



THE 30th ANNUAL TICKETHOLDER AWARDS, 2021

by Travis Michael Holder

What can we call this one... a non-year? Even before Omicron started to again shut down theatres all over at the end of the year, the pickins' were already slim for 2021, but only in quantity, not in quality. Honestly, you could not in any year or in any environment do much better work than the kind of brilliance created by the winners listed below. Still, as theatres tentatively began to reopen and almost as quickly go dark again, the hope was that 2022 would bring a gloriously full season before many newly mounted shows began to cancel performances and some even close entirely before their run ended. We can only hope that our scrappy and ever-resilient theatre community will continue to persevere as it always has and will ultimately recover—that is, if we're not all dead by 2023.

SPECIAL REMEMBRANCE TO THE TITAN OF MUSICAL THEATRE:

Stephen Sondheim, 1930 – 2021

“There’s a lot I’ll have missed
But I’ll not have been dead when I die
And a person should celebrate everything
Passing By”

“Bit by Bit: Sir Steve Putting It Together,” by Travis Michael Holder, 2020

BEST PRODUCTION OF 2021

***The Children*, Fountain Theatre**

***Poor Clare*, Echo Theater Company**

***An Octoroon*, Fountain Theatre**

***A Hit Dog Will Holler*, Skylight Theatre Company / Playwrights’ Arena**

***It’s a Wonderful Life*, Rogue Machine at the Matrix**

BEST REVIVAL PRODUCTION

Seven Guitars, A Noise Within

A Midsummer Night's Dream, Theatricum Botanicum

A Christmas Carol, A Noise Within

BEST MUSICAL PRODUCTION

A Christmas Carol, Center Theatre Group, Ahmanson Theatre

Head Over Heels, Pasadena Playhouse

My Fair Lady, Broadway in Hollywood, Dolby Theatre

BEST ACTOR IN A PLAY

Desean K. Terry, *Seven Guitars, A Noise Within*

RUNNERS-UP: Leandro Cano, *The Last, Best Small Town*, Theatricum Botanicum; Geoff Elliott, *A Christmas Carol*, ANW; Matthew Hancock, *An Octoroon*, Fountain; John Earl Jelks, *Paradise Blue*, Geffen

BEST ACTRESS IN A PLAY

Shayna Small, *Paradise Blue*, Geffen Playhouse

RUNNERS-UP: Jordan Hull, *Poor Clare*, Echo; Donna Simone Johnson, *A Hit Dog Will Holler*, Skylight/Playwrights' Arena; Cheri VandenHeuvel, *A Hit Dog Will Holler*, Skylight/Playwrights' Arena

BEST ACTOR IN A MUSICAL

Bradley Whitford, *A Christmas Carol*, Center Theatre Group, Ahmanson Theatre

BEST ACTRESS IN A MUSICAL

Linda Purl, *Tenderly*, Ensemble Theatre Company

RUNNER-UP: Shereen Ahmed, *My Fair Lady*, Dolby

BEST SOLO PERFORMANCE

Leo Marks, *It's a Wonderful Life*, Rogue Machine

RUNNER-UP: Tom Dugan, *Tevye in New York*, Wallis

BEST SUPPORTING ACTOR IN A PLAY

Kevin Jackson, *Seven Guitars*, A Noise Within

RUNNERS-UP: Richard Azurdia, *The Last, Best Small Town*, Theatricum Botanicum; Alan Blumenfeld, *A Christmas Carol*, ANW; Leandro Cano, *Ascension*, Echo; Steve Hofvendahl, *Ascension*, Echo; Kelvin Morales, *The Last, Best Small Town*, Theatricum Botanicum; Rob Nagle, *An Octoroon*, Fountain; Miguel Perez, *The Last, Best Small Town*, Theatricum Botanicum; Michael Sturgis, *Poor Clare*, Echo; Terrence Wayne Jr., *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Theatricum Botanicum

BEST SUPPORTING ACTRESS IN A PLAY

Lisa Wolpe, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Theatricum Botanicum

RUNNER-UP: Tyla Abercrombie, *Paradise Blue*, Geffen; Cherish Monique Duke, *Seven Guitars*, A Noise Within; Veralyn Jones, *Seven Guitars*, ANW; Hazel Lozano, *An Octoroon*, Fountain; Sara Mountjoy-Pepka, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Theatricum Botanicum; Ann Noble, *Poor Clare*, Echo; Vanessa Claire Stewart, *An Octoroon*, Fountain; Deborah Strang, *A Christmas Carol*, ANW; Pam Trotter, *An Octoroon*, Fountain

