



## Elizabeth Public Schools Press Release

### **TJAA's Tartuffe Sweeps Classical Play Nominations for MSU Theater Night Awards**

*Receives 9 Foxy Award nominations, including Outstanding Production; Lead Actor, Actress*

**Elizabeth, N.J., April 14, 2020** – Thomas Jefferson Arts Academy swept the classical play categories among its nine Foxy Awards nominations from Montclair State University for the annual MSU Theater Night Awards.

The Theater Night Awards promote the commitment to high-quality straight play production in New Jersey's secondary schools. The awards given at the ceremony, known as Foxy Awards, are named in honor of former Mahwah High School theatre teacher JoAnne Fox, co-founder of Theatre Night Awards, who passed away suddenly in 2009 following a rehearsal at her school shortly after the inaugural Theatre Night Awards. Fox, along with MSU Theatre and Dance Department professor Susan Kerner, created the event to celebrate and advance the popularity of the high school play as well as those who performed exceptionally in them.

The event honors the individual achievements of students and educators in the areas of performance, direction, design, and technical theatre as well as outstanding productions in the drama, comedy, classical and new work genres.

Jefferson Arts Academy received nine Foxy Awards nominations for production and individual performances associated with its play *Tartuffe*. The Molière masterpiece features *Tartuffe*, a rogue who pretends to be pious to take advantage of the easily deceived Orgon, including an attempt to take his property.

The production nominations are Outstanding Achievement in Period/Fantasy Costume Design, Outstanding Achievement by an Acting Ensemble of a Classical, and Outstanding Production of a Classical.

Individual nominations are *Tartuffe* Director and Jefferson Arts Academy drama teacher Sandra Toll for The Peter Filichia Award for Pushing the Envelope in Academic Theatre, Jefferson Arts Academy student Cooper Mendonssa (*Tartuffe- Tartuffe*) for Outstanding Performance by a Lead Actor in a Classical Play, Jefferson Arts Academy students Ariana Montoya and Melody Turner (*Dorine the Maid- Tartuffe*) for Outstanding Performance by a Lead Actress in a Classical Play, Jefferson Arts Academy student Brandon Calda (*Orgon- Tartuffe Cast B*) for Outstanding Performance by a Supporting Actor in a Classical Play, Jefferson Arts Academy student Olivia Trujillo (*Mariane- Tartuffe Cast B*) for Outstanding Performance by a Supporting Actress in a Classical Play.

The winners of each category will be announced by MSU during a virtual awards ceremony in May.

“Thomas Jefferson Arts Academy has established itself among the top schools in the State of New Jersey for its excellent theater arts program, highlighted by its award-winning theatrical productions,” said Elizabeth Public Schools Superintendent Olga Hugelmeyer. “All of our students and team members associated with the production and performance of Tartuffe are the latest to add their names and performances to the school’s rich theater history.”

“Sweeping an entire awards category is a truly extraordinary feat and is a reflection of the hard work and dedication that the theater department at Jefferson Arts Academy puts into each and every one of their productions,” said Elizabeth Board of Education President Diane Barbosa. “We are so proud of our students and teachers involved for receiving so many nominations and wish them the best of luck. We hope to hear more great news once the winners are announced.”

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