Playhouse Square Reveals Nominees for the 2026 Dazzle Awards presented by Pat and John Chapman

Region's High School Musical Theater Programs Celebrated at May 16 Awards Ceremony

Cleveland, OH – High school students from across Northeast Ohio are ready to shine and showcase their hard work and talents at Playhouse Square as a part of the 2026 Dazzle Awards presented by Pat and John Chapman. The organization today announced the nominees whose onstage and offstage work will be recognized at the annual ceremony on May 16. This year, a record-high 44 high schools representing seven Northeast Ohio counties participated in the arts education program.

The Dazzle Awards is affiliated with The Jimmy Awards®/The National High School Musical Theatre Awards® and offers learning opportunities throughout the school year, including classes with industry professionals, audition workshops and apprenticeship programs. It culminates with the annual awards ceremony hosted by Fox 8's Natalie Herbick and directed by Broadway director/choreographer Connor Gallagher. Excitement fills the air as participating students arrive in style by walking the "PNC Red Carpet," then perform on a Playhouse Square stage.

The 2026 Dazzle Awards Ceremony takes place at the KeyBank State Theatre on Saturday, May 16 at 7:30 p.m. Tickets are available online at playhousesquare.org or by calling 216-241-6000.

In addition to classes and audition workshops for students who perform onstage, the Dazzle Awards also offers Musical Apprentice, Technical Apprentice and Student Reporter programs. These students learn from the Dazzle Awards director/choreographer, music director, musicians, stage managers, lighting and sound designers and local reporters. The following students were chosen based on an application process and letters of recommendation:

Musical Apprentices
Finley Barron (Trombone), Solon High School
Steven Haines (Percussion), Solon High School
Elyse Mull (Violin), Bay High School
Andrew Saab (Trumpet), Rocky River High School
Aris Soto (Electric Bass), Saint Ignatius High School

Technical Apprentices
Carmen Chen, Independence High School
Delaney Kilkenney, Gilmour Academy
Rachel Oldfield, Saint Joseph Academy
Kai Wang, Andrews Osborne Academy

Student Reporters
Zachary Berman, Gilmour Academy
Lucia Durbin, Avon Lake High School
Jackson Kase, Highland High School
Addilynn Thompson, Marion L. Steele High School

At the May 16 ceremony, Dazzle Awards will be presented to outstanding musical theater productions and students in 15 categories, including the “Spirit of the Dazzle Awards” category, which is awarded to the student who most embodies camaraderie, passion and a continuous positive attitude throughout rehearsal week as identified by the creative team. The Best Actor and Best Actress winners will represent Northeast Ohio at The Jimmy Awards at the Minskoff Theatre in New York City in June.

The 2026 Dazzle Award Nominees:

Best Student Orchestra
Avon High School, *Shrek The Musical*
Bay High School, *Anything Goes (2022 Revision)*
Brunswick High School, *Anything Goes (2022 Revision)*
Hudson High School, *Legally Blonde The Musical*
Lakewood High School, *Natasha, Pierre & the Great Comet of 1812*
Nordonia High School, *Chitty Chitty Bang Bang*
Orange High School, *Disney's High School Musical*
Rocky River High School, *Cinderella (Enchanted Edition)*
Shaker Heights High School, *Chicago: Teen Edition*
Solon High School, *Disney's The Little Mermaid*
Willoughby South High School, *The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee*

Best Student Technical Execution
Bay High School, *Anything Goes (2022 Revision)*
Hathaway Brown School, *Hadestown: Teen Edition*
Highland High School, *Hadestown: Teen Edition*
Lakewood High School, *Natasha, Pierre & the Great Comet of 1812*
Lutheran West, *Hadestown: Teen Edition*
Magnificat High School, *Disney's The Little Mermaid*
Medina High School, *Hadestown: Teen Edition*
Nordonia High School, *Chitty Chitty Bang Bang*
Rocky River High School, *Cinderella (Enchanted Edition)*
Saint Ignatius High School, *Guys and Dolls*
Solon High School, *Disney's The Little Mermaid*

Best Choreography Execution
Avon Lake High School, *Jesus Christ Superstar*
Bay High School, *Anything Goes (2022 Revision)*
CMSD All-City Musical, *Fame The Musical*
Lakewood High School, *Natasha, Pierre & the Great Comet of 1812*
Lutheran West, *Hadestown: Teen Edition*
Magnificat High School, *Disney's The Little Mermaid*
Medina High School, *Hadestown: Teen Edition*
Nordonia High School, *Chitty Chitty Bang Bang*
Rocky River High School, *Cinderella (Enchanted Edition)*
Saint Ignatius High School, *Guys and Dolls*
Solon High School, *Disney's The Little Mermaid*
Strongsville High School, *Anything Goes (2022 Revision)*