BEST SUPPORTING ACTOR IN A MUSICAL

Chris Hoch, *A Christmas Carol*, Center Theatre Group, Ahmanson Theatre

RUNNERS-UP: Dashiell Eaves, *A Christmas Carol*, CTG/Ahmanson; Brandon Gill, *A Christmas Carol*, CTG/Ahmanson; Adam Grupper, *My Fair Lady*, Dolby; Kevin Pariseau, *My Fair Lady*, Dolby; Sam Simahk, *My Fair Lady*, Dolby

BEST SUPPORTING ACTRESS IN A MUSICAL

Sarah Hunt, *A Christmas Carol*, Center Theatre Group, Ahmanson Theatre

RUNNERS-UP: Leslie Alexander, *My Fair Lady*, Dolby; Gayton Scott, *My Fair Lady*, Dolby

BEST ENSEMBLE CAST IN A PLAY

Ron Bottitta, Elizabeth Elias Huffman, Lily Knight, *The Children*, Fountain Theatre

RUNNERS-UP: Amir Abdullah, DeJuan Christopher, Cherish Monique Duke, Kevin Jackson, Veralyn Jones, Sydney A. Mason, Desean K. Terry; *Seven Guitars*, A Noise Within

BEST ENSEMBLE CAST IN A MUSICAL

Alaska 5000, Lea DeLaria, Yurel Echezarreta, Freddie, Tiffany Mann, George Salazar, Emily Skeggs, Shanice Williams; *Head Over Heels*, Pasadena Playhouse

RUNNERS-UP:

Kate Burton, Chante Carmel, Dashiell Eaves, Brandon Gill, Evan Harrington, Chris Hoch, Sarah Hunt, Andrew Mayer, Alex Nee, Alex Newell, Sebastian Ortiz, Cade Robinson, Celia Mei Rubin, Brett Ryback, Harry Thornton, Glory Yepassis-Zembrou, Bradley Whitford, Grace Yoo; *A Christmas Carol*, Center Theatre Group, Ahmanson Theatre

Shereen Ahmed, Leslie Alexander, Rajeer Alford, Colin Anderson, Mark Banik, Michael Biren, Mary Callahan, Elena Camp, Christopher Faison, Nicole Ferguson, Kaitlyn Frank, Juliane Godfrey, Colleen Grate, Adam Grupper, Patrick Kerr, Brandon Leffler, Nathalie Marrable, Laird Mackintosh, William Michaels, Aisha Mitchell, Rommel Pierre O'Choa, Kevin Pariseau, George Psomas, Kevin Quillon, JoAnna Rhinehart, Gayton Scott, Sam Simahk, Samatha Sturm, Sarah Quinn Taylor, Gerald M. Williams, Richard Riaz Yoder, Minami Yusui, Lee Zarrett; *My Fair Lady*, Broadway in Hollywood, Dolby Theatre

NEW DISCOVERY OF 2021

Aarush Mehta

***A Christmas Carol*, A Noise Within**

***A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Theatricum Botanicum**

RUNNERS-UP: Freddy Duffy, *A Christmas Carol*, ANW; Carolina J. Flores, *Waiting*, Playwrights' Arena; Sebastian Ortiz, *A Christmas Carol*, CTG/Ahmanson; Cade Robinson, *A Christmas Carol*, CTG/Ahmanson

BEST PLAYWRIGHT

Lucy Kirkwood, *The Children*, Fountain Theatre

RUNNERS-UP: Chiara Atik, *Poor Clare*, Echo; Inda Craig-Galvan, *A Hit Dog Will Holler*, Skylight/Playwrights' Arena

BEST ADAPTATION OR TRANSLATION

Jack Thorne, *A Christmas Carol*, Center Theatre Group, Ahmanson Theatre

RUNNER-UP: Tom Dugan, *Tevye in New York*, Wallis; Geoff Elliott, *A Christmas Carol*, ANW; Branden Jacobs-Jenkins, *An Octoroon*, Fountain; Jeff Whitty and James Magruder, *Head Over Heels*, Pasadena Playhouse; Steve Murray, *It's a Wonderful Life*, Matrix

