

# Nominations are announced for the 65th Annual Drama Desk Awards

[DC dcmetrotheaterarts.com/2020/04/21/nominations-are-announced-for-the-65th-annual-drama-desk-awards](https://dcmetrotheaterarts.com/2020/04/21/nominations-are-announced-for-the-65th-annual-drama-desk-awards)

Deb Miller

April 21,  
2020

Nominations for the 65<sup>th</sup> annual **Drama Desk Awards**, founded in 1955 to celebrate outstanding achievements in on, off, and off-off Broadway theater, were announced this afternoon by hosts Seth Rudetsky and James Wesley on the 2 pm live-stream of ***Stars in the House*** (a twice-daily online series that benefits The Actors Fund and its services). Because of the shutdown of theaters to combat the spread of the coronavirus, the eligibility date for awards consideration for the 2019-20 season was moved to March 11, the day before the mandated closure.



Photo courtesy of the Drama Desk Awards.

The 2020 awards will be presented remotely in a virtual ceremony on Sunday, May 31, in honor of William Wolf, a former Drama Desk President who succumbed to COVID-19 complications on March 28. Winners will receive a new statuette designed in partnership with Society Awards, featuring the masks of comedy and tragedy cut into the Drama Desk's iconic quill image and set on an inkwell base (representing the members – theater critics, journalists, editors, publishers, and broadcasters – who vote on the awards each year).

In addition to the nominees in 34 categories, honorees for six Special Awards were announced. Throughout all of them, Off-Broadway took a commanding lead over Broadway, with The Public Theater's production of David Henry Hwang's ***Soft Power*** earning the largest number of nominations for any show, with a total of eleven.



Conrad Ricamora and the cast of *Soft Power*. Photo by Joan Marcus.

The full list of 2020 Drama Desk Awards nominations is as follows:

**Outstanding Play:** *Cambodian Rock Band*, by Lauren Yee, Signature Theatre; *Greater Clements*, by Samuel D. Hunter, Lincoln Center Theater; *Halfway Bitches Go Straight to Heaven*, by Stephen Adly Guirgis, Atlantic Theater Company/LAByrinth Theater Company; *Heroes of the Fourth Turning*, by Will Arbery, Playwrights Horizons; *The Inheritance*, by Matthew Lopez

**Outstanding Musical:** *Octet*, Signature Theatre; *The Secret Life of Bees*, Atlantic Theater Company; *Soft Power*, The Public Theater; *A Strange Loop*, Playwrights Horizons/Page 73 Productions; *The Wrong Man*, MCC Theater

**Outstanding Revival of a Play:** *Fefu and Her Friends*, Theatre for a New Audience; *for colored girls who have considered suicide/when the rainbow is enuf*, The Public Theater; *Mac Beth*, Red Bull Theater/Hunter Theater Project; *Much Ado About Nothing*, The Public Theater;

*A Soldier's Play*, Roundabout Theatre Company

**Outstanding Revival of a Musical:** *Little Shop of Horrors*; *The Unsinkable Molly Brown*, Transport Group; *West Side Story*

**Outstanding Actor in a Play:** Charles Busch, *The Confession of Lily Dare*; Edmund Donovan, *Greater Clements*; Raúl Esparza, *Seared*; Francis Jue, *Cambodian Rock Band*; Triney Sandoval, *72 Miles to Go...*; Kyle Soller, *The Inheritance*

**Outstanding Actress in a Play:** Rose Byrne, *Medea*; Liza Colón-Zayas, *Halfway Bitches Go Straight to Heaven*; Emily Davis, *Is This A Room*; April Matthis, *Toni Stone*; Ruth Negga, *Hamlet*

**Outstanding Actor in a Musical:** David Aron Damane, *The Unsinkable Molly Brown*; Chris Dwan, *Enter Laughing*; Joshua Henry, *The Wrong Man*; Francis Jue, *Soft Power*; Larry Owens, *A Strange Loop*

**Outstanding Actress in a Musical:** Tammy Blanchard, *Little Shop of Horrors*; Beth Malone, *The Unsinkable Molly Brown*; Saycon Sengbloh, *The Secret Life of Bees*; Elizabeth Stanley, *Jagged Little Pill*; Adrienne Warren, *Tina: The Tina Turner Musical*

**Outstanding Featured Actor in a Play:** Victor Almanzar, *Halfway Bitches Go Straight to Heaven*; Esteban Andres Cruz, *Halfway Bitches Go Straight to Heaven*; David Alan Grier, *A Soldier's Play*; Paul Hilton, *The Inheritance*; Chris Perfetti, *Moscow Moscow Moscow Moscow*

