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Starlight Reveals the Much-Anticipated 2020-21 Blue Star Awards Nominations



Starlight's 19th Annual Blue Star Awards Ceremony will be held Thursday, May 20, 2021.

KANSAS CITY, Mo. – Each year, thousands of high school students across the Kansas City metro wait in anticipation for the revelation of the annual Blue Star Awards nominations. In the 2020-21 school term, as many schools presented musicals via different platforms due to the COVID-19 pandemic, it was difficult to assess each show in the way that has been tradition for nearly two decades. Instead, Starlight adjusted this year's Blue Star Awards to highlight the broader work of schools and students, with the opportunity to submit materials in seven categories. On Thursday, April 22, Starlight leadership and staff revealed the 99 nominations in a Facebook livestream.

"We couldn't be more impressed by the passion and creativity that area high school students bring to the table," Alex Jones, Starlight's Vice President of Community Engagement, said. "While the COVID-19 pandemic continues to impact schools and students alike, these young artists prove that challenges can inspire some of the most resourceful thinking, too. We're so happy to share these nominations and can't wait for Kansas City area students, schools and families to join us outdoors for the Blue Star Awards Ceremony on May 20 at Starlight Theatre."

Modeled after Broadway's Tony Awards®, Starlight's annual Blue Star Awards recognize achievement and excellence in musical theatre among Kansas City area high school students. This year, rather than adjudicators attending all performances, schools had the opportunity for an adjudicator to attend their show to provide educational feedback only. For nominations, adjudicators were engaged to evaluate all award category submissions.

MORE

Starlight also introduced a new award category this year—the Dream Production Award, which highlights the creativity of students working in the areas of design, direction and choreography. The 2020-21 Blue Star Awards also mark the most scholarships ever awarded to students—more than \$10,000.

The annual Blue Star Awards Ceremony will take place Thursday, May 20, 2021, at Starlight Theatre. Tickets are free but reservations are required. To reserve tickets, visit kcstarlight.com or call the box office at (816) 363-7827. Masks, social distancing and safety protocols will be required. There will be limited concessions available for purchase.

Starlight asks that patrons be considerate of the safety of their fellow guests at all times so that everyone can have an enjoyable and safe experience at the theatre, and continues to closely monitor federal, state and local guidelines. Policies and procedures will continue to evolve dependent on COVID-19 status at the time of each event. Stay up-to-date on all of the precautions Starlight is taking on Starlight's [Staying Safe](#) webpage.

2020-21 Blue Star Awards Nominees

Outstanding Actress in a Lead Role

Leavenworth – Haley Engen as Jo – *Little Women*
Liberty North – Ava Wolesky as Esmeralda – *The Hunchback of Notre Dame*
Oak Grove – Emma Nadeau as Ariel – *Disney's The Little Mermaid*
Olathe East – Willa Walberg as Anya – *Anastasia*
Raymore-Peculiar – Kennedy Kinnick as Winnifred the Woebegone – *Once Upon a Mattress*
Rockhurst – Isabel Mayer as Cathy – *The Last Five Years*
Smithville – Sierra Quinn as Jo – *Little Women*
Truman – Myel White as Deloris Van Cartier – *Sister Act*

Outstanding Actor in a Lead Role

Liberty North – Jacob Hagen as Quasimodo – *The Hunchback of Notre Dame*
Oak Park – Jacob Collier as Baker – *Into the Woods*
Olathe East – Justin Cooley as Dmitry – *Anastasia*
Olathe South – Max Pardo as Javert – *Les Misérables*
Park Hill South – Jack Blackburn as Billy Cane – *Bright Star*
Platte County – Myles Schmitt as Baker – *Into the Woods*
Raymore-Peculiar – Denton Meehan as Dauntless the Drab – *Once Upon a Mattress*
Raytown – Aiden Harkins as Pippin – *Pippin*

Performance Scholarship

Basehor-Linwood – Colton Coy
Belton – Isaiah Allison
Belton – Kayla Watts
Belton – Tucker Rushing
Grain Valley – Imani Vaughn
Grain Valley – Maddux Hughes
Grain Valley – Mariah Gattenby-Snyder
Grandview – Anastasia Coburn
Grandview – Hannah Fuller

