – “Jekyll & Hyde” – Kokandy Productions
Keith Parham – “Tom & Eliza” – TUTA Theatre
Brandon Wardell – “Angels in America” – Invictus Theatre
Levi J. Wilkins – “The House That Will Not Stand” – Invictus Theatre

PROJECTION DESIGN

DJ Douglass – “Strange Cargo: The Doom of the Demeter” – City Lit Theater Company City Lit Theater Company
in association with Black Button Eyes Productions
G. "Max" Maxin IV – “Angels in America” – Invictus Theatre
David Sajewich – “The Curious Circumstances of Louis Le Prince” – The Factory Theater

ARTISTIC SPECIALIZATION

Jeremiah Barr – Puppet Design – “Strange Cargo: The Doom of the Demeter” – City Lit Theater Company in
association with Black Button Eyes Productions David Blixt – Fight Choreography – “Superior Donuts” – The
Artistic Home
Ayanna Bria Bakari – Wig Design – “At the Wake of a Dead Drag Queen” – The Story Theatre
Victoria Jablonski – Wig Design – “The School for Scandal” – Idle Muse Theatre Company
Rachel Livingston – Properties Design – “The Curious Circumstances of Louis Le Prince” – The Factory Theater
Robin Manganaro – Properties Design – “Gary: A Sequel to Titus Andronicus” – Redtwist Theatre
Chas Mathieu – Properties Design – “The Pilon” – Red Theater
Keith Ryan – Wig Design – “The Real Housewives of the North Pole” – Hell in a Handbag Productions
Petter Wahlbäck – Original Music – “The Winter’s Tale” – Invictus Theatre Company

PRODUCTION – SHORT RUN

“Bernhardt/Hamlet” – Edge of the Wood Theatre
“The Drowning Girls” – Three Crows Theatre
“Helena & Hermia in the Enamored Odyssey” – The Impostors Theatre Co.
“Mr. Parker” – Open Space Arts

DIRECTOR – SHORT RUN

Daniel King – “The Drowning Girls” – Three Crows Theatre
Tony Lawry – “Matt & Ben” – Theatre Above the Law
Stefan Roseen – “Helena & Hermia in the Enamored Odyssey” – The Impostors Theatre Co.
David G. Zak – “Mr. Parker” – Open Space Arts

NEW WORK – SHORT RUN

Dominick Alesia – “Helena & Hermia in the Enamored Odyssey” – The Impostors Theatre Co.
Greta Geiser – “The Pyg Hypothesis” – Theatre Above the Law

PERFORMER IN A PRINCIPAL ROLE – SHORT RUN

Courtney Abbott (Sarah Bernhardt) – “Bernhardt/Hamlet” – Edge of the Wood Theatre
Connor Brown Sprenger (Matt & Ben) – “Matt & Ben” – Theatre Above the Law
Andrew Kain Miller (Terrence) – “Mr. Parker” – Open Space Arts
Shannon McEldowney (Hermia) – “Helena & Hermia in the Enamored Odyssey” – The Impostors Theatre Co.
Cameron Raasdal-Munro (Junior) – “Gangsta Baby” – Open Space Arts
Kendal Romero (Matt & Ben) – “Matt & Ben” – Theatre Above the Law

PERFORMER IN A SUPPORTING ROLE – SHORT RUN

Riley Capp (Justin) – “Mr. Parker” – Open Space Arts
Abby Denault (Maureen) – “Rent” – Suring Films & Theatrics
Stephen Loch (Constant Coquelin) – “Bernhardt/Hamlet” – Edge of the Wood Theatre
Josh Odor (Senior) – “Gangsta Baby” – Open Space Arts
Ian Rigg (Nick Bottom) – “Helena & Hermia in the Enamored Odyssey” – The Impostors Theatre Co.
Sarah Wisterman (Professor Pickering) – “The Pyg Hypothesis” – Theatre Above the Law

