

PHIL POTEempa: Theatre at the Center garners 8 Jeff Award nominations, including nods to Mercury's 'Cash'

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Theatre at the Center in Munster earned eight nominations in **Jeff Award** categories for recognizing stage excellence, as announced this month.

Chicago stage, TV and film star **Michael Shannon** did the nominees announcement for the **2014-2015 Equity Jeff Awards** on Friday, Aug. 21. A video of the presentation is also posted at JeffAwards.org.

Collette Todd earned a nomination for "Actress in a Supporting Role -- Musical" for "**Big Fish**" at Theatre the Center last Spring. **Danny Herman** netted a nomination for "Choreography" for "**All Shook Up**," which just closed a summer run at Theatre at the Center on Aug. 16.

The other six nominations for Theatre at the Center are the shared nominations with **Mercury Theatre**, which is currently in a run of "Ring of Fire, The Music of Johnny Cash," the musical revue first seen by Munster audiences last year and then relaunched for Chicago audiences at Mercury Theatre.

All in all, six world premiere plays, three world premiere musicals, and three new adaptations seen first by Chicago audiences, were among those receiving Jeff nominations by the Jeff Awards Committee. There are a total of 187 nominations in 36 categories honoring Chicago Equity theatrical productions that opened between Aug. 1, 2014 and July 31, 2015.

In its first year of Jeff Awards eligibility, **Paramount Theatre** led all theaters with 16 nominations, all for musicals in the Large Theatre category. "**Les Misérables**" and the rock opera "**The Who's Tommy**" received six each, and "**Mary Poppins**" garnered four. **Drury Lane Productions** received 13 nominations, including five for "**Billy Elliot, the Musical**," and three each for "**Camelot**" and "**West Side Story**." The **Marriott Theatre** had 12 nominations, with five for "**The King and I**" and three for "**City of Angels**."

Nominations for plays at Large Theaters were led by **Steppenwolf Theatre Company** with 12, divided as five for "**Airline Highway**," and four for "**Marie Antoinette**." **Chicago Shakespeare Theater** received 11 nominations, including four for its new musical "**Sense and Sensibility**."

Midsized theaters were well represented by **Porchlight Music Theatre** with 11 nominations, five for the musical revue "**Sondheim on Sondheim**" and three each for musicals "**A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum**" and "**Sweeney Todd: The Demon Barber of Fleet Street**." Mercury Theater Chicago, besides the six shared nominations for "Ring of Fire," also netted about three for the musical "**The Addams Family**." In its first season as an Equity theater, **The Hypocrites** received nine nominations, eight were for "**All Our Tragic**," an epic 12-hour adaptation of the 32 surviving Greek tragedies.

For the coveted Ensemble category, the Jeff Awards Committee nominated eight productions: Steppenwolf Theatre Company's "Airline Highway," about the denizens of a faltering motel outside of New Orleans (which transferred intact to Broadway); The Hypocrites' "All Our Tragic," Sean Graney's contemporary mashup of the Greek tragedies; **TimeLine Theatre Company's** "**The Apple Family Plays**," two of **Richard Nelson's** plays about a family's dinner table gatherings through the years; "**The Humans**" at **American Theater Company**, portraying a family's implosion; the docu-drama "**The Project(s)**," also at American Theater Company, recounting the rise and fall of the Chicago

public housing projects; **"A Q Brothers' Christmas Carol"** at Chicago Shakespeare Theater, a hip-hop version of the holiday classic; The House Theatre of Chicago's **"Season On The Line,"** about a struggling theater trying to mount the year's plays; and **"The White Road"** at **Irish Theatre of Chicago**, about a thrilling and treacherous expedition to Antarctica. **Actors' Equity Association** supports the Equity Jeff Awards by sponsoring the Ensemble Award.

