



TUTS Announces 2013 Tommy Tune Award Nominees; Ceremony Set for 4/16 at Hobby Center

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by BWW News Desk



John C. Breckenridge, President and CEO of Theatre Under The Stars (TUTS), announced today the nominations and presenters for TUTS' eleventh annual [Tommy Tune](#) Awards which will be held on Tuesday, April 16 at 7:30 p.m. at the

Hobby Center for the Performing Arts. Developed by TUTS, the [Tommy Tune](#) Awards honor musical theatre excellence at the high school level. Co-hosts for the award ceremony include [Jim Bernhard](#) and Sarah Pepper. Bernhard has written several original productions that have debuted at TUTS and authored the theatrical history Stars in Your Eyes. Pepper is the morning host of The Hot Show on HOT 95.7 FM.



After reviewing and evaluating the 45 participating Houston-area high school productions during the 2012-2013 school year, a team of 29 Houston-based theatre professionals made 163 nominations in 15 categories. An additional committee considered 38 potential scholarship recipients.

The following high schools and individuals were nominated:

Best Musical

Clear Springs High School, Curtains
Episcopal High School, Seussical
G. W. Carver Magnet High School, The Color Purple
Klein High School, Into the Woods
Klein Oak High School, Sweeney Todd: School Edition
Pearland High School, South Pacific
Second Baptist School, On the Town
Stratford High School, Crazy for You

Best Leading Actor

Clear Springs High School: Mark Mendell (Lt. Frank Cioffi) Curtains
Episcopal High School: Mark Hauptfleish (Horton) Seussical
G. W. Carver Magnet High School: Trey [Morgan Lewis](#) (Mister) The Color Purple
James E. Taylor High School: Camron Alexander (Horton) Seussical
Klein High School: Nathan Eggen (Baker) Into the Woods
Klein Oak High School: [Ryne Nardecchia](#) (Sweeney Todd) Sweeney Todd: School Edition

Pearland High School: Matt Flowers (Emile de Becque) South Pacific
Seven Lakes High School: Joseph Nicholson (Man in Chair) The Drowsy Chaperone
Stratford High School: Graham Baker (Bobby Child) Crazy for You

Best Leading Actress

Clear Springs High School: Libby Hart (Carmen Bernstein) Curtains
Cypress Woods High School: [Bethany Eggleston](#) (Millie Dillmount) Thoroughly Modern Millie
Episcopal High School: Jennifer Laporte (Gertrude) Seussical
G. W. Carver Magnet High School: Amber Scott (Celie) The Color Purple
Kerr High School: Melissa Ramos ([Kate Monster](#)) Avenue Q - School Edition
Kinkaid School: Madi Goeringer ([Roxie Hart](#)) Chicago
Klein Collins High School: Ashlyn Connor (Elle Woods) Legally Blonde
Klein Oak High School: [Morgan Starr](#) (Mrs. Lovett) Sweeney Todd: School Edition
Pearland High School: Allison Anderson (Nellie Forbush) South Pacific

Best Supporting Actor

Cypress Falls High School: Thomas Valdez (Snoopy) You're A Good Man, Charlie Brown
Episcopal High School: [Henry Herbert](#) (Cat in the Hat) Seussical
G. W. Carver Magnet High School: Alric Davis (Harpo) The Color Purple
High School for the Performing and Visual Arts: Wesley Whitson (Vernon Hines) The Pajama Game
Pasadena Memorial High School: Alexis Vargas (Cornelius Hackl) Hello Dolly!
Pearland High School: Nathan Agnew (Billis) South Pacific
Second Baptist School: Ethan Hackett (Chip) On the Town
St. John's School: Sam Burkett (Bill Calhoun) Kiss Me, Kate
Stratford High School: McGregor Dalton (Bela Zangler) Crazy for You

Best Supporting Actress

Episcopal High School: Hayley Talkington (Jojo) Seussical
Friendswood High School: Haley Holtje (Adelaide) Guys and Dolls
G. W. Carver Magnet High School: Delaney Williams (Shug) The Color Purple
Kinkaid School: Carrie Walker (Velma Kelly) Chicago
Klein Collins High School: Miriam Richard (Paulette) Legally Blonde
Klein Oak High School: Sarah Holevinski (Johanna) Sweeney Todd: School Edition
Pasadena Memorial High School: Jaclyn Hernandez (Irene Malloy) Hello Dolly!
St. Agnes Academy: Madeline Garvis (Paulette) Legally Blonde
Woodlands High School: Devin Cherry (Ado Annie) Oklahoma!

