

W H
A R T
O N

SUTTON FOSTER AWARDS
RULES AND GUIDELINES
2022-2023

Sutton Foster Awards 2023.....	3
Diversity Equity & Inclusion Statement	4
Participant Eligibility	5
Qualifying Shows and Roles	5
Appeal Process	7
Updates to the list of approved musicals and roles	7
Application	7
Waiting List	7
Fees	8
Awards	8
Adjudication	8
Important Dates.....	9
Publicity	10
Nominee Documents	10
Winners	11
Tickets	11
Program Contacts	11

SUTTON FOSTER AWARDS 2023

GOALS

1. To recognize, celebrate, honor, and encourage excellence in high school musical theatre performances in the state of Michigan.
2. To support the work of arts educators through a constructive review process.
3. To highlight the importance of arts education in schools.
4. To foster creativity, confidence, and collaboration through the arts.

The Sutton Foster Awards (SFA) are a celebration of high school theatre across the State of Michigan. Wharton Center is expanding that mission with some important and exciting changes. First and foremost, we want to make sure the Sutton Foster Awards program is accessible to as many people as possible. This means accepting more schools into the program, making the application process easier, and offering financial assistance to any school that find the application fee a barrier to participation.

We are committed to the education and growth of all participating performers. This year, Sutton Foster Awards Nominees will have access to:

- Multiple opportunities to grow, learn, and connect with a community of peers.
- An SFA Workshop and Audition Weekend led by industry professionals where nominees develop relevant theatre skills.

NOMINEE SELECTION

- Adjudicator scores will determine two nominees from each school. Additional performers may be invited based on adjudicator scoring.
- SFA Workshop and Audition Weekends will occur May 6–7 in Detroit, and May 13–14 in East Lansing.
 - Nominees **must** attend one workshop and audition weekend in order to be considered for a chance to compete at the Jimmy Awards.
- The Sutton Foster Awards Showcase Weekend will be held May 20–21 at Fisher Theatre in Detroit.

SCORING

- Two participants from the Sutton Foster Awards Showcase will be selected to represent Michigan at the Jimmy Awards®.
 - These two nominees will be selected based on:
 - The score they receive from adjudicators based on their performance in their school's musical.
 - The score they receive from the judges during the Sutton Foster Awards Workshop and Audition Weekend.
 - The score they receive from the judges during the Sutton Foster Awards Showcase Weekend.

SUTTON FOSTER AWARDS DIVERSITY EQUITY AND INCLUSION STATEMENT

At Wharton Center, we feel a profound sense of responsibility to the mission of our founders to bring the arts to the entire community and to be a space where people can be their authentic selves. We recognize the arts are a catalyst for connection that can bring forward positive change. We are committed to engaging artists who contribute to the strength of our community, celebrating the lived experiences of every individual, and supporting your access to the transformative power of live performing arts.

“The performing arts are a dimension of culture that, when meaningfully exposed, provide you with a more meaningful existence on this planet.”

—Dr. Clifton and Dolores Wharton

The Sutton Foster Awards is committed to the growth, exposure, and advocacy for celebrating high school musical theatre and arts education in Michigan. It is also committed to diversity, equity, and inclusion in concert with your organization and industry practices. We do this in order to make the entire Sutton Foster Awards’ process a welcoming and fulfilling experience for everyone involved, whether on stage, backstage, or in the audience.

Genuine Representation of Culture

As the national conversation about diversity opportunities widens our multicultural competency, two questions have emerged: Whose story is it? Who should tell it? The answers have yet to be completely determined; however, all roles should be cast based on the ethnic or cultural heritage of the character as stipulated by the authors in the text of the script, or the licensing agreement, and should be played by actors who mirror the same cultural background. We urge all high school programs to take an honest look at the community and culture they represent and choose to tell stories that align as such. The only acceptable exception to this is when the authors and/or the licensing agent specifically and clearly state that specific roles that historically were usually played by a specific ethnic character can be played by an actor of any ethnicity.