MORE

Performance Scholarship (continued)

Grandview – Samantha Lambert
Lee’s Summit North – Abby Knabe
Lee’s Summit North – Elaine Watson
Lee’s Summit North – Sophia Niblock
Oak Park – Brenden Blue
Oak Park – Kylie McLane
Oak Park – Madison Wells
Olathe East – Madeline King
Olathe East – Phoebe Mock
Olathe East – Sydney Nicks
Olathe South – Alana Shields
Olathe South – Elise Bowles
Olathe South – Rowan Farha
Olathe West – Brandon Heflin
Olathe West – Kalista Brown
Olathe West – Meredith McCalmon
Platte County – Emily Clark
Platte County – Madelynn Darst
Raymore-Peculiar – Meghan Larsen
Raymore-Peculiar – Spencer Barr
Ruskin – Willie Anderson
Saint Thomas Aquinas – Maddy Terril
Saint Thomas Aquinas – Maggie Halpin
Saint Thomas Aquinas – Sarah Phillips
St. Teresa’s Academy – Darcie Hingula
St. Teresa’s Academy – Liv Collet
Truman – Breana Smith
Truman – Kyleigh Hendrix
Truman – Paige Gonzales
Winnetonka – Blake Brinsa
Winnetonka – Zack Abrams

Technical Achievement Award

Belton – Wesley Freeman – Properties Master
Benton – Alex Duhn – Properties Master
Oak Park – Brenden Blue – Publicity
Oak Park – Emily Morrison – Costume Design
Oak Park – Kaleighan Chastain – Stage Management
Oak Park – Lily Dickson – Hair and Makeup Design
Olathe East – Breanna Kristian – Stage Management and Properties Design
Olathe East – Grant Martin – Costume Design
Olathe East – Saphron DeWitt – Stage Management
Park Hill South – Alyssa Espinosa – Scenic Design
Park Hill South – Sean Hall – Scenic Construction
Raymore-Peculiar – Nathan Caskey – Lighting Design and Scenic Construction
Winnetonka – Derek Walsh – Costume Design and Management
Winnetonka – Hunter Murray – Stage Management

MORE

Rising Star Scholarship

Belton – Jessica Frank
Belton – Tucker Rushing
Leavenworth – Haley Engen
Lee’s Summit North – Elaine Watson
Liberty North – Garrett Lampert
Liberty North – Nadia Higareda
Oak Park – Francesca Young
Oak Park – Reese Hill
Olathe East – Addison Landes
Olathe East – Willa Walberg
Olathe West – Emma Johnson
Park Hill South – Allison Miller
Raymore-Peculiar – Denton Meehan
Raytown – Cheyli Ferbet
St. Teresa’s Academy – Darcie Hingula
Truman – Gabrielle Petentler
Winnetonka – Blake Brinsa

Community Impact Award

Benton
Leavenworth
Oak Park
Winnetonka

Dream Production Award

Basehor-Linwood – Madi Messer – Hair and Makeup Design
Olathe East – Grant Martin – Costume Design
Olathe East – Millie Bell – Choreography
Olathe West – Ella Amos – Costume Design
Liberty North – Kiersten Schmalz – Choreography
Liberty North – Sydney Davis – Direction
Liberty North – Theresa Sudholt – Choreography
Raymore-Peculiar – Nathan Caskey – Lighting Design

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About Starlight

Opened as a theatre in 1950 and a nonprofit organization in 1951, Starlight is the largest and oldest performing arts institution in Kansas City and provides inspiring, one-of-a-kind experiences to its patrons. Starlight presents and produces Broadway musicals, concerts and Indoors shows in addition to offering extensive community engagement programming, including classes, scholarships and Starlight’s Blue Star Awards, one of the largest high school musical theatre award programs in the nation.

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Located on 16 acres in Swope Park, Starlight's historic, city-owned venue is the second-largest outdoor producing theatre in the country and includes rehearsal halls, a museum, club area for dining, concessions, gardens, fountains and a 10-story, climate-controlled stage. For more information, visit kcstarlight.com.

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