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PITTSBURGH CLO ANNOUNCES THE WINNERS OF THE 2024 GENE KELLY AWARDS



Pittsburgh, May 25, 2024 – An overly-enthusiastic sold-out crowd gathered at the Benedum Center as Pittsburgh CLO and The Michael J. Kara Family honored Allegheny County’s finest high school performers at the 33rd Annual Pittsburgh CLO Gene Kelly Awards for Excellence in High School Musical Theater on Saturday, May 25, 2024.

Named for legendary performer and Pittsburgh native Gene Kelly, this celebration emphasizes the importance of arts education and rewards the time, energy, and dedication that local high schools devote to their musical productions each spring.

The ceremony included live ensemble performances by eight Best Musical nominees, and live performances by six Best Actor and six Best Actress nominees. Ensembles performed a five-minute selection from their nominated musicals, and Best Actor and Actress nominees performed in character-driven medley groups. Special guest presenters included local television personalities WPXI's **David Johnson**, WQED's **Nancy Polinsky**, KDKA's **Boaz Frankel**, as well as the City of Pittsburgh's **Mayor Ed Gainey** and Gene Kelly's widow **Patricia Ward Kelly**.

Pittsburgh CLO's Gene Kelly Awards is the nation's oldest, most comprehensive regional awards program. Patterned on the Tony Awards®, it recognizes excellence in student performances and production, including Best Student Orchestra, Scenic Design, Costume Design, Lighting Design, Ensemble, Crew/Technical Execution, Dance Ensemble, Vocal Ensemble, Outstanding Student Artist, and Musical. Awards are given in four budget levels, ensuring that all schools, whether public and private and no matter their resources, have an equal opportunity to participate and win.

Pittsburgh CLO's Gene Kelly Awards presented over **\$75,000** in scholarships, including the following college-bound seniors:

Point Park University presented **Ava Delio** with a scholarship renewable for four years, to attend Point Park University's Conservatory of Performing Arts.

Robert Morris University presented **Alexis Yunk** with a scholarship renewable for four years, to attend Robert Morris University.

Seton Hill University presented **Brylee Hendry** and **Jayla Chase** with scholarships to attend Seton Hill University.

Gene Kelly Cash Scholarships were awarded to three high school seniors who have applied and were accepted to a school for the performing or technical arts: **Hope Johnson**, **Helena Marshall**, **Max Peluso**, and **Kai Sachon**.

The Pittsburgh CLO Ambassadors awarded scholarships to three college-bound students who will be pursuing a major outside of the arts: **Isabel Concepcion**, **Paulina Sanchez**, and **Lillian Stalewski**.

The Charles Gray Award for Special Achievement in Arts Education was presented to **Pittsburgh Carmalt PreK-8** in recognition of its arts education program. The school has made an enduring commitment to use the arts as a way to build community, develop empathy, and promote leadership skills. The school was presented with an award and a cash prize.

Now in its 21st year, The Kelly Critics program is a joint partnership between Pittsburgh CLO, Dr. Christopher Rawson, and the Pittsburgh Post-Gazette. **Julie Evanchak from Thomas Jefferson High School** was presented the Christopher Rawson Kelly Critics Award and a cash prize.

The judging panel, comprised of performing arts educators, arts administrators, entertainment professionals, and performers have spent the past three months attending performances at the following 33 Allegheny County High Schools: *Avonworth High School, Baldwin High School, Bishop Canevin High School, Brentwood High School, Carlynton Junior Senior High School, Chartiers Valley High School, Eden Christian Academy, Elizabeth Forward High School, Gateway High School, Hampton High School, Keystone Oaks High School, McKeesport Area High School, Montour High School, North Hills High School, Our Lady of the Sacred Heart High School, Penn Hills High School, Pine-Richland High School, Pittsburgh Alderdice High School, Pittsburgh CAPA 6-12, Plum Senior High, Quaker Valley High School, Redeemer Lutheran School, Riverview Jr./Sr. High School, Saint Joseph High School, Serra Catholic High School, Seton LaSalle Catholic High School, Sewickley Academy, Shady Side Academy Senior School, Springdale Jr./Sr. High School, Thomas Jefferson High School, West Allegheny High School, Westinghouse Arts Academy, and Woodland Hills High School.*

The Recipients of the 2024 Gene Kelly Awards are:

BEST SCENIC DESIGN

Budget Level I

Bishop Canevin High School
ALL SHOOK UP School Edition

Budget Level II

Avonworth High School
INTO THE WOODS

Budget Level III

Elizabeth Forward High School
BIG FISH

Budget Level IV

Pine-Richland High School
MAMMA MIA!



BEST COSTUME DESIGN

Budget Level I

Saint Joseph High School

TARZAN - The Stage Musical based on the Disney film

Budget Level II

Avonworth High School

INTO THE WOODS

Budget Level III

Westinghouse Arts Academy

CHICAGO: Teen Edition

Budget Level IV

Woodland Hills High School

WONDERLAND Pilot Production



BEST LIGHTING DESIGN

Budget Level I

Shady Side Academy Senior School

ZOMBIE PROM

Budget Level II

Avonworth High School

INTO THE WOODS

Budget Level III

Westinghouse Arts Academy

CHICAGO: Teen Edition

Budget Level IV

Thomas Jefferson High School

Disney's BEAUTY AND THE BEAST



BEST VOCAL ENSEMBLE

Budget Level I

Our Lady of the Sacred Heart High School

Rodgers & Hammerstein's OKLAHOMA!