Growth Through Adjudication

The adjudication process provides a set of goals for directors, designers, technicians, musicians, actors, etc., to support the growth of theatre programs and the values instilled by arts education in general. While awards and recognitions are also determined through this process, we seek to focus on the rubrics to guide both the production and the evaluation process. Please note that while it may not contribute to the overall score, adjudicators may also reflect on the production as it upholds this set of values.

Invitation to Inclusion

To enrich the artistic experience, educational theater can make room on the stage, around the production team table, and behind the scenes. We also do this by extending an invitation to community members, including the wide variety of races, ethnicities, religions, genders, gender identities, and abilities that make up our society.

PARTICIPATION IN THE SUTTON FOSTER AWARDS

To participate, schools apply with their fall or spring musical. Wharton Center will send a team of adjudicators to attend a performance of your musical. Each school will receive an assessment of their show, meant to support the teacher, school, and students in strengthening their theatre program for future productions. Adjudicators will also nominate a minimum of two individuals for Outstanding Performer in a Leading Role who will be invited to participate in an SFA Workshop, an Audition Weekend, & the Sutton Foster Awards Showcase weekend.

- SFA Workshop and Audition Weekends will occur in Detroit and East Lansing. Nominees will be invited to participate in a workshop and audition weekend based on the location of their participating high school and availability of the nominee.
- Sutton Foster Awards Showcase: A weekend of rehearsals, vocal coaching, and professional development culminating in a public performance where two participants will be named Sutton Foster Award winners. **The Sutton Foster Awards Showcase will be held on May 21, 2023, at Fisher Theatre in Detroit.**

PARTICIPANT ELIGIBILITY

The Sutton Foster Awards program is open to public and private high schools producing musical theatre in Michigan. To be eligible for participation for the 2022-2023 season, a school must meet the following qualifications:

- High school must be located within the state of Michigan.
- High school musical theatre productions will take place between October 6, 2022 & April 30, 2023.
- If your show has MORE than 2 teachers/alumni in your production, you will NOT be eligible for Best Musical (all students in Best Actress/Best Actor categories MUST be high school students.) A google form will be sent to you via email asking production related questions that will help our adjudicators properly evaluate your show. You must fill this out within one week of receiving it.

QUALIFYING SHOWS & ROLES

In order for your student to be eligible to participate in the Jimmy Awards®, your student must have participated in the Sutton Foster Awards as a Qualifying Role in a Qualifying Show; see details below.

The National High School Musical Theatre Awards® has reviewed the professional standards for identifying the definition of an Approved Musical and a Qualifying Role in an Approved Musical for the purposes of our program. These standards serve as a guide to create a minimum standard and criteria for what defines a Qualifying Role in the category of Best Actor/Actress in an amateur production of an Approved Musical.

1. Definition of an Approved Musical

For the purposes of NHSMTA, an Approved Musical is one that:

- Held performances in a major New York City/Broadway theatre, professional regional, or touring theatre outside of New York City prior to being made available for licensing to the regional, amateur, or school theatre/circuit.
- Was originally conceived and produced for a core audience over eight years of age.
- Is officially available for a performance license by a high school from the licensing entity that manages such licenses on behalf of the rights holder for such musical.
- Is officially licensed from the licensing entity that manages such licenses on behalf of the rights holder for such musical.
- Is the standard or school edition/version; The following editions/versions are not eligible: 101 Collection (Middle School Editions), Broadway Junior, G2K (Getting to Know Series), Young Performers Edition, and Young@Part. Concert versions are not permitted.

2. Definition of a Qualifying Role

For the purposes of NHSMTA, a Qualifying Role in an Approved Musical is a role in which the character has a name, provides a vehicle for the actor or actress to demonstrate the ability to deliver the exceptional performance of a solo song, and the ability to interact with other leading and featured performers in scenes and/or songs.

Unless identified as an “Ensemble Cast Musical,” an Approved Musical may have not more than six (6) Qualifying Roles. Such roles do not have to be evenly divided between genders.

