



## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **The 5th Avenue Award Goes To...**

*The 5th Avenue Theatre Honors Washington's High School Musical Theater Programs in Tony Award-Style Event*  
*Sponsored by Wells Fargo*

(Monday, June 4, 2012, SEATTLE, WA) – High school students from across Washington State packed **The 5th Avenue Theatre** tonight for **The 10th Annual 5th Avenue Awards Honoring High School Musical Theater**, a high school version of the Tony Awards sponsored by Wells Fargo. The house was packed with 2,100 teenagers in costume representing their schools' musical theater productions, who cheered for their peers as they performed musical excerpts and accepted awards honoring top student achievements in musical theater. The acclaimed program brought previous recipients from the last decade back to the stage (many of whom have gone on to successful arts careers locally and nationally) to hand out awards in 21 categories ranging from Outstanding Overall Musical Production to Outstanding Lobby Display.

A new special honor for teachers was inaugurated this year with Roosevelt High School drama teacher **Ruben Van Kempen** as its first recipient. A talented educator, Van Kempen has seen many past students go on to perform on television, Broadway, and across America. Van Kempen's former students include Chad Kimball (Tony Nominee for *Memphis*), Ryah Nixon (first national tour of *9 to 5*), Daniel Berryman (star of The 5th Avenue's upcoming production of *RENT*), and choreographer/performer Noah Racey (choreographer of The 5th Avenue's holiday hit *Cinderella*), and many other rising stars.

**Liberty High School** took home top honors at The 10th Annual 5th Avenue Awards, leaving at the end of the night with four awards including Best Outstanding Overall Musical Production for their hit show, *Little Shop of Horrors*. **Eisenhower High School's** *The Boyfriend* and **Kentridge High School's** *Legally Blonde* each captured two 5th Avenue Awards. **Lewis and Clark High School** also took home two 5th Avenue Awards, one for their production of *Zombie Prom* and one for its production of *Legally Blonde*. Eleven other high schools were recognized with the remaining awards.

**Kentridge High School** student **Caelan Creaser** and **Lewis and Clark High School** student **Jesse Ward** received the awards for Outstanding Performance by an Actress in a

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Leading Role (*Legally Blonde*) and Outstanding Performance by an Actor (*Legally Blonde*) in a Leading Role. **Glacier Peak High School** received the award for Outstanding Direction (*Suessical*), **Liberty High School** received the award for Outstanding Music Direction (*Little Shop of Horrors*), and **Eisenhower High School** brought home the award for Outstanding Choreography for the second year in a row (*The Boyfriend*).

Previous recipients representing the last ten years of achievement in high school musical theater presented The 5th Avenue Awards to this year's recipients, passing the torch from one generation of emerging musical theater stars to the next. This year's 5th Avenue Awards Show was directed by previous recipient **Brandon Ivie**, who also presented the award for Best Direction. Ivie directed The 5th Avenue's smash holiday hit *Cinderella*, and was also dramaturge of Broadway's *Catch Me If You Can* and assistant to the writer for Brian Yorkey on Broadway's *Next to Normal*. Other presenters included **Sarah Rose Davis** (Village Theater: *The Yellow Wood*), **Kirsten DeLohr Helland** (The 5th: *Oklahoma!*, Balagan Theater: *Spring Awakening*), **Justin Huertas** (national tour of *Spring Awakening*), **Diana Huey** (Village Theatre: *It Shoulda Been You*), **Cayman Ilika** (The 5th: *Saving Aimee*), **Jared Michael Brown** (The 5th: *Cinderella* and *Oklahoma!*), and **Lauren Smith** (co-founder of Inverse Opera), among others.

Since its inception, The 5th Avenue Awards have grown in size and scope from 24 productions and 3,100 students in 2003 to 93 productions and more than 9,000 students participating in the 2011-12 high school theater season. The 2012 5th Avenue Awards encompassed 161 nominations, 104 honorable mentions, and 31 special awards, which were given out in various categories. Schools from as far away as Spokane, Mt. Baker, Sequim, and Vancouver, WA, are reporting back to The 5th Avenue that their involvement in this awards program has significantly helped their individual efforts to secure funding, improve curriculum and increase student participation.

For a full list of 5th Avenue Award recipients, visit the 2012 5th Avenue Awards page at: <http://www.5thavenue.org/education/student-programs#5th-avenue-awards>.