Budget Level II

Avonworth High School

INTO THE WOODS

Budget Level III

Pittsburgh CAPA 6-12

SWEENEY TODD: THE DEMON BARBER OF FLEET STREET, A MUSICAL THRILLER

Budget Level IV

Thomas Jefferson High School

Disney's BEAUTY AND THE BEAST



BEST DANCE ENSEMBLE

Budget Level I

Our Lady of the Sacred Heart High School

Rodgers & Hammerstein's OKLAHOMA!

Budget Level II

West Allegheny High School

BYE BYE BIRDIE

Budget Level III

Westinghouse Arts Academy

CHICAGO: Teen Edition

Budget Level IV

Hampton High School

TUCK EVERLASTING



BEST CREW/TECHNICAL EXECUTION

Budget Level I

Shady Side Academy Senior School

ZOMBIE PROM

Budget Level II

Avonworth High School

INTO THE WOODS

Budget Level III

North Hills High School
THE 25th ANNUAL PUTNAM COUNTY SPELLING BEE

Budget Level IV
Thomas Jefferson High School
Disney's BEAUTY AND THE BEAST



BEST STUDENT ORCHESTRA

Pine-Richland High School
MAMMA MIA!



OUTSTANDING STUDENT ARTIST

Brady Bandik
Lighting Designer
Thomas Jefferson High School



BEST SUPPORTING ACTOR & BEST SUPPORTING ACTRESS

Eamonn McElfresh
Tobias Ragg
SWEENEY TODD: THE DEMON BARBER OF FLEET STREET, A MUSICAL THRILLER
Pittsburgh CAPA 6-12

Rissa Williams
Beggar Woman
SWEENEY TODD: THE DEMON BARBER OF FLEET STREET, A MUSICAL THRILLER
Pittsburgh CAPA 6-12



BEST ACTOR & BEST ACTRESS

Kai Sachon
Sweeney Todd
SWEENEY TODD: THE DEMON BARBER OF FLEET STREET, A MUSICAL THRILLER
Pittsburgh CAPA 6-12

Emma Hopf
William Barfee

THE 25th ANNUAL PUTNAM COUNTY SPELLING BEE
North Hills High School



BEST MUSICAL

Budget Level I

Saint Joseph High School

TARZAN - The Stage Musical based on the Disney film

Budget Level II

Avonworth High School

INTO THE WOODS

Budget Level III

Westinghouse Arts Academy

CHICAGO: Teen Edition

Budget Level IV

Thomas Jefferson High School

Disney's BEAUTY AND THE BEAST



The winners for Best Actor and Best Actress will represent Pittsburgh CLO's Gene Kelly Awards in the Jimmy Awards ®/National High School Musical Theatre Awards ® in New York City on Monday, June 26. For more information on the Jimmy Awards, please visit <http://www.jimmyawards.com>.

The scholarships presented were made possible through generous donations from the CLO Ambassadors, Highmark Blue Cross Blue Shield, and participating colleges. More information is available at PITTSBURGHCLO.org

The Gene Kelly Awards are presented by the Michael J. Kara Family with additional support provided by Deloitte, The Gismondi Family Foundation, Point Park University, Highmark Blue Cross Blue Shield, PNC Bank, the Pittsburgh Cultural Trust, and the CLO Ambassadors. Deloitte Consulting, LLP is the official auditor for the Gene Kelly Awards.

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Pittsburgh CLO has been a driving force behind the preservation, creation and promotion of live musical theater since 1946. As one of the largest regional musical theater organizations in the country, it is fortunate for the yearly support of nearly 200,000 audience members. In addition to producing fresh new productions of Broadway classics, the not-for-profit's mission is to develop new works and showcase emerging talent, and has been credited with launching the

careers of numerous artists such as Billy Porter, Renée Elise Goldsberry, Rob Marshall, Kathleen Marshall, Rob Ashford, Bernadette Peters, and Shirley Jones. The organization's dedication to musical theater extends beyond its six-show Summer Season at the Benedum Center to year-round programming at the 250-seat Cabaret Theater, which saw the world premieres of Up and Away and Game On in 2018 and The Double-Threat Trio in 2019. Its extensive education efforts include the Pittsburgh CLO Academy of Musical Theater; a university internship program; New Horizons, and in-school programs Gallery of Heroes and Creative Vision. Other ongoing initiatives include the Construction Center for the Arts, the Gene Kelly Awards for Excellence in High School Musical Theater, and SPARK, a festival for new small-cast musicals launched in 2018. The organization also founded the National High School Musical Theatre Awards/ Jimmy Awards®. To further its mission to grow the art form, Pittsburgh CLO has been involved with 29 Broadway shows (32 Tony Awards®), and in 2014 produced the world premiere of An American in Paris in Paris, then on Broadway, where it won 4 Tony Awards®, and in London, Tokyo, Pittsburgh and throughout the U.S. and Europe. Pittsburgh CLO is the subject of a film starring Jeff Goldblum titled "Pittsburgh." pittsburghCLO.org.

PITTSBURGH CLO

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