Best Featured Performer

Clear Springs High School: Stephen Louis (Christopher Belling) Curtains
Friendswood High School: Nathan Stevens (Arvide Abernathy) Guys and Dolls
G. W. Carver Magnet High School: Sydney Malone (Sophia) The Color Purple
James E. Taylor High School: Connor Woods (Gen. Genghis Kahn Schmitz) Seussical
[John Cooper](#) School: Amelia Eskridge (Ursula Merkle) Bye Bye Birdie
Klein Forest High School: Austen Smith (Mitch Mahoney) 25th Annual...Spelling Bee
Klein Oak High School: Alec [Michael Ryan](#) (Judge Turpin) Sweeney Todd: School Edition
Pearland High School: Matt Galindo and Marcus Lonardo (StewPot and Professor) South Pacific
Second Baptist School: Bailey Wilkerson (Flossie) On the Town
St. John's School: Spencer Lepow and Rohan Ramchand (First Man & Second Man) Kiss Me, Kate
Stratford High School: Caitlin Ehlinger (Patsy) Crazy for You
Woodlands High School: Elizabeth Kaplin (Dream Laurey) Oklahoma!

Best Direction

Clear Springs High School, Curtains
Episcopal High School, Seussical
Friendswood High School, Guys and Dolls
G. W. Carver Magnet High School, The Color Purple
Klein High School, Into the Woods
Klein Oak High School, Sweeney Todd: School Edition

Magnolia West High School, You're A Good Man, Charlie Brown
Pearland High School, South Pacific
Second Baptist School, On the Town
Spring Woods High School, Children of Eden
Stratford High School, Crazy for You

Best Choreography

Clear Falls High School, Once Upon A Mattress
Cypress Falls High School, You're A Good Man, Charlie Brown
Episcopal High School, Seussical
Friendswood High School, Guys and Dolls
G. W. Carver Magnet High School, The Color Purple
James E. Taylor High School, Seussical
[John Cooper](#) School, Bye Bye Birdie
Kinkaid School, Chicago
Klein Oak High School, Sweeney Todd: School Edition
Pearland High School, South Pacific
Second Baptist School, On the Town
St. John's School, Kiss Me, Kate

Best Musical Direction

Clear Springs High School, Curtains
Episcopal High School, Seussical
Friendswood High School, Guys and Dolls
G. W. Carver Magnet High School, The Color Purple
Houston Christian High School, The Wizard of Oz
High School for the Performing and Visual Arts, The Pajama Game
[John Cooper](#) School, Bye Bye Birdie
Klein High School, Into the Woods
Klein Oak High School, Sweeney Todd: School Edition
Pearland High School, South Pacific
Second Baptist School, On the Town
Stratford High School, Crazy for You

Best Orchestra

Friendswood High School, Guys and Dolls
G. W. Carver Magnet High School, The Color Purple
George Ranch High School, Footloose
High School for the Performing and Visual Arts, The Pajama Game
James E. Taylor High School, Seussical
Katy High School, Joseph.....Dreamcoat
Klein Forest High School, 25th Annual...Spelling Bee
Klein High School, Into the Woods
Klein Oak High School, Sweeney Todd: School Edition
Magnolia West High School, You're A Good Man, Charlie Brown
Pasadena Memorial High School, Hello Dolly!
Sam Rayburn High School, Grease
Seven Lakes High School, The Drowsy Chaperone
Texas City High School, Footloose
Woodlands High School, Oklahoma!