New Work and New Adaptation nominations recognized plays that had their world premieres in Chicago. New Work nominations went to **Bruce Graham** for **"White Guy on the Bus"** at **Northlight Theatre**, a complex and explosive examination of race, intent and racial biases; **Laura Jacqmin** for **Rivendell Theatre Ensemble's "Look, we are breathing,"** three women's reflections on their conflicted emotions over the death of a teen; **Rohina Malik** for **"The Mecca Tales"** at **Chicago Dramatists**, the personal journeys of five American Muslim women during a pilgrimage to Mecca; the late **PJ Paparelli** and **Joshua Jaeger** for their provocative examination of Chicago public housing in **"The Project(s)"** at American Theatre Company; **Caitlin Parrish** for **"The Downpour"** at **Route 66 Theatre Company**, a thriller about two sisters dealing with the legacy of their traumatic childhood; and **Mat Smart** for **"The Royal Society of Antarctica"** at **The Gift Theatre**, the tale of a young woman at a remote Antarctica facility searching for answers to her mother's disappearance.

New Work Musical nominations went to **Paul Gordon** for "Sense and Sensibility" at Chicago Shakespeare Theater, a moving chamber piece based on the Jane Austen novel; **GQ, JQ, Jackson Doran** and **Postell Pringle** for "A Q Brothers' Christmas Carol," their hip-hop take on **Charles Dickens'** classic story, also at Chicago Shakespeare Theater; and **Jessica Thebus, Andre Pluess** and **Amanda Dehnert** for Northlight Theatre's **"Shining Lives: A Musical,"** a heart-rending portrait of the lives of young women poisoned while working at **Chicago's Radium Dial Company** in the 1920's.

New Adaptation nominations went to **David Catlin** for his dynamic reinvention of **Herman Melville's "Moby Dick"** at **Lookingglass Theatre Company** in association with **The Actors' Gymnasium**; to Sean Graney for his epic Greek tragedies marathon "All Our Tragic" at The Hypocrites; and to **Nambi E. Kelley** for her intense distillation of **Richard Wright's "Native Son"** presented by **Court Theatre** and American Blues Theater.

During the 2014-15 season, Jeff Awards judges attended opening nights of 149 Equity productions offered by 61 producing organizations, and from these openings, 112 productions were "Jeff Recommended" and eligible for award nominations.

The **47th Annual Equity Jeff Awards Ceremony** honoring excellence in professional theater produced within the immediate Chicago area is Monday, Oct. 5 at **Drury Lane Oakbrook**, 100 Drury Lane, Oakbrook Terrace, Ill. Emceeding the festivities are multi-talented award winning performers **Cheryl Lynn Bruce** and **E. Faye Butler**.

Performances featuring cast members from nominated musicals and revues and video segments from nominated plays will highlight the Oct. 5 ceremony. Pre-show appetizers and cash bar are offered from 6 to 7:30 p.m., followed by the awards ceremony, directed by Michael Weber, and a lavish buffet reception immediately thereafter.

Advance purchase tickets, which include the ceremony and pre- and post-show parties, are \$75 (\$55 for members of Actors' Equity Association, **United Scenic Artists, Stage Directors and Choreographers Society, Stage Managers' Association, The Dramatists Guild of America, and American Federation of Musicians**). The evening is black tie optional and the public is invited to attend. To purchase tickets, visit the Jeff Awards website at jeffawards.org. For more information, contact Jeff Equity Chair **Merril Prager** at equitywing@jeffawards.org.

The Jeff Awards has been honoring outstanding theater artists annually since it was established in 1968. With up to 55 members representing a wide variety of backgrounds in theatre, the Jeff Awards Committee is committed to celebrating the vitality of Chicago area theater by recognizing excellence through its recommendations, awards, and honors. The Jeff Awards fosters the artistic growth of area theaters and theater artists and promotes educational opportunities, audience appreciation, and civic pride in the achievements of the theater community. Each year, the Jeff Awards Committee evaluates over 250 theatrical productions and holds two awards ceremonies. Originally

chartered to recognize only Equity productions, the **Jeff Awards Non-Equity Wing** was established in 1973 to celebrate outstanding achievement in non-union theater.

