

BROADWAY IN CHICAGO

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JONAH RAWITZ OF BUFFALO GROVE, ILLINOIS WINS 6TH ANNUAL NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL MUSICAL THEATER AWARDS

CHICAGO (July 1, 2014) – Broadway In Chicago is thrilled to announce that Jonah Rawitz of Buffalo Grove, IL (Adlai E. Stevenson High School), representing the Illinois High School Musical Theater Awards, was awarded the coveted Jimmy™ Award for Best Performance by an Actor on Monday, June 30, 2014 at Broadway's Minskoff Theater. The Jimmy™ Award for Best Performance by an Actress was presented to Jai'Len Josey, representing the Georgia High School Musical Theater Awards – Shuler Hensley Awards.

"I am so incredibly grateful to have had this unforgettable and amazing experience and to have met so many unforgettable and amazing people," said Jonah upon receiving the award.

The Jimmy™ Award is named in honor of James M. Nederlander, the legendary Broadway theater owner and producer. James L. Nederlander, Chairman of The Nederlander Organization, presented both winners with a check for \$10,000 to further their education. They will also be eligible for a four-year merit and a need-based scholarship to attend the New Studio on Broadway, NYU Tisch School of the Arts Department of Drama, contingent upon acceptance into the program.

Four runners-up each received a \$2,500 scholarship toward their future education from the Barry and Fran Weissler Foundation. These winners were Matthew Richards, Layton, UT; Brook Solan, Las Vega, NV; Sophia Tzougros, Dousman, WI; and Mekhai Lee, Charlotte, NC.

Three additional awards were presented to English Bernhardt, Wakeforest, NC (Best Performance in an Ensemble); Joshua Velez, Torrance, CA (Most Improved), and Matthew Washington, Cary, NC (Spirit of the Jimmy Awards). Another student, Jai'Len Josey, East Point, GA was selected to attend Carnegie Mellon University's 6-week Pre-College Drama program.

The ceremony was hosted by 2011 Jimmy Award-winner Ryan McCartan. McCartan recently starred as JD in the Off-Broadway hit musical, *Heathers*, appears regularly as Diggy in the TV show *Liv & Maddie* on the Disney Channel, and is a recurring character on the USA Network's *Royal Pains*. Andy Karl, star of *Rocky: The Musical*, also performed alongside the cast to close the show.

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Jimmy™ Award winners were selected by a panel of Broadway brass including **Kent Gash** (New Studio on Broadway, NYU Tisch School of the Arts Department of Drama); **Rachel Hoffman** (Telsey +Co); **Arielle Tepper Madover** (Tony® Award-Winning Producer); **Tara Rubin** (Casting Director) **Nick Scandalios** (Nederlander Organization); **Sergio Trujillo** (Award-Winning Choreographer).

The production was directed by Van Kaplan and choreographed by Kiesha Lalama, with musical direction by Michael Moricz.

The annual Broadway-focused talent showcase featured performances by all 56 participants and solos by select finalists. Their Broadway debut followed 5-days of rehearsals and private coaching with faculty at the New Studio on Broadway, NYU Tisch School of the Arts Department of Drama and other professionals. Students also enjoyed a discussion with award-winning composer and lyricist **Stephen Schwartz**. The students also took in a performance of *Kinky Boots* and had a talkback with the cast.

Over 1,500 high schools and 60,000 students participate in these annual events. Student performers qualified to compete in the national program by winning top honors at 28 regional high school musical awards competitions presented by Broadway League member performing arts centers. Click [here](#) for the list of participating organizations.

Founded in 2009, NHSMTA's mission is to raise the profile of musical theater in schools, recognize dedicated teachers and inspire the next generation of performers and enthusiasts. Since its inception, the NHSMTA has enabled over \$1,000,000 in university and conservatory scholarships to be awarded to talented students at the national and local level-several of whom have already been cast in Broadway, touring and West End productions.

To recognize the important work being done in high schools across the United States, Tony Award-winner Tommy Tune and Charlotte St. Martin, Executive Director of The Broadway League, presented the **2014 League Educator Apple Award®** to **Vincent Gassetto**, Principal of MS 343 Academy of Applied Mathematics and Technology in Bronx, New York (nominated by Situation Interactive in New York, New York); **Holly Valentine**, Fourth Grade Teacher at Walt Disney Elementary School in Rochester, New York (nominated by the Rochester Broadway Theatre League in Rochester, New York); **Maureen Binienda**, Principal at South High Community School in Worcester, Massachusetts (nominated by the Hanover Theatre for the Performing Arts in Hanover, Massachusetts); and **Brian Sammons**, Third Grade Teacher at Aplington Elementary in Aplington, Iowa (nominated by Des Moines Performing Arts in Des Moines, Iowa).

The NHSMTA is produced by the Broadway Education Alliance and supported by many leading theater industry organizations including The Broadway League, BWF (Weissler) Foundation, Disney Theatrical Productions, Jujamcyn Theatres, Music Theatre International, Nederlander Organization, NYU Tisch School of the Arts, Pittsburgh CLO, Rodgers & Hammerstein Organization, Samuel French Library, Shubert Organization, Tams-Witmark Music Library, Inc., Ticketmaster and others. To learn more about the National High School Musical Theater Awards and/or to make a donation to the program, please visit nhsmta.com.

WHO'S WHO IN THE PROJECT

BROADWAY EDUCATION ALLIANCE (BEA) is a 501.c3 organization that serves as an independent catalyst for the development and implementation of national programs that serve local performing arts organizations and support theatre arts education and cultural studies for audiences of all ages. The National High School Musical Theater Awards is the organization's first national coalition presented to inspire creativity, build confidence, and stimulate critical thinking in American's youth. For more information, visit www.BroadwayEducationAlliance.org.

NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL MUSICAL THEATER AWARDS (NHSMTA)/JIMMY™ AWARDS was founded in 2009 by Pittsburgh CLO and Nederlander Alliances LLC, under the leadership of James L. Nederlander, and is produced by the Broadway Education Alliance in association with Pittsburgh CLO. The program promotes the importance of theater arts programming in high schools, provides educational scholarships and creates a pathway for promising young performers to pursue a career in the professional theater industry. For more information, visit www.nhsmta.com.

NYU TISCH SCHOOL OF THE ARTS DEPARTMENT OF DRAMA integrates a combination of rigorous professional theatre training and broad-ranging academic education. In partnership with some of the country's foremost professional theatre training institutions, the program offers comprehensive theatre courses in acting, directing, musical performance, design, and theatre production. The program also offers an expansive and innovative academic curriculum. The faculty is composed of nationally and internationally recognized theatre artists, scholars, and theorists. The curriculum is further enriched by required courses in the humanities and social sciences. An extensive internship program connects students to the professional theatre community of New York City. The program is complemented by challenging and innovative productions that welcome guest artists from a range of culture and artistic perspectives. Graduates of the program include Alec Baldwin '94, Kristen Bell '02, Raúl Esparza '92, Philip Seymour Hoffman '89, Bryce Dallas Howard '03, Felicity Huffman '88, Dan Jinks '85, Moisés Kaufman '89, John Leguizamo '83, Michael Longoria '02, Idina Menzel '93, Molly Shannon '87, and Chandra Wilson '91.

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