



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Press contact: ErinMarie Reiter info@sdcriticscircle.org

**The San Diego Theatre Critics Circle
announces its nominations for the
2023 Craig Noel Awards for Excellence in Theatre**

The awards will return to a full slate of categories after presenting a reduced program in 2022 following the two-year pandemic break

(1/1/24) SAN DIEGO -- The San Diego Theatre Critics Circle is pleased to announce the nominations for its 2023 Craig Noel Awards for Excellence in Theatre. Now in its 20th year, the Craig Noel Awards honor the achievements at professional theatres in San Diego County.

Because of the pandemic, the Craig Noel Awards were not presented for the theatre years 2020 and 2021. For the 2022 theatre year, a limited number of awards were presented. For the 2023 awards year, the Circle will return to a full slate of awards categories for the first time since the 2019 awards program.

The 2023 nominees were chosen by a 9-member body of professional critics who write year-round for San Diego newspapers, magazines, online publications, and blogs.

This year's ceremony will feature more than 25 awards, including a tribute to Jay and Julie Sarno, who have been supporting theatres as philanthropists, season ticket holders, and volunteers for more than 40 years.

"Jay and Julie Sarno are true champions of the San Diego theatre community and, through their dedication as arts supporters, have impacted nearly every theatre organization in the city over the years, including our own," said ErinMarie Reiter, President of the San Diego Theatre Critics Circle. "Their help through the pandemic was invaluable and they have continued to champion this very celebration, ensuring our Craig Noel Awards ceremony celebrating all of the amazing theatre each year is a success. Their gifts of time and knowledge and their financial contributions have enriched not only the San Diego Theatre Critics Circle but theatres all over the Southern California region. We are so pleased to celebrate them the way they celebrate all of us."

Winners will be announced at the 20th Craig Noel Awards ceremony from 6 p.m to 10 p.m. Feb. 12, 2024, at the SES Portuguese Hall of San Diego, 2818 Avenida De Portugal, San Diego.

Individually named nominees will receive one free ticket to the ceremony. Tickets for gallery-style, first-come, first-served general seating are \$25. Only 100 VIP table seats will be sold at the price of \$100 each.

Tickets are now on sale on our Eventbrite page at <https://bit.ly/3tzKtia>. For questions about purchasing a full table and nominee tickets, email info@sdcriticscircle.org.

More information about the nominations and event can be found online at sdcriticscircle.org.

The list of nominations begins on the following page.

The 2023 Craig Noel Award nominees:

(Nominees by category are listed in alphabetical order)

Outstanding Dramatic production

"August: Osage County" — Backyard Renaissance Theatre

"The Ferryman" — New Village Arts

"Public Enemy" — New Fortune Theatre

"Ripped" — Loud Fridge Theatre Group

"Sharon" — Cygnet Theatre

Outstanding New Play

"Babbitt" — Joe DiPietro, La Jolla Playhouse

"Exotic Deadly: or the MSG Play" — Keiko Green, The Old Globe

"Kagitingan" — Jimiliz Valiente-Neighbours, Blindspot Collective

"Sumo" — Lisa Sanaye Dring, La Jolla Playhouse

"Under A Baseball Sky" — José Cruz González, The Old Globe

Outstanding New Musical

"R-E-S-P-E-C-T" — Kerry Meads & Vanda Eggington, Lamb's Players Theatre

"The Outsiders" — Book by Adam Rapp with Music and Lyrics by Jamestown Revival (Jonathan Clay & Zach Chance) and Justin Levine, La Jolla Playhouse

"Underground" — Book by Blake McCarty, Music & Lyrics by Ben Folds, Blindspot Collective

"The Untitled Unauthorized Hunter S. Thompson Musical" — Book by Joe Iconis and Gregory S. Moss, Music and Lyrics by Joe Iconis, La Jolla Playhouse

Outstanding Resident Musical

"Cabaret" — The Old Globe

"Evita" — Cygnet Theatre

"Head Over Heels," — Diversionary Theatre

"R-E-S-P-E-C-T" — Lamb's Players Theatre

"Sunday in The Park With George" — CCAE Theatricals

(continued on the following page)

Outstanding Direction of a Play

Richard Baird — “Public Enemy,” New Fortune Theatre
Lisa Berger — “Birds of North America,” Moxie Theatre
Rob Lutfy — “God Of Carnage,” Backyard Renaissance Theatre
Jesca Prudencio — “Exotic Deadly: or the MSG Play,” The Old Globe
Kate Rose Reynolds & John Wells III — “Ripped,” Loud Fridge Theatre Group

Outstanding Direction of a Musical

Christopher Ashley — “The Untitled Unauthorized Hunter S. Thompson Musical,” La Jolla Playhouse
Nick DeGruccio — “Pippin,” North Coast Repertory Theatre
T.J. Dawson — “Sunday in The Park With George,” CCAE Theatricals
DJ Gray — “42nd Street,” Moonlight Stage Productions
Danya Taymor — “The Outsiders,” La Jolla Playhouse

Outstanding Music Direction

Vanda Eggington — “R-E-S-P-E-C-T,” Lamb’s Players Theatre
Matt Hinkley — “The Outsiders,” La Jolla Playhouse
Patrick Marion — “Head Over Heels,” Diversionary Theatre
Elan McMahan — “Sunday in The Park With George,” CCAE Theatricals
Robert Meffe — “Cabaret,” The Old Globe