BEST DIRECTION OF A PLAY

Gregg T. Daniels, *Seven Guitars*, A Noise Within

RUNNERS-UP: Drew Barr, *It's a Wonderful Life*, Matrix; Alana Dietze, *Poor Clare*, Echo; Geoff Elliott and Julia Rodriguez-Elliott, *A Christmas Carol*, ANW; Simon Levy, *The Children*, Fountain; Melora Marshall, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Theatricum Botanicum; Jon Lawrence Rivera, *A Hit Dog Will Holler*, Skylight/Playwrights' Arena

BEST DIRECTION OF A MUSICAL

Matthew Warchus and Thomas Caruso, *A Christmas Carol*, Center Theatre Group, Ahmanson Theatre

RUNNERS-UP: Jenny Koons and Sam Pinkelton, *Head Over Heels*, Pasadena Playhouse; Bartlett Sher, *My Fair Lady*, Dolby; Jenny Sullivan, *Tenderly*, ETC

BEST MUSICAL SCORE

Christopher Nightingale, *A Christmas Carol*, Center Theatre Group, Ahmanson Theatre

RUNNERS-UP: David "Preach" Balfour, *Paradise Blue*, Geffen; The Go-Go's, *Head Over Heels*, Pasadena Playhouse; Robert Oriel, *A Christmas Carol*, ANW

BEST MUSICAL DIRECTION

Kris Kukul, *Head Over Heels*, Pasadena Playhouse

RUNNERS-UP: John Bell, *My Fair Lady*, Dolby; Remy Kurs, *A Christmas Carol*, CTG/Ahmanson

BEST CHOREOGRAPHY

Christopher Gattelli, *My Fair Lady*, Dolby Theatre

BEST SET DESIGN

Edward E. Haynes Jr., *Paradise Blue*, Geffen Playhouse

RUNNERS UP: Andrew Hammer, *The Children*, Fountain; Rob Howell, *A Christmas Carol*, CTG, Ahmanson; David Meyer, *Head Over Heels*, Pasadena Playhouse; Jan Munroe, *A Hit Dog Will Holler*, Skylight/Playwrights' Arena; Jeanine A. Ringer, *A Christmas Carol*, ANW; Stephanie Kerley Schwartz, *Seven Guitars*, ANW; Michael Yeargan, *My Fair Lady*, Dolby

BEST COSTUME DESIGN

Angela Balogh Calin, *A Christmas Carol*, A Noise Within

RUNNERS-UP: Naila Aladdin-Sanders, *An Octoroon*, Fountain; Wendell C. Carmichael, *Paradise Blue*, Geffen; Beth Eslick, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Theatricum Botanicum; Diane K. Graebner, *Poor Clare*, Echo; Rob Howell, *A Christmas Carol*, CTG/Ahmanson; Hahnji Jang, *Head Over Heels*, Pasadena Playhouse; Mylette Nora, *Seven Guitars*, ANW; Catherine Zuber, *My Fair Lady*, Dolby

BEST LIGHTING DESIGN

Alan C. Edwards, *Paradise Blue*, Geffen Playhouse

RUNNERS-UP: Ken Booth, *A Christmas Carol*, ANW; Francois-Pierre Couture, *Tenderly*, ETC; Stacey Derosier, *Head Over Heels*, Pasadena Playhouse; Donald Holder, *My Fair Lady*, Dolby; Derrick McDaniel, *Seven Guitars*, ANW; Cricket S. Myers, *Tevye in New York*, Wallis; Hugh Vanstone, *A Christmas Carol*, CTG, Ahmanson

BEST SOUND DESIGN

Jeff Gardner, *Paradise Blue*, Geffen Playhouse

RUNNERS-UP: Simon Baker, *A Christmas Carol*, CTG/Ahmanson; Danny Erdberg and Ursula Kwong Brown, *Head Over Heels*, Pasadena Playhouse; Jeff Gardner, *Poor Clare*, Echo; Jeff Gardner, *Seven Guitars*, ANW; Robert Oriel, *A Christmas Carol*, ANW

BEST CGI / VIDEO DESIGN

Rick Martin, *It's a Wonderful Life*, Rogue Machine at the Matrix

SPECIAL EVENTS and PERFORMANCES

Hershey Felder, *Dante and Beatrice in Florence: A New Musical Film*

Steven Spielberg and his entire creative team, *West Side Story: The Movie*, 20th Century Fox