Here's the complete list of nominations and categories:

2015 EQUITY JEFF AWARD NOMINEES

PRODUCTION – PLAY – LARGE

“Airline Highway” - Steppenwolf Theatre Company

“The Diary of Anne Frank” - Writers Theatre

“The Little Foxes” - Goodman Theatre

“Moby Dick” - Lookingglass Theatre Company in association with The Actors' Gymnasium

“Native Son” - Court Theatre and American Blues Theater

PRODUCTION – PLAY – MIDSIZE

“All Our Tragic” - The Hypocrites

“The Downpour” - Route 66 Theatre Company

“The Royale” - American Theater Company

“Travesties” - Remy Bumppo Theatre Company

“The White Road” - Irish Theatre of Chicago

PRODUCTION – MUSICAL – LARGE

“Billy Elliot, the Musical” - Drury Lane Productions

“City of Angels” – The Marriott Theatre

“The King and I” – The Marriott Theatre

“Les Misérables” - Paramount Theatre

“Mary Poppins” - Paramount Theatre

“The Who's Tommy” - Paramount Theatre

PRODUCTION – MUSICAL – MIDSIZE

“The Addams Family” - Mercury Theater Chicago

“A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum” - Porchlight Music Theatre

“Sweeney Todd: The Demon Barber of Fleet Street” - Porchlight Music Theatre

PRODUCTION – REVUE

“Men of Soul with a Tribute to Bill Withers” - Black Ensemble Theater

“Panic on Cloud 9” - The Second City

“Ring of Fire, The Music of Johnny Cash” - Mercury Theater Chicago and

Theatre at the Center

“Sondheim on Sondheim” - Porchlight Music Theatre

DIRECTOR – PLAY

Jaime Castañeda - “The Royale” - American Theater Company

David Catlin - “Moby Dick” - Lookingglass Theatre Company in association with

The Actors’ Gymnasium

Sean Graney - “All Our Tragic” - The Hypocrites

Nick Sandys - “Travesties” - Remy Bumppo Theatre Company

Erica Weiss - “The Downpour” - Route 66 Theatre Company

Henry Wishcamper - “The Little Foxes” - Goodman Theatre

DIRECTOR – MUSICAL

Nick Bowling - “City of Angels” – The Marriott Theatre

Nick Bowling - “The King and I” – The Marriott Theatre

Jim Corti - “Les Misérables” - Paramount Theatre

Jim Corti - “The Who’s Tommy” - Paramount Theatre

Rachel Rockwell - “Billy Elliot, the Musical” - Drury Lane Productions

Rachel Rockwell - “Mary Poppins” - Paramount Theatre

DIRECTOR – REVUE

Nick Bowling - “Sondheim on Sondheim” - Porchlight Music Theatre

Daryl Brooks - “Men of Soul with a Tribute to Bill Withers” - Black Ensemble Theater

Brian Russell - “Ring of Fire, The Music of Johnny Cash” - Mercury Theater Chicago and

Theatre at the Center

ENSEMBLE

“Airline Highway” - Steppenwolf Theatre Company

“All Our Tragic” - The Hypocrites

“The Apple Family Plays” - TimeLine Theatre Company

“The Humans” - American Theater Company

“The Project(s)” - American Theater Company

“A Q Brothers’ Christmas Carol” - Chicago Shakespeare Theater

“Season on the Line” - The House Theatre of Chicago

“The White Road” - Irish Theatre of Chicago

ACTOR IN A PRINCIPAL ROLE – PLAY

Allen Gilmore (Vladimir) - “Waiting for Godot” - Court Theatre

Francis Guinan (Tommy) - “The Night Alive” - Steppenwolf Theatre Company

Francis Guinan (Ray) - “White Guy on the Bus” - Northlight Theatre

Jerod Haynes (Bigger) - “Native Son” - Court Theatre and American Blues Theater

Jerod Haynes (Jay) - “The Royale” - American Theater Company

Mark L. Montgomery (Anthony Reilly) - “Outside Mullingar” - Northlight Theatre

Larry Yando (King Lear) - “King Lear” - Chicago Shakespeare Theater

ACTOR IN A PRINCIPAL ROLE – MUSICAL

Anthony Crivello (Louis Prima) - “Louis & Keely ‘Live’ at the Sahara” - HackFeld LLC

Nicholas Dantes (Billy) - “Billy Elliot, the Musical” - Drury Lane Productions

Devin DeSantis (Tommy) - “The Who’s Tommy” - Paramount Theatre

Karl Hamilton (Gomez Addams) - “The Addams Family” - Mercury Theater Chicago

Bill Larkin (Prologus/Pseudolus) - “A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum” -