The award ceremony was webcast live on The 5th Avenue Facebook page, and will also be broadcast on the Seattle Channel. Visit [www.seattlechannel.org](http://www.seattlechannel.org) for airdates and times.

### **About The 5th Avenue Theatre**

The 5th Avenue Theatre is one of the nation's premier incubators for new musical theater. Since 2002, the celebrated company has produced 13 new musicals. Five have moved on to Broadway premieres, earning a combined 14 Tony Awards, including two for Best Musical (*Hairspray* and *Memphis*). The 5th Avenue Theatre is also known for its world class, critically acclaimed productions of musicals chosen from both the contemporary canon and the Golden Age of Broadway.

Unique in its Chinese-inspired design, this exquisite theater opened in 1926 as a venue for vaudeville and film. In 1980, the non-profit 5th Avenue Theatre began producing and presenting top-quality live musical theater. Today, under the leadership of Executive Producer and Artistic Director David Armstrong, Managing Director Bernadine C. Griffin and Producing Director Bill Berry, The 5th Avenue Theatre attracts an annual attendance of

more than 287,000 and ranks among the nation's largest and most respected musical theater companies.

In addition to its main stage productions, The 5th Avenue Theatre is also committed to encouraging the next generation of theatergoers through its extensive educational outreach program which includes: The Adventure Musical Theatre Touring Company, The 5th Avenue Awards Honoring High School Musical Theatre, the Student Matinee Program, and Spotlight Nights. For more information about The 5th Avenue Theatre, its season and its programs, please visit [www.5thavenue.org](http://www.5thavenue.org).

The 5th Avenue sincerely thanks Wells Fargo for its sponsorship of this important event for the eighth year in a row. In Washington, Wells Fargo has nearly 5,000 team members and 228 banking, mortgage and financial stores. Wells Fargo & Company is a diversified financial services company with \$1.2 trillion in assets, providing banking, insurance, investments, mortgage, and consumer and commercial finance across North America and internationally through more than 10,000 stores and 12,000 ATMs and the Internet ([wellsfargo.com](http://wellsfargo.com) and [wachovia.com](http://wachovia.com)).

### **2012 5th Avenue Award Recipients**

#### **Outstanding Overall Musical Production**

Liberty High School, *Little Shop of Horrors*

#### **Outstanding Direction**

Glacier Peak High School, *Seussical*

#### **Outstanding Music Direction**

Liberty High School, *Little Shop of Horrors*

#### **Outstanding Choreography**

Eisenhower High School, *The Boyfriend*

#### **Outstanding Orchestra**

Rogers High School, *My Fair Lady*

#### **Outstanding Scenic Design**

Liberty High School, *Little Shop of Horrors*

#### **Outstanding Lighting Design**

Lewis and Clark High School, *Zombie Prom*

#### **Outstanding Costume Design**

Ballard High School, *Bye Bye Birdie*

#### **Outstanding Hair and Make-Up Design**

Wenatchee High School, *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat*

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**Outstanding Stage Crew**

University High School, *Little Women*

**Outstanding Lobby Display**

Ferndale High School, *West Side Story*

**Outstanding Performance by an Actress in a Leading Role**

Caelan Creaser as Elle Woods, Kentridge High School, *Legally Blonde*

**Outstanding Performance by an Actor in a Leading Role**

Jesse Ward as Emmett, Lewis and Clark High School, *Legally Blonde*

**Outstanding Performance by an Actress in a Supporting Role**

Taylor Harris as Motormouth Maybelle, Union High School, *Hairspray*

**Outstanding Performance by an Actor in a Supporting Role**

Jeremy Dodd as Mr. Mushnik, Liberty High School, *Little Shop of Horrors*

**Outstanding Performance by an Ensemble Cast**

West Valley High School, *1776*

**Outstanding Performance by an Actress in a Featured Ensemble Role**

Olivia Rogers as Vivienne, Kentridge High School, *Legally Blonde*

**Outstanding Performance by an Actor in a Featured Ensemble Role**

Rohan Waghani as Mitch, Interlake High School, *The 25th Annual Putman County Spelling Bee*

**Outstanding Performance by a Chorus**

Eisenhower High School, *The Boyfriend*

**Outstanding Performance by an Ensemble Group**

Edmonds Heights K12, *Xanadu*, Melpomene and Calliope

**Outstanding Performance by an Actor or Actress in a Non-Singing Role**

Cody Lippert as Roscoe Dexter, Cashmere High School, *Singin' in the Rain*