Best Ensemble/Chorus

Avon Lake High School, *Jesus Christ Superstar*
Bay High School, *Anything Goes (2022 Revision)*
Lakewood High School, *Natasha, Pierre & the Great Comet of 1812*
Lutheran West, *Hadestown: Teen Edition*
Magnificat High School, *Disney's The Little Mermaid*
Medina High School, *Hadestown: Teen Edition*
Nordonia High School, *Chitty Chitty Bang Bang*
Rocky River High School, *Cinderella (Enchanted Edition)*
Saint Ignatius High School, *Guys and Dolls*
West Geauga High School, *You're A Good Man, Charlie Brown (Revised)*

Best Supporting Actor

Ryan Arieta, Nordonia High School ('Grandpa Potts' in *Chitty Chitty Bang Bang*)
Octavian Chaloux, Strongsville High School ('Elisha Whitney' in *Anything Goes (2022 Revision*))
Elijah Delgado, Willoughby South High School ('Vice Principal Douglas Panch' in *The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee*)
Jaxon Floyd, Saint Ignatius High School ('Rusty Charlie' in *Guys and Dolls*)
Blake Jeffrey-White, Saint Ignatius High School ('Benny Southstreet' in *Guys and Dolls*)
Nathan Lamb, Avon Lake High School ('King Herod' in *Jesus Christ Superstar*)
Daniel Luce, Solon High School ('Jetsam' in *Disney's The Little Mermaid*)
Axel Scott, Lakewood High School ('Dolokhov' in *Natasha, Pierre & the Great Comet of 1812*)
Jack Simon, Hudson High School ('Elle's Dad / Cezar Tepesh / Nikos Argitakos' in *Legally Blonde The Musical*)
Steven Vereb, Aurora High School ('Kevin G.' in *Mean Girls High School Version*)

Best Supporting Actress

Jayda Blackman, Akron School for the Arts at Firestone CLC ('Aquata' *Disney's The Little Mermaid*)
Mira Cahalane, Hudson High School ('Pilar' in *Legally Blonde The Musical*)
Melanie Cesa, Padua Franciscan High School ('Lorraine' in *All Shook Up*)
Mariana Fuery, Lutheran West ('Fate 1' in *Hadestown: Teen Edition*)
Reese Goldmeier, Medina High School ('Fate 3' in *Hadestown: Teen Edition*)
Katie Hersh, Nordonia High School ('Baroness Bomburst' in *Chitty Chitty Bang Bang*)
Asia Morron, Rocky River High School ('Grace' in *Cinderella (Enchanted Edition)*)
Olivia Obermeier, Medina High School ('Fate 2' in *Hadestown: Teen Edition*)
Grace Rose, Rocky River High School ('Joy' in *Cinderella (Enchanted Edition)*)
Ceci Whiteamire, Lakewood High School ('Marya' *Natasha, Pierre & the Great Comet of 1812*)

Best Actor

Mason Cooper, Medina High School ('Orpheus' in *Hadestown: Teen Edition*)
Anthony Fritzgerald, Saint Ignatius High School ('Nicely-Nicely Johnson' in *Guys and Dolls*)
Joey Herman, Hudson High School ('Emmett Forrest' in *Legally Blonde The Musical*)
Owen Hill, Lakewood High School ('Anatole' in *Natasha, Pierre & the Great Comet of 1812)*
Andrew Jeschelnig, Eastlake North High School ('Nick Bottom' in *Something Rotten!*)
Jackson Kenny, Saint Ignatius High School ('Nathan Detroit' in *Guys and Dolls*)
Roman Kline-Bossman, Chagrin Falls High School ('Alfred / White Rabbit / March Hare' in *Alice by Heart*)
Christian Lee, Avon High School ('Shrek' in *Shrek The Musical)*
Ezekiel Rayle, Nordonia High School ('Caractacus Potts' in *Chitty Chitty Bang Bang*)
Jacob Yankow, Magnificat High School ('Scuttle' in *Disney's The Little Mermaid)*