For Approved Musicals with both a book and libretto, a Qualifying Role must, at minimum, include:

- At least one solo, featured song
- Appearances in more than one scene with spoken dialogue with other leading or featured performers
- Appearances in both or all acts

For Approved Musicals with a libretto only, a Qualifying Role must, at minimum, include:

- At least one solo, featured song
- At least one song featuring solo lines or dialogue with other leading or featured performers in the same song
- Appearances in both or all acts

3. For the purposes of the NHSMTA program, students are adjudicated in the category corresponding to their gender identification, not the gender of the role that they played. Students identifying as non-binary or gender-fluid may choose to either select the category in which they wish to be adjudicated (regardless of the gender of the role) OR they may be adjudicated based on the gender of the role they played. All casting or script change requests for performances in the NHSMTA program must be approved beforehand.

The regional awards program should be prepared to submit proof of approval from the show's licensing organization.

APPEAL PROCESS

Wharton Center may submit an appeal to the NHSMTA for either a musical or role to be considered an Approved Musical or a Qualifying Role.

UPDATES TO THE LIST OF APPROVED MUSICALS AND QUALIFYING ROLES

Each September, in consultation with the major licensing houses, NHSMTA updates the list of Qualifying Roles and Approved Musical titles made available for high school licensing. However, because appeals are made and approved throughout the year, the list of Qualifying Roles continues to be updated. Please see the most recent list of qualifying roles on the Jimmy Awards website, www.jimmyawards.com/participation/qualifying-shows-and-roles/.

APPLICATION

To apply, please complete and return the Sutton Foster Awards interest form found [HERE](#). Once an interest form has been submitted, a Wharton Center staff member will contact you for further instruction.

A Note on Double Casting

If a school double casts one or more roles, the school must select one set of cast members to be adjudicated. Please note on your application which performances have been selected for the adjudication panel. We will not adjudicate multiple students for the same role unless you submit two applications. Please note this requires double the payment if you would like to have both casts adjudicated and considered for awards. Double casting for our definition means that more than one student plays a single role, in different performances.

Sharing a role in a single performance is not allowed if the role is on the Jimmy Awards Qualifying Roles list. Please contact us if you have questions on this.

WAITING LIST

Wharton Center will determine if a waiting list is necessary based on school interest and adjudicator availability.

FEES

A \$225 registration fee per high school production cast is required to participate. Financial assistance is available should the application fee serve as a barrier to participation. Please contact us to discuss how we can support your school. Once an application and payment has been submitted, a receipt will be issued. Checks should be made payable to Michigan State University. Please send checks to:

Wharton Center
Attn: Ticket Office
750 E. Shaw Ln.
East Lansing, MI 48824

Credit card payments are also accepted over the phone by calling Randall Fields at 517.884.3130.

AWARDS

The following awards are given out each year:

- Outstanding Performers in a Leading Role
- \$1,000 cash award
- Scholarship to Take It From The Top Musical Theatre Intensive at Wharton Center
- Trip to NYC to attend the Jimmy Awards
 - Outstanding Performers in a Supporting Role
 - Featured Dancer
 - Excellence in Musical Theatre Education
 - Best Musical
 - Other creative achievements may be celebrated based on submissions received

ADJUDICATION

Approximately two weeks before your performance you will be contacted by your adjudicators. By submitting an application, you agree to the following:

- You will communicate with adjudicators in a timely manner.
- You will provide 2 complimentary tickets per adjudicator to the performance of their choice.
 - Please note that adjudicators may see different performances.
- You will provide the adjudicators a cast list and production credits.
- If you have any students that are involved in design or creative production elements of the show, please let us know.
- If you have anyone in your cast that is NOT a high school student, you MUST let us know at least three weeks before the performance. This includes students in lower grades, teachers, community members or alumni.

ADJUDICATOR QUALIFICATIONS

Wharton Center selects highly qualified performing arts professionals with backgrounds in music, theatre, dance, design, and related fields to serve as adjudicators. Adjudicators attend mandatory training run by Wharton Center education staff.