DESIGN – SHORT RUN

Elizabeth Niemczyk, Costume Design – “Bernhardt/Hamlet” – Edge of the Wood Theatre
Toria Olivier, Costume Design – “Helena & Hermia in the Enamored Odyssey” – The Impostors Theatre Co.
Jae Robinson, Sound Design – “Pussy Sludge” – Facility Theatre

MULTIPLE NOMINATIONS

By Company

Theo Ubique Cabaret Theatre	20	
Kokandy Productions	17	
Invictus Theatre Company	14	
Red Theater	8	
City Lit Theater Company	7	5 with Black Button Eyes Productions
Idle Muse Theatre Company	7	
The Story Theatre	7	
The Artistic Home	6	
Blank Theatre Company	6	
The Impostors Theatre Co.	6	
Open Space Arts	6	
Lifeline Theatre	5	
Theatre Above the Law	5	
Edge of the Wood Theatre	4	
First Floor Theater	4	
Griffin Theatre Company	4	
The Factory Theater	4	
Redtwist Theatre	3	
TUTA Theatre	3	
Facility Theatre	2	
Hell in a Handbag Productions	2	
Strawdog Theatre Company	2	
Three Crows Theatre	2	

By Production

“Diana: The Musical”	10
“Jekyll & Hyde”	10
“Angels in America”	9
“Urinetown”	9
“Amélie”	7
“At the Wake of a Dead Drag Queen”	7
“The Pilon”	7
“Helena & Hermia in the Enamored Odyssey”	6

"The School for Scandal"	5
"Strange Cargo: The Doom of the Demeter"	5
"Bernhardt/Hamlet"	4
"The Curious Circumstances of Louis Le Prince"	4
"Girls & Boys"	4
"Hedda Gabler"	4
"Kid Prince and Pablo"	4
"Mr. Parker"	4
"One Party Consent"	4
"Passion"	4
"Gary: A Sequel to Titus Andronicus"	3
"The House That Will Not Stand"	3
"Matt & Ben"	3
"Tom & Eliza"	3
"The Blood Countess"	2
"The Drowning Girls"	2
"The F*ck House"	2
"Gansta Baby"	2
"Jesus Hopped the 'A' Train"	2
"The Pyg Hypothesis"	2
"Superior Donuts"	2
"Sweet Charity"	2
"The Winter's Tale"	2

By Individual

Brenda Didier	4	1 w/Fred Anzevino, 1 w/ Cameron Turner
G "Max" Maxin IV	3	
Joe Griffin	2	
Victoria Jablonski	2	
Aaron Kaplan	2	
Cynthia Marker	2	
Derek Van Barham	2	
Petter Wahlbäck	2	

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 our recommendations, awards, fellowship grants and honors we help foster the growth of companies, encourage artists, bring new appreciation for diverse storytelling, and cultivate 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 theater. The Jeff Awards is professionally independent and voting members of the committee are unaffiliated with any theater companies or producing organizations. For more information, visit www.jeffawards.org.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION ON NOMINATIONS AND THE AWARDS PROGRAM

The Jeff Awards website lists all current nominees, previous recipients and nominations, and other Jeff Awards information and news. Visit www.jeffawards.org.

The 52nd Anniversary Jeff Awards for Non-Equity Theater will be held Monday, March 23, 2026, at the Harris Theater in Chicago, IL. Doors will open at 6:00pm with a cash bar available, and the awards will begin at 7:00pm. Early Bird tickets will become available February 17, 2026, at www.jeffawards.org. General Admission tickets are \$62.30 (includes ticket + required fees). A group rate of \$54.25 (includes ticket + required fees) is available for parties of 10 or more by contacting the Harris Theater box office at 312-334-777. Festive cocktail attire is suggested, and the public is cordially invited. An after-party will be held at the theater with light food and a cash bar.

Names of award recipients will be released immediately following the program on March 23rd by e-mail and on our website under Non-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 member, please call or e-mail Suzanne Ross, Communications Chair, at 312-953-6987 or suzanne@suzanne-ross.com.

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