Best Actress
Lilah Anders, Solon High School ('Ariel' in *Disney's The Little Mermaid)*
Cora Barcelona, Lakewood High School ('Natasha' in *Natasha, Pierre & the Great Comet of 1812)*
Symone Bibb, Thomas W. Harvey High School ('Sibella Hallward' in *A Gentleman's Guide to Love and Murder)*
Parker Dansizen, Avon Lake High School ('Judas Iscariot' in *Jesus Christ Superstar)*
Eliza Gonzales, Chagrin Falls High School ('Alice' in *Alice by Heart)*
Sophia Mende, Lutheran West ('Persephone' in *Hadestown: Teen Edition)*
Skyler Ramsey, Andrews Osborne Academy ('Eurydice' in *Hadestown: Teen Edition*)
Charlotte Speyer, West Geauga High School ('Sally Brown' in *You're A Good Man, Charlie Brown (Revised))*
Margaret Vollman, Akron School for the Arts at Firestone CLC ('Ariel' in *Disney's The Little Mermaid)*
Legend Young, Willoughby South High School ('Olive Ostrovsky' in *The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee)*

The following categories are tiered based on the school musical budget. Tier I – budget of less than $12,000; Tier II – budget of more than $12,000.

Best Student Scenic Design – Tier I
Akron School for the Arts at Firestone CLC, *Disney's The Little Mermaid*
Brunswick High School, *Anything Goes (2022 Revision)*
Strongsville High School, *Anything Goes (2022 Revision)*
Walsh Jesuit High School, *Freaky Friday*
Willoughby South High School, *The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee*

Best Student Scenic Design – Tier II
Bay High School, *Anything Goes (2022 Revision)*
Lutheran West, *Hadestown: Teen Edition*
Magnificat High School, *Disney's The Little Mermaid*
Rocky River High School, *Cinderella (Enchanted Edition)*
Solon High School, *Disney's The Little Mermaid*

Best Student Costume Design – Tier I
Beaumont School, *SIX: Teen Edition*
Chagrin Falls High School, *Alice by Heart*
Hawken School, *Mamma Mia!*
Shaker Heights High School, *Chicago: Teen Edition*
Willoughby South High School, *The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee*

Best Student Costume Design – Tier II
Avon Lake High School, *Jesus Christ Superstar*
Bay High School, *Anything Goes (2022 Revision)*
Lutheran West, *Hadestown: Teen Edition*
Magnificat High School, *Disney's The Little Mermaid*
Western Reserve Academy, *Seussical*

Best Musical (Tier I – *school musical budget less than $12,000*)
Akron School for the Arts at Firestone CLC, *Disney's The Little Mermaid*
Shaker Heights High School, *Chicago: Teen Edition*
West Geauga High School, *You're A Good Man, Charlie Brown (Revised)*

Best Musical (Tier II – *school musical budget greater than $12,000*)
Lutheran West, *Hadestown: Teen Edition*
Magnificat High School, *Disney's The Little Mermaid*
Nordonia High School, *Chitty Chitty Bang Bang*

Public and private high schools located in Cuyahoga, Geauga, Lake, Lorain, Medina, Portage and Summit Counties were invited to apply for participation in the Dazzle Awards. Information and applications for the 2027 Dazzle Awards will be available online at playhousesquare.org/dazzleawards in August.

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Playhouse Square, the nation's premier home for touring Broadway, is a globally recognized arts district. A not-for-profit presenter and producer of performing arts experiences, Playhouse Square is a champion of arts education and the vitality of downtown Cleveland. It proudly serves as home to eight resident companies: The City Club of Cleveland, Cleveland Ballet, Cleveland International Film Festival, Cleveland Play House, Cleveland State University Department of Theatre and Dance, DANCE Cleveland, Great Lakes Theater, and Tri-C JazzFest.

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The Jimmy Awards®/National High School Musical Theatre Awards® (NHSMTA®) is a celebration of student achievement in high school musical theatre across the country, spotlighting the next generation of Broadway talent. The program impacts over 180,000 students who participate in 58 regional high school musical theatre competitions sponsored by presenters of touring Broadway productions throughout the United States. Named for Broadway impresario James M. Nederlander, the program has been the catalyst for more than $9,000,000 in educational scholarships since its launch in 2009, and over 90 alumni have performed on Broadway and in National Tours. Presented by The Broadway League Foundation, Inc., the NHSMTA invites two nominees from each local regional ceremony to New York City for a rigorous theatre intensive that includes coaching sessions, training, and rehearsals led by some of Broadway's most accomplished professionals. Nominees will spend ten days in New York City from Friday, June 12, 2026, through Tuesday, June 23, 2026, and their experience will culminate in an extraordinary talent showcase performed live in front of an audience on a Broadway stage. The seventeenth annual Jimmy Awards will take place on Monday, June 22, 2026, at the Minskoff Theatre. For more information, please visit www.JimmyAwards.com.