Porchlight Music Theatre

ACTRESS IN A PRINCIPAL ROLE – PLAY

Brenda Barrie (Robin) - “The Downpour” - Route 66 Theatre Company

Janet Ulrich Brooks (Sonia) - “Vanya and Sonia and Masha and Spike” - Goodman Theatre

Hillary Clemens (Crystal) - “Bethany” - The Gift Theatre

Kate Fry (Rosemary Muldoon) - “Outside Mullingar” - Northlight Theatre

Mariann Mayberry (Shelley) - “Grand Concourse” - Steppenwolf Theatre Company

Lia D. Mortensen (Julianna) - “The Other Place” - Profiles Theatre

Caroline Neff (Hazel) - “The Downpour” - Route 66 Theatre Company

Eileen Niccolai (Serafina Delle Rose) - “The Rose Tattoo” - Shattered Globe Theatre

ACTRESS IN A PRINCIPAL ROLE – MUSICAL

Shoshana Bean (Cee Cee Bloom) - “Beaches, A New Musical” - Drury Lane Productions

in association with Jennifer Maloney-Prezioso

Rebecca Finnegan (Nellie Lovett) - "Sweeney Todd: The Demon Barber of Fleet Street" -

Porchlight Music Theatre

Heidi Kettenring (Anna Leonowens) - "The King and I" - Marriott Theatre

Megan McGinnis (Marianne Dashwood) - "Sense and Sensibility" -

Chicago Shakespeare Theater

Susie McMonagle (Mrs. Wilkinson) - "Billy Elliot, the Musical" - Drury Lane Productions

ACTOR OR ACTRESS IN A REVUE

Michael Monroe Goodman (Young Johnny) - "Ring of Fire, The Music of Johnny Cash" -

Mercury Theater Chicago and Theatre at the Center

Cory Goodrich (June Carter Cash) - "Ring of Fire, The Music of Johnny Cash" -

Mercury Theater Chicago and Theatre at the Center

John Hartman (Ensemble) - "Panic on Cloud 9" - The Second City

James Earl Jones II (Ensemble) - "Sondheim on Sondheim" - Porchlight Music Theatre

Kent M. Lewis (Johnny) - "Ring of Fire, The Music of Johnny Cash" -

Mercury Theater Chicago and Theatre at the Center

SOLO PERFORMANCE

Ronald Keaton (Winston Churchill) - "Churchill" - SoloChicago Theatre and

Greenhouse Theater Center

Linda Reiter (Mary) - "The Testament of Mary" - Victory Gardens Theater

Kelvin Roston, Jr. (Donny) - "Twisted Melodies" - Congo Square Theatre Company

Steven Strafford (Himself) - "Methtacular!" - About Face Theatre

in association with Justin Brill

ACTOR IN A SUPPORTING ROLE – PLAY

Greg Matthew Anderson (Tristan Tzara) - "Travesties" - Remy Bumppo Theatre Company

Behzad Dabu (Amit) - "Samsara" - Victory Gardens Theater

Anthony Fleming III (Queequeg/Ensemble) - "Moby Dick" - Lookingglass Theatre Company

in association with The Actors' Gymnasium

K. Todd Freeman (Sissy Na Na) - "Airline Highway" - Steppenwolf Theatre Company

Nic Grelli (Alvaro Mangiacavallo) - "The Rose Tattoo" - Shattered Globe Theatre

Larry Yando (Benjamin Hubbard) - "The Little Foxes" - Goodman Theatre

ACTOR IN A SUPPORTING ROLE – MUSICAL

Matthew Crowle (Hysterium) - "A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum" -

Porchlight Music Theatre

Devin DeSantis (Marius) - "Les Misérables" - Paramount Theatre

Sean Allan Krill (Colonel Brandon) - "Sense and Sensibility" - Chicago Shakespeare Theater

Ross Lehman (Moonface Martin) - "Anything Goes" - Marriott Theatre

Travis Taylor (Lancelot) - "Camelot" - Drury Lane Productions

ACTRESS IN A SUPPORTING ROLE – PLAY

Annabel Armour (Virginia) - "The Clean House" - Remy Bumppo Theatre Company

Dana Black (Actor 6) - "Abraham Lincoln Was a F*gg*t" - About Face Theatre

Kate Buddeke (Tanya) - "Airline Highway" - Steppenwolf Theatre Company

Kate Buddeke (Terry) - "Side Man" - American Blues Theater

Patrese D. McClain (Shatique) - "White Guy on the Bus" - Northlight Theatre

Cassidy Slaughter-Mason (Avery Willard) - "Rapture, Blister, Burn" - Goodman Theatre