**Outstanding Featured Actress in a Play:** Patrice Johnson Chevannes, *runboyrun & In Old Age*; Kristina Poe, *Halfway Bitches Go Straight to Heaven*; Belange Rodríguez, *The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao*; Elizabeth Rodriguez, *Halfway Bitches Go Straight to Heaven*; Lois Smith, *The Inheritance*

**Outstanding Featured Actor in a Musical:** George Abud, *Emojiland*; Christian Borle, *Little Shop of Horrors*; Jay Armstrong Johnson, *Scotland, PA*; Conrad Ricamora, *Soft Power*; Ryan Vasquez, *The Wrong Man*

**Outstanding Featured Actress in a Musical:** Yesenia Ayala, *West Side Story*; Paula Leggett Chase, *The Unsinkable Molly Brown*; LaChanze, *The Secret Life of Bees*; Alyse Alan Louis, *Soft Power*; Lauren Patten, *Jagged Little Pill*

**Outstanding Director of a Play:** Jessica Blank, *Coal Country*; Stephen Daldry, *The Inheritance*; John Ortiz, *Halfway Bitches Go Straight to Heaven*; Tina Satter, *Is This A Room*; Erica Schmidt, *Mac Beth*

**Outstanding Director of a Musical:** Stephen Brackett, *A Strange Loop*; Thomas Kail, *The Wrong Man*; Kathleen Marshall, *The Unsinkable Molly Brown*; Leigh Silverman, *Soft Power*; Annie Tuppe, *Octet*

**Outstanding Choreography:** Camille A. Brown, *for colored girls who have considered suicide/when the rainbow is enuf*; Anne Teresa De Keersmaeker, *West Side Story*; Keone Madrid and Mari Madrid, *Beyond Babel*; Kathleen Marshall, *The Unsinkable Molly Brown*; Sonya Tayeh, *Moulin Rouge!*; Travis Wall, *The Wrong Man*

**Outstanding Music:** Ross Golan, *The Wrong Man*; Michael R. Jackson, *A Strange Loop*; Dave Malloy, *Octet*; Joshua Rosenblum, *Einstein's Dreams*; Duncan Sheik, *The Secret Life of Bees*; Jeanine Tesori, *Soft Power*

**Outstanding Lyrics:** Susan Birkenhead, *The Secret Life of Bees*; Adam Gwon, *Scotland, PA*; Michael R. Jackson, *A Strange Loop*; Joanne Sydney Lessner and Joshua Rosenblum, *Einstein's Dreams*; Dave Malloy, *Octet*; Mark Saltzman, *Romeo & Bernadette*

**Outstanding Book of a Musical:** David Henry Hwang, *Soft Power*; Michael R. Jackson, *A Strange Loop*; Dave Malloy, *Octet*; Lynn Nottage, *The Secret Life of Bees*; Mark Saltzman, *Romeo & Bernadette*; Dick Scanlan, *The Unsinkable Molly Brown*

**Outstanding Orchestrations:** Tom Kitt, *Jagged Little Pill*; Alex Lacamoire, *The Wrong Man*; Or Matias and Dave Malloy, *Octet*; Danny Troob, John Clancy, and Larry Hochman, *Soft Power*; Jonathan Tunick, *West Side Story*

**Outstanding Music in a Play:** Steve Earle, *Coal Country*; Frightened Rabbit, *Square Go*; Jim Harbourne, *Feral*; Martha Redbone, *for colored girls who have considered suicide/when the rainbow is enuf*; Adam Seidel, Jane Bruce, and Daniel Ocanto, *Original Sound*

**Outstanding Scenic Design for a Play:** Catherine Cornell, *Mac Beth*; Clint Ramos, *Grand Horizons*; Adam Rigg, *Fefu and Her Friends*; Paul Steinberg, *Judgment Day*; B.T. Whitehill, *The Confession of Lily Dare*

**Outstanding Scenic Design for a Musical:** Julian Crouch, *Little Shop of Horrors*; Anna Louizos, *Scotland, PA*; Derek McLane, *Moulin Rouge!*; Clint Ramos, *Soft Power*; Amy Rubin and Brittany Vasta, *Octet*

**Outstanding Costume Design for a Play:** Asa Benally, *Blues for an Alabama Sky*; Montana Levi Blanco, *Fefu and Her Friends*; Toni-Leslie James, *for colored girls who have considered suicide/when the rainbow is enuf*; Antony McDonald, *Judgment Day*; Rachel Townsend and Jessica Jahn, *The Confession of Lily Dare*; Kaye Voyce, *Coriolanus*

