

W H
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SUTTON FOSTER AWARDS
RULES AND GUIDELINES

2020-2021

WHARTON CENTER
INSTITUTE FOR
ARTS & CREATIVITY
SUPPORTED BY MSU FEDERAL CREDIT UNION

Michigan State University
750 E. Shaw Lane, East Lansing, MI 48824

Sutton Foster Awards 2021*	3
About the Sutton Foster Awards	4
Goals	4
Program Contacts	4
Participant Eligibility	4
Qualifying Shows and Roles	5
Appeal process	6
Updates to the list of approved musicals and roles	6
Application	6
Waiting List*	6
Fees	7
Awards	7
Adjudication	7
Important Dates	8
Publicity	8
Nominees Documents	9
Winners	9
Tickets	9

Sutton Foster Awards 2021

NEW RULES AND GUIDELINES

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the Sutton Foster Awards are going to look different this year. This section addresses the major changes that will be taking place.

- It is our sincere hope that we can continue to make theatre together in person, but only when it is safe to do so. Until that time, the Sutton Foster Awards will be predominately virtual.
- Participating schools will be able to choose one of two “tracks” for their musical this year. A Production Track or an Audition Track

Production Track

- A school has chosen to produce and perform a qualifying musical either in person or on a virtual platform such as zoom. The school may also choose to present a concert, Junior/101/Young performers version of a qualified musical. The production must be specifically written and licensed to be performed in this manner, and the school will be responsible for obtaining all of the necessary rights to perform.
- Adjudicators must be able to watch the production virtually (either pre-recorded or live). Adjudicators will then select a Best Actress and Best Actor from the qualifying roles from the show to compete in the Sutton Foster Awards in May.
- Given the unique circumstances of your production, specific feedback will be given based on questions or guidelines determined by the director ahead of time.

Audition Track

- A school has chosen **not** to produce and perform a musical this year.
 - In order for your school to send two students to compete in the Sutton Foster Awards, a cast list must be provided with qualifying roles assigned to students as if you had done the musical. Students from that list will get to audition for SFA adjudicators and a Best Actor and Best Actress from will be chosen.
 - For example: Your school was planning on doing Guys & Dolls this year. For whatever reason, that is not happening. You would then send me what your cast list (just qualifying roles) would have looked like.
Student A: Nicely Nicely
Student B: Sky Masterson
Student C: Nathan Detroit
Student D: Adelaide
Student E: Sarah Brown
 - All of these students will then set up a time to audition for two adjudicators. The nominees must audition with a song from their qualifying role in their qualifying musical. One Best Actor and One Best Actress will be chosen to compete in the Sutton Foster Awards.
 - The Wharton Center is ultimately not responsible for how you decide which students would have been cast. It is our hope that you will pick the students in a fair and equitable way that would best represent your high school.

ABOUT THE SUTTON FOSTER AWARDS

Wharton Center Sutton Foster Awards celebrates the achievements of Michigan high school teachers and students involved in musical theatre.

To participate, schools apply with their fall and/or spring musical. Wharton Center will send a team of expert adjudicators to attend a performance of your musical. Adjudicators will nominate two individuals for "Best Actor" and "Best Actress" who will be invited to participate in the Sutton Foster Awards on May 23rd 2021. Additionally, adjudicators' reviews and tabulations determine awards in technical and creative achievement, and Best Musical.

Each school will receive a professional assessment of their show, meant to support the teacher, school, and students in strengthening their production values and continue to grow their theatre program.

On May 23rd 2021, Wharton Center hosts the Sutton Foster Awards to recognize the outstanding achievements of high school musical theatre productions and students.

GOALS

1. To recognize, celebrate, honor and encourage excellence in high school students' 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.

PROGRAM CONTACTS

Ben English
SFA Coordinator
517-884-3171
wc.ben.english@whartoncenter.com

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

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 2020-2021 season, a school should meet the following qualifications:

- High schools must be located within the state of Michigan
- High school musical theatre productions will take place between July 1st 2020 & May 2nd 2021.
- Summer productions are eligible to compete and must follow all of the same guidelines as any other production.
- Musicals must be either considered a qualifying show based on the National standards (see below) or have been successfully appealed in the appeals process.
- 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 AND ROLES

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.
- RAP officially licensed from the licensing entity that manages such licenses on behalf of the rights holder for such musical.

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 not have 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. All casting or script change requests for performances in the NHSMTA program must be approved beforehand. The regional awards program must also 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 Jimmmy Awards Website. <https://www.jimmyawards.com/participation/qualifying-shows-and-roles/>

APPLICATION

To apply, please complete and return the application form, including the registration fee, no later than Monday, January 11th, 2021. We will accept the first 25 qualified applications. When the slots become filled you will be asked if you would like to be put on the waiting list. Applications must be submitted at least 3 weeks prior to your production.