Best Scenic Design

Clear Falls High School, Once Upon A Mattress
Clear Springs High School, Curtains
Episcopal High School, Seussical
James E. Taylor High School, Seussical
[John Cooper](#) School, Bye Bye Birdie
Katy High School, Joseph...Dreamcoat

Kingwood High School, How to Succeed...
Klein High School, Into the Woods
Klein Oak High School, Sweeney Todd: School Edition
Northland Christian School, Seussical
Second Baptist School, On the Town
Spring Woods High School, Children of Eden

Best Costume Design

Clear Falls High School, Once Upon A Mattress
Episcopal High School, Seussical
G. W. Carver Magnet High School, The Color Purple
Houston Christian High School, The Wizard of Oz
[John Cooper](#) School, Bye Bye Birdie
Kingwood High School, How to Succeed...
Klein High School, Into the Woods
Klein Oak High School, Sweeney Todd: School Edition
Second Baptist School, On the Town
Seven Lakes High School, The Drowsy Chaperone
St. John's School, Kiss Me, Kate

Best Lighting Design

Clear Falls High School, Once Upon A Mattress
Clear Springs High School, Curtains
Episcopal High School, Seussical
Katy High School, Joseph...Dreamcoat
Kingwood High School, How to Succeed...
Klein High School, Into the Woods
Klein Oak High School, Sweeney Todd: School Edition
Magnolia West High School, You're A Good Man, Charlie Brown
Seven Lakes High School, The Drowsy Chaperone
Spring Woods High School, Children of Eden
St. John's School, Kiss Me, Kate
Stratford High School, Crazy for You

Best Crew & Technical Execution

Clear Falls High School, Once Upon A Mattress
Clear Springs High School, Curtains
Friendswood High School, Guys and Dolls
[John Cooper](#) School, Bye Bye Birdie
Kingwood High School, How to Succeed...
Klein Oak High School, Sweeney Todd: School Edition
Pearland High School, South Pacific
Second Baptist School, On the Town
Seven Lakes High School, The Drowsy Chaperone
St. John's School, Kiss Me, Kate
Stratford High School, Crazy for You
Woodlands High School, Oklahoma!

Best Ensemble/Chorus

Clear Springs High School, Curtains
Episcopal High School, Seussical
Friendswood High School, Guys and Dolls
G. W. Carver Magnet High School, The Color Purple
[John Cooper](#) School, Bye Bye Birdie
Klein High School, Into the Woods
Klein Oak High School, Sweeney Todd: School Edition
Pearland High School, South Pacific
Second Baptist School, On the Town

Stratford High School, Crazy for You

Presenters this year will include Carrie Adamian, who appeared in several TUTS shows including TUTS' first ever production of Annie as the title character. Other presenters include TUTS Artistic Director [Bruce Lumpkin](#), Miller Outdoor Theatre's Managing Director Cissy Segall Davis, KUHT's [Ernie Manouse](#), ABC-13's Don Nelson and TUTS Scholarship Committee Chairperson Amy Pierce.

TUTS' [Tommy Tune](#) Awards are designed not only to acknowledge remarkable musical theatre talent at the high school level, but also to encourage future development. TUTS will present eight scholarships to outstanding participating students of the [Tommy Tune](#) Awards. This includes the Ruth Denney Scholarship, named in honor of Tune's mentor and legendary Lamar High School drama teacher. Ruth Denney was the founder and first director of the High School for the Performing and Visual Arts in Houston, and then Professor of Drama Education at the University of Texas at Austin. She died in 2007, just a few days before her 93rd birthday. Students under consideration were required to meet specific criteria set out by the Scholarship Committee, as well as submit an application and essay. The scholarship committee, composed of TUTS board members and community leaders, has carefully reviewed all of the applications and will announce scholarship recipients during the awards ceremony.

In addition to the Tony-awards-style ceremony, the evening will feature performances from nominees in the Best Musical category, a musical medley with this year's Best Leading Actor and Best Leading Actress nominees, and a grand finale including two students from each participating school.