**Outstanding Costume Design for a Musical:** Vanessa Leuck, *Emojiland*; Jeff Mahshie, *Bob & Carol & Ted & Alice*; Mark Thompson, *Tina: The Tina Turner Musical*; Anita Yavich, *Soft Power*; Catherine Zuber, *Moulin Rouge!*

**Outstanding Lighting Design for a Play:** Isabella Byrd, *Heroes of the Fourth Turning*; Oona Curley, *Dr. Ride's American Beach House*; Heather Gilbert, *The Sound Inside*; Mimi Jordan Sherin, *Judgment Day*; Yi Zhao, *Greater Clements*

**Outstanding Lighting Design for a Musical:** Betsy Adams, *The Wrong Man*; Jane Cox, *The Secret Life of Bees*; Herrick Goldman, *Einstein's Dreams*; Bruno Poet, *Tina: The Tina Turner Musical*; Justin Townsend, *Moulin Rouge!*

**Outstanding Projection Design:** David Bengali, *Einstein's Dreams*; Julia Frey, *Medea*; Luke Halls, *West Side Story*; Lisa Renkel and POSSIBLE, *Emojiland*; Hannah Wasileski, *Fires in the Mirror*

**Outstanding Sound Design for a Play:** Paul Arditti and Christopher Reid, *The Inheritance*; Justin Ellington, *Heroes of the Fourth Turning*; Mikhail Fiksel, *Dana H.*; Palmer Hefferan, *Fefu and Her Friends*; Lee Kinney and Sanae Yamada, *Is This A Room*

**Outstanding Sound Design for a Musical:** Tom Gibbons, *West Side Story*; Kai Harada, *Soft Power*; Peter Hylenski, *Moulin Rouge!*; Hidenori Nakajo, *Octet*; Nevin Steinberg, *The Wrong Man*

**Outstanding Wig and Hair Design:** Campbell Young Associates, *Tina: The Tina Turner Musical*; Cookie Jordan, *Fefu and Her Friends*; Nikiya Mathis, *STEW*; Tom Watson, *The Great Society*; Bobbie Zlotnik, *Emojiland*

**Outstanding Solo Performance:** David Cale, *We're Only Alive for a Short Amount of Time*; Kate del Castillo, *the way she spoke*; Laura Linney, *My Name is Lucy Barton*; Jacqueline Novak, *Get on Your Knees*; Deirdre O'Connell, *Dana H.*

**Unique Theatrical Experience:** *Beyond Babel*, Hideaway Circus; *Feral*, Tortoise in a Nutshell/Cumbernauld Theatre/59E59; *Is This A Room*, Vineyard Theatre; *Midsummer: A Banquet*, Food of Love Productions/Third Rail Projects

**Outstanding Fight Choreography:** Vicki Manderson, *Square Go*; Thomas Schall, *A Soldier's Play*; UnkleDave's Fight House, *Halfway Bitches Go Straight to Heaven*

**Outstanding Adaptation:** *A Christmas Carol*, by Jack Thorne; *Judgment Day*, by Christopher Shinn; *Mojada*, by Luis Alfaro; *Moscow Moscow Moscow Moscow Moscow Moscow*, by Halley Feiffer



**Outstanding Puppet Design:** Raphael Mishler, *Tumacho*; Rockefeller Productions, *Paddington Gets in a Jam*; Amanda Villalobos, *Is This A Room*.



The cast of Octet. Photo by Joan Marcus.

### **Special Awards:**

**The Ensemble Award:** To the eight performers in Dave Malloy's a cappella musical *Octet*: Adam Bashian, Kim Blanck, Starr Busby, Alex Gibson, Justin Gregory Lopez, J.D. Mollison, Margo Seibert, and Kuhoo Verma.

**Sam Norkin Award:** To actress Mary Bacon, who continued her versatile career of compassionate searing work.

To The Actors Fund, Seth Rudetsky, and James Wesley for connecting members of the theater community and lifting spirits during the coronavirus crisis.

To The Public Theater's Mobile Unit, which tours free Shakespeare throughout the five boroughs, including prisons, homeless shelters, and community centers.

To WP Theater and Julia Miles, the company's founder for an unwavering focus on women writers, directors, producers, performers, and craftspeople.

To Claire Warden for her pioneering work as an intimacy choreographer.



Check back with us on May 31, for a list of this year's recipients.