Any school has the right to make an archival recording of their live performances in order to be considered for the Sutton Foster Awards in the case that adjudicators are not available to attend. Recorded performances may not be posted on-line, nor shall the recording be sold or shared, in compliance with your licensor.

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 an eligible role for Best Actor/Best Actress. Please contact us if you have questions on this.

WAITING LIST***

Due to the changes in the Sutton Foster Awards the waiting list will be different this year.

We accept the first 25 qualified applications. After those spots are filled, there are 10 spots on the waiting list.

Changes for this year

- There will be no charge to be on the waiting list
- The waiting list will not be adjudicated unless a school on the qualified list decides not to participate.
- In the event a school from the waiting list makes it to the qualified list, at that time, the school will pay the regular fee.
- The school will then be adjudicated based on the participation track chosen. **If the school already performed their musical, it is expected that they will have a video recording that can be viewed by adjudicators.**
- If the school has chosen the audition track, then the school will have already sent in their list

FEES

A \$100.00 registration fee per high school production cast is required to participate. Once you submit your registration form and payment, you will receive an invoice as your receipt. Checks should be made payable to Michigan State University. Please send checks to Wharton Center Attn: Ticket Office. Credit card payments are accepted over the phone by calling Randall Fields at 517-884-3130.

AWARDS

The following awards are given out each year.

- Best Actor and Best Actress
 - \$1000.00 cash award
 - Scholarship to Take It From The Top
- Best Featured Actor
- Best Featured Actress
- Best Featured Dancer
- Excellence in Musical Theatre Education - Given to a theatre teacher nominated by a student.
- 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. Please adhere to the following:

- You will communicate with them in a timely manner
- You will provide 2 complimentary tickets per adjudicator to the performance of their choice
**Note – adjudicators may see different performances*
- You will provide the adjudicators cast list and production credits
- If you have any students that are taking design or creative production roles please let us know. For example if you have a student choreographing, doing set design, etc.
- Once contacted by your adjudicators, you may, at that time, share supplementary information on your production, including the resources available to your school and theatre department, director's notes, the rationale behind artistic choices, and specific areas on which you would like feedback.
- If you have anyone in your cast that is NOT a high school student you MUST let us know at least 3 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. The adjudicators go through mandatory training run by Wharton Center education staff. A list of adjudicators is available at www.whartoncenter.com.

FEEDBACK

Within four weeks of the performance, the primary contact will receive written, detailed feedback on various elements of their high school musical.

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.

SCORING

In order to designate awards for artistic excellence, adjudicators will score high school musical theatre productions on acting and overall production. Adjudicators will also note other artistic and creative elements of your production, including but not limited to direction, choreography, lighting costume and set elements, etc.

IMPORTANT DATES

January 11th, 2021 – Last day to submit an application

Rolling - Best Actor/Best Actress Nominees notified

February 22nd, 2021 Materials due from Fall/Summer show nominees

April 26th, 2021 Materials due from Winter/Spring show nominees (unless performing at a later date)

May 23rd 2021 Sutton Foster Awards at Wharton Center

May 26th, 2021 Materials due from winners to send to Nationals

TBD - 2021 National Jimmy Awards - Virtually!

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. Please use the following in your programs:

Insert High School Name Here is a participant in the 2020-2021 Sutton Foster Awards at Wharton Center for Performing Arts on the campus of Michigan State University. The 2021 Sutton Foster awards will be held on May 23rd, 2021. For more information and tickets please visit www.whartoncenter.com

IF YOU ARE A BEST ACTRESS/BEST ACTOR NOMINEE

The following materials will be due to Wharton Center by February 22nd, 2020 from Fall/Summer show nominees or April 26th, 2020 from Winter/Spring show nominees (unless you have a later performance date).

- Best Actres/Best Actor Nominess Packet Including:
 - 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)
 - Teacher Recommendation Form
 - 45 second or 32 Measure Cut from Nominated Musical (must be a solo selection performed by the nominated actor/actress 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 course of 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 3rd, 2021 your school may be disqualified from participating in the 2022 Sutton Foster Awards.

IF YOU ARE A BEST ACTRESS/BEST ACTOR WINNER

- You agree to get any and all requested materials/paperwork to Wharton Center by May 26th, 2020
- You agree to be available and fully present for the Virtual Jimmy Awards happening in June

TICKETS

Tickets to the Sutton Foster Awards on May 23rd can be purchased through the Wharton Center box office. Recipients of creative and production awards will be offered two complimentary tickets to the Sutton Foster Awards.