ACTRESS IN A SUPPORTING ROLE – MUSICAL

Michelle Aravena (Anita) - "West Side Story" - Drury Lane Productions

Kristen Choi (Lady Thiang) - "The King and I" - Marriott Theatre

Marya Grandy (Hildy Esterhazy) - "On the Town" - Marriott Theatre

Meghan Murphy (Oolie/Donna) - "City of Angels" - Marriott Theatre

Colette Todd (Sandra Bloom) - "Big Fish" - Theatre at the Center

NEW WORK - PLAY

Bruce Graham - "White Guy on the Bus" - Northlight Theatre

Laura Jacqmin - "Look, we are breathing" - Rivendell Theatre Ensemble

Rohina Malik - "The Mecca Tales" - Chicago Dramatists

PJ Paparelli and Joshua Jaeger - "The Project(s)" - American Theater Company

Caitlin Parrish - "The Downpour" - Route 66 Theatre Company

Mat Smart - "The Royal Society of Antarctica" - The Gift Theatre

NEW WORK - MUSICAL

Paul Gordon - "Sense and Sensibility" - Chicago Shakespeare Theater

GQ, JQ, Jackson Doran, Postell Pringle - "A Q Brothers' Christmas Carol" -

Chicago Shakespeare Theater

Jessica Thebus, Andre Pluess and Amanda Dehnert - "Shining Lives: A Musical" -

Northlight Theatre

NEW ADAPTATION

David Catlin - "Moby Dick" - Lookingglass Theatre Company in association with

The Actors' Gymnasium

Sean Graney - "All Our Tragic" - The Hypocrites

Nambi E. Kelley - "Native Son" - Court Theatre and American Blues Theater

CHOREOGRAPHY

Brock Clawson - "The Who's Tommy" - Paramount Theatre

Rhett Guter - "West Side Story" - Drury Lane Productions

Danny Herman - "All Shook Up" - Theatre at the Center

Rachel Rockwell - "Billy Elliot, the Musical" - Drury Lane Productions

Alex Sanchez - "On the Town" - Marriott Theatre

ORIGINAL MUSIC IN A PLAY

Victoria Deiorio - "The White Road" - Irish Theatre of Chicago

Andrew Hansen - "My Name is Asher Lev" - TimeLine Theatre Company

Henry Marsh - "Pericles" - Chicago Shakespeare Theater

Richard Woodbury - "The Little Foxes" - Goodman Theatre

MUSIC DIRECTION

Austin Cook - "Sondheim on Sondheim" - Porchlight Music Theatre

Paul Litteral - "Louis & Keely 'Live' at the Sahara" - HackFeld LLC

Doug Peck - "The Secret Garden" - Court Theatre

Malcolm Ruhl - "Ring of Fire, The Music of Johnny Cash" - Mercury Theater Chicago and