Outstanding Choreography

Xavier J. Bush — “Anything Goes,” San Diego Musical Theatre
Katie Banville & Jenna Ingrassia-Knox — “Singin’ In The Rain,” New Village Arts
Rick Kuperman & Jeff Kuperman — “The Outsiders,” La Jolla Playhouse
DJ Gray — “42nd Street,” Moonlight Stage Productions
Jenn Freeman & Sonya Tayeh — “Is It Thursday Yet?,” La Jolla Playhouse

(continued on the following page)

Outstanding Scenic Design

Diggle — “The Merry Wives of Windsor,” The Old Globe

Wilson Chin — “The Untitled Unauthorized Hunter S. Thompson Musical,” La Jolla Playhouse

Yi-Chien Lee — “Sharon,” Cygnet Theatre

Doug Cumming — “The Ferryman,” New Village Arts

Robin Sanford Roberts — “Birds of North America,” Moxie Theatre

Outstanding Sound Design

Leon Rothenberg — “Under A Baseball Sky,” The Old Globe

Matt Lescault-Wood — “Birds of North America,” Moxie Theatre

Melanie Chen Cole — “Is It Thursday Yet?,” La Jolla Playhouse

Lindsay Jones — “Crime and Punishment, A Comedy,” The Old Globe

Michael Cusimano — “Turn of The Screw,” Chalk Circle Collective

Outstanding Costume Design

Elisa Benzoni — “Head Over Heels,” Diversionary Theatre

Jemima Dutra — “R-E-S-P-E-C-T,” Lamb’s Players Theatre

Lex Liang — “The Merry Wives of Windsor,” The Old Globe

Janet Pitcher — “Sunday in The Park With George,” CCAE Theatricals

Alejo Vietti — “Crime and Punishment, A Comedy,” The Old Globe

Outstanding Lighting Design

Bryan Ealey — “Sharon,” Cygnet Theatre

Michelle Miles — “Sunday in The Park With George,” CCAE Theatricals

Rui Rita — “Under a Baseball Sky,” The Old Globe

Cha See — “Babbitt,” La Jolla Playhouse

Cha See — “Is It Thursday Yet?,” La Jolla Playhouse

Outstanding Projection Design

Patrick Gates — “Sunday in The Park With George,” CCAE Theatricals

Hana Kim — “Sumo,” La Jolla Playhouse

Blake McCarty — “Evita,” Cygnet Theatre

Lacio Pontes — “R-E-S-P-E-C-T,” Lamb’s Players Theatre

S. Katy Tucker — “Love All,” La Jolla Playhouse

(continued on the following page)

Outstanding Lead Performance in a Play

Richard Baird — “Public Enemy,” New Fortune Theatre
Kandace Crystal — “Neat,” Scripps Ranch & Loud Fridge Theatre Group
Farah Dinga — “Birds of North America,” Moxie Theatre
Deborah Gilmour Smyth — “August: Osage County,” Backyard Renaissance Theatre
Rafael Goldstein — “Sharon,” Cygnet Theatre
Sara Porkalob — “Dragon Mama,” Diversionary Theatre
Amira Temple — “Ripped,” Loud Fridge Theatre Group
Shana Wride — “The Glass Menagerie,” Diversionary Theatre

Outstanding Featured Performance in a Play

Kirk Brown — “The Glass Menagerie,” Diversionary Theatre
Maggie Carney — “August: Osage County,” Backyard Renaissance Theatre
Dagmar Krause Fields — “The Ferryman,” New Village Arts
Jessica John — “August: Osage County,” Backyard Renaissance Theatre
Katie MacNichol — “The Cherry Orchard,” North Coast Repertory Theatre
Wendy Maples — “Proof,” Backyard Renaissance Theatre
David McBean — “The Savoyard Murders,” The Roustabouts Theatre Co.
MJ Sieber — “The Little Fellow (Or The Queen of Tarts Tells All),” Cygnet Theatre

Outstanding Lead Performance in a Musical

Will Blum — “Sunday in The Park With George,” CCAE Theatricals
Gerilyn Brault — “Head Over Heels,” Diversionary Theatre
Brody Grant — “The Outsiders,” La Jolla Playhouse
Joey Kirkpatrick — “Head Over Heels,” Diversionary Theatre
Sky Lakota-Lynch — “The Outsiders,” La Jolla Playhouse
Emily Lopez — “Sunday in The Park With George,” CCAE Theatricals
Allison Spratt Pearce — “Anything Goes,” San Diego Musical Theatre
Ryan Vasquez — “The Outsiders,” La Jolla Playhouse

(continued on the following page)

Outstanding Featured Performance in a Musical

George Abud — “The Untitled Unauthorized Hunter S. Thompson Musical,” La Jolla Playhouse

Zane Davis — “Anything Goes,” San Diego Musical Theatre

Giovanny Diaz de Leon — “The Untitled Unauthorized Hunter S. Thompson Musical,” La Jolla Playhouse

Berto Fernández — “Evita,” Cygnet Theatre

Debbie Prutsman — “Sunday in The Park With George,” CCAE Theatricals

Audrey Ward — “Singin’ In The Rain,” New Village Arts

Robert Zelaya — “Pippin,” North Coast Repertory Theatre

Other awards that will be announced from the stage:

- **San Diego Champions of Theatre**
- **Actors of the Year**
- **Outstanding Youth Performance**
- **Outstanding Achievement by a Small Theatre**
- **Reviewers of Tomorrow Award Winners**

Founded in 1983 and rededicated in 2002 with a new awards program named after the late Craig Noel — the founding father of San Diego's professional theatre community — the San Diego Theatre Critics Circle is a nonprofit association of professional writers in San Diego County. To learn more about our organization and its members, visit sdcriticscircle.org.