The Best Leading Actor and Actress will go on to compete at the national level for the Jimmy Award at the National High School Musical Theater Awards in New York City. Established in 2009, the Jimmy Awards are named after Broadway theater owner and producer, [James M. Nederlander](#). This year, the program will bring the country's best high school performers together to compete on Broadway at the Minskoff Theatre on Monday, July 1.

Theatre Under The Stars will cover all expenses for this year's Best Actor and Best Actress to represent TUTS in this week-long national event. While in New York, Jimmy Award participants will have the opportunity to participate in rehearsals and master classes; receive one-on-one coaching from theater professionals; be seen by casting agents; meet and converse with Broadway actors; and compete for scholarships and other prizes. The week's events will culminate in a live awards show where the Jimmy Award for Best Performance by an Actor and Best Performance by an Actress will be presented.

The Theatre Under The Stars [Tommy Tune](#) Awards are named for Houston native and Lamar High School alumnus, [Tommy Tune](#). A performer, director, and choreographer with more than 50 years of stage experience, Tune received nine Tony Awards for his work in the following productions: Seesaw, My One and Only, A Day in Hollywood/A Night in the Ukraine, Nine, Grand Hotel, and The [Will Rogers](#) Follies. He was also awarded the National Medal of Arts in 2003 by President Bush.

The [Tommy Tune](#) Awards ceremony is open to the general public, and tickets will be available for purchase beginning on April 3. For information on tickets to the 2013 [Tommy Tune](#) Awards ceremony, call (713) 558-2600 or visit www.tuts.com/TTA.

VIP tickets, which grant access to a pre-event reception and ensure prime, center orchestra seating, are available for \$150. Box seats are available for \$100. To purchase VIP tickets, call Development Director Gina Sullivan at 713-558-2655.

Theatre Under The Stars (TUTS) is Houston's acclaimed nonprofit musical theatre company whose mission is to enrich life through the experience of quality musical theatre and to positively impact lives beyond the stage through innovative education & community engagement programs. Currently TUTS engages more than 200,000 people annually through productions at Sarofim Hall and Zilkha Hall at the Hobby Center and at Miller Outdoor Theatre. TUTS was the first theatrical organization in Houston to perform free to the public when it was founded in 1968 at Miller Outdoor Theatre in Hermann Park and is the only Houston arts organization that has performed there free to the public every year since the theatre opened. Founded by [Frank M. Young](#) and currently under the direction of President and CEO John C. Breckenridge and Artistic Director [Bruce Lumpkin](#), TUTS has produced more than 300 musicals including many local, national and world premieres such as Kopit and Yeston's Phantom, Disney's

Beauty and the Beast, Jekyll & Hyde, and [Irving Berlin](#)'s White Christmas as well as critically acclaimed re-inventions of classics Cabaret and Les Miserables. Through its membership in the [Independent Presenters Network](#), TUTS has helped bring Bombay Dreams, 9 to 5, Thoroughly Modern Millie, Spamalot, Legally Blonde, Ragtime, Curtains and The Color Purple to Broadway and ultimately back to Houston audiences.

In support of TUTS' mission, TUTS' Education & Community Engagement programs provide instruction and stage experience for more than 48,000 Houstonians annually. The Humphreys School of Musical Theatre (HSMT) offers technique-driven classes for all ability levels and ages, ranging from four to adult. Through The River Performing and Visual Arts Center (The River), TUTS provides an accessible and inclusive arts education for individuals of all abilities that will enhance their development into confident, balanced individuals. TUTS Education & Community Engagement provides extended on-site programming as well as off-site programming for children in schools, hospitals and other community-based sites. TUTS' community partnerships include collaborations with the Houston Independent School District and Region IV school districts, the YMCA of Greater Houston, M.D. Anderson Children's Cancer Center, Texas Children's Hospital and Shriner's Hospital - Houston, among several other Houston-area organizations. TUTS also annually presents the [Tommy Tune](#) Awards, honoring the best and brightest in Houston's high school musical theatre programs.