Theatre at the Center

Tom Vendafreddo - "Les Misérables" - Paramount Theatre

SCENIC DESIGN – MIDSIZE

Ira Amyx and Merje Veski - "The White Road" - Irish Theatre of Chicago

John Holt - "Accidentally Like a Martyr" - A Red Orchid Theatre

Jeffrey D. Kmiec - "Watch on the Rhine" - The Artistic Home

Angela Weber Miller - "The Gravedigger" - First Folio Theatre

Sarah Ross - "The Rose Tattoo" - Shattered Globe Theatre

Grant Sabin - "Yankee Tavern" - American Blues Theater

SCENIC DESIGN – LARGE

Linda Buchanan - "Two Trains Running" - Goodman Theatre

Kevin Depinet - "The Game's Afoot" - Drury Lane Productions

Kevin Depinet and Jeffrey D. Kmiec - "Les Misérables" - Paramount Theatre

Jack Magaw - "The Diary of Anne Frank" - Writers Theatre

Scott Pask - "Airline Highway" - Steppenwolf Theatre Company

Todd Rosenthal - "The Little Foxes" - Goodman Theatre

Joey Wade - "Grand Concourse" - Steppenwolf Theatre Company

LIGHTING DESIGN – MIDSIZE

Brian Sidney Bembridge - "The Royale" - American Theater Company

Maggie Fullilove-Nugent - "Endgame" - The Hypocrites

Lee Keenan - "The Hammer Trinity, Part 3: The Excelsior King" -

The House Theatre of Chicago

Jared Moore - "All Our Tragic" - The Hypocrites

Julian Pike - "The White Road" - Irish Theatre of Chicago

LIGHTING DESIGN – LARGE

Lee Fiskness - "Camelot" - Drury Lane Productions

Greg Hofmann - "The Who's Tommy" - Paramount Theatre

Jesse Klug - "Les Misérables" - Paramount Theatre

Jesse Klug - "Pericles" - Chicago Shakespeare Theater

Marc Stubblefield - "Native Son" - Court Theatre and American Blues Theater

COSTUME DESIGN – MIDSIZE

Mara Blumenfeld and Mieka Van Der Ploeg - "Mr. Burns: a post-electric play" - Theater Wit

Rachel Lambert - "Travesties" - Remy Bumppo Theatre Company

Frances Maggio - "The Addams Family" - Mercury Theater Chicago

Bill Morey - "Sweeney Todd: The Demon Barber of Fleet Street" - Porchlight Music Theatre

Alison Siple - "All Our Tragic" - The Hypocrites

COSTUME DESIGN – LARGE

Dede M. Ayite - "Marie Antoinette" - Steppenwolf Theatre Company

Theresa Ham - "Mary Poppins" - Paramount Theatre

Susan E. Mickey - "Sense and Sensibility" - Chicago Shakespeare Theater

Nancy Missimi - "The King and I" - Marriott Theatre

Nancy Missimi - "La Cage aux Folles" - Marriott Theatre

SOUND DESIGN – MIDSIZE

John Corkill and Alex Monroe - "Macbeth" - The Artistic Home

Victoria Deiorio - "The White Road" - Irish Theatre of Chicago

Joshua Horvath - "The Hammer Trinity, Part 3: The Excelsior King" -

The House Theatre of Chicago

Kevin O'Donnell - "All Our Tragic" - The Hypocrites

Rick Sims - "Side Man" - American Blues Theater

Rick Sims - "Twisted Melodies" - Congo Square Theatre Company

SOUND DESIGN – LARGE

Joshua Horvath - "Native Son" - Court Theatre and American Blues Theater

Lindsay Jones - "King Lear" - Chicago Shakespeare Theater

Lindsay Jones - "Marie Antoinette" - Steppenwolf Theatre Company

Andre Pluess - "Iphigenia in Aulis" - Court Theatre

Josh Schmidt - "The Diary of Anne Frank" - Writers Theatre

Rick Sims - "Moby Dick" - Lookingglass Theatre Company in association with

The Actors' Gymnasium

PROJECTIONS/VIDEO DESIGN

Smooch Medina - "The White Road" - Irish Theatre of Chicago

Aaron Rhyne - "Pericles" - Chicago Shakespeare Theater

Jeff Sugg - "Marie Antoinette" - Steppenwolf Theatre Company

Mike Tutaj - "Mary Poppins" - Paramount Theatre

Mike Tutaj - "Sondheim on Sondheim" - Porchlight Music Theatre

Mike Tutaj - "The Who's Tommy" - Paramount Theatre

FIGHT CHOREOGRAPHY

David Blixt - "Macbeth" - The Artistic Home

Ryan Bourque - "All Our Tragic" - The Hypocrites

Matt Hawkins - "West Side Story" - Drury Lane Productions

John Tovar - "Camelot" - Drury Lane Productions

ARTISTIC SPECIALIZATION

Dave Bova - Hair and Makeup Design - "Marie Antoinette" - Steppenwolf Theatre Company

Jesse Mooney-Bullock - Puppet Design - "The Hammer Trinity, Part 3: The Excelsior King" -

The House Theatre of Chicago

Marco Ramirez and Stephanie Paul - Rhythm and Percussion - "The Royale" -

American Theater Company

Isaac Schoepp - Rigging Design - "Moby Dick" - Lookingglass Theatre Company in association with

The Actors' Gymnasium

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