FEEDBACK

Within four weeks of your performance, the primary school contact will receive written, detailed feedback on various elements of their show. It is our intent that this feedback will be shared with the company of the show.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Adjudicators will not provide oral critiques following the performance. Adjudicators will not discuss their opinions, evaluations, scores, or feedback with anyone, in any format. Please do not contact adjudicators with questions. Any inquiries should be directed to Wharton Center Institute for Arts & Creativity staff.

SCORING

Adjudicators utilize a detailed rubric to determine scores in elements of Direction, Musical Direction, Choreography, Set Design, Lighting Design, Costume Design, Hair/Make up Design, and Best Overall Production. Adjudicators will also select a minimum of two Outstanding Performers in a Leading Role.

IMPORTANT DATES

September 19, 2022 – Application process begins

October 17, 2022 – Application process concludes

Ongoing – Nominees for Outstanding Performer in a Leading Role notified

January 31, 2023 – Materials due from Fall Nominees

April 24, 2023 – Materials due from Spring Nominees (Unless performing at a later date)

May 6-7, 2023 – Detroit SFA Workshop and Audition Weekend

May 13-14, 2023 – East Lansing SFA Workshop and Audition Weekend.

May 20-21, 2023 – Sutton Foster Awards Showcase

PUBLICITY

All participating schools are asked to mention their involvement with Wharton Center Sutton Foster Awards in their show programs/playbills. This will serve as an endorsement of your school's participation in the program. Wharton Center's marketing team will provide resources to advertise this partnership. Please use the following in your programs:

Insert High School Name Here is a participant in the 2022-2023 Sutton Foster Awards at Wharton Center for Performing Arts on the campus of Michigan State University. The 2023 Sutton Foster awards will be held on May 21, 2023. For more information and tickets please visit whartoncenter.com.

IF YOU ARE A NOMINEE FOR OUTSTANDING PERFORMER IN A LEADING ROLE

The following materials will be due to Wharton Center by January 31, 2023, from fall show nominees or April 24, 2023, from winter/spring show nominees (unless you have a later performance date).

Nominees for Outstanding Performer in a Leading Role participation packet include:

- Student Application
- Student Youth Protocol Paperwork
- Student Media Release Form
- Student Headshot (high resolution jpg file, 8x10 at 300DPI)
- Student Theatrical Resume
- Student Essay (one-page, double spaced essay describing his/her experience while participating in his/her musical this year)
- Student Bio (no more than 200 words, written in complete sentences and in third person format)
- 45 second or 32 Measure Cut from Nominated Musical (must be a solo selection performed by the nominated performer in the nominated musical, sheet music must have piano and vocal lines)
- Full Song of the Nominee's Choice (must be a solo from another Broadway musical; sheet music must include piano and vocal lines)
- Three (3) production photos highlighting the Nominee in his/her nominated high school musical performance.
 - If submitted to nationals, all submissions become the property of NHSMTA and will not be returned.
 - All footage and photos may be used during the NHSMTA program, including, but not limited to inclusion in press releases, marketing information, website, and The Jimmy™ Awards ceremony.

NOTE TO SCHOOLS: I understand that if my nominee/s drop out of the program after May 1, 2023, my school may be disqualified from participating in the 2024 Sutton Foster Awards.

IF YOU ARE A WINNER OF OUTSTANDING PERFORMER IN A LEADING ROLE

- You agree to get any and all requested materials/paperwork to Wharton Center by May 26, 2023.
- You agree to be available to go to NYC for eight days to attend the NHSMTA (Jimmy Awards®) in June.

TICKETS

Tickets to the Sutton Foster Awards on May 15 can be purchased through the Wharton Center Ticket Office.

PROGRAM CONTACTS

Ben English
SFA Coordinator
517.884.3171
ben.english@whartoncenter.com

Bert Goldstein
Director, Wharton Center Institute for Arts & Creativity
517.884.3108
goldst72@whartoncenter.com