



**EMBARGO UNTIL MONDAY, APRIL 29 AT 8AM ET**

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**DIRECTOR REBECCA APARICIO TO RECEIVE THE 2024 BARBARA WHITMAN AWARD FROM STAGE DIRECTORS AND CHOREOGRAPHERS FOUNDATION**

**DIRECTORS JO CATTELL, BO FRAZIER, CARA HINH, LANISE ANTOINE SHELLEY, AND BENITA DE WIT ANNOUNCED AS FINALISTS**

(April 29, 2024— New York, NY) Stage Directors and Choreographers Foundation (SDCF), the not-for-profit foundation of Stage Directors and Choreographers Society (SDC), today announced the recipient and five finalists for the **2024 Barbara Whitman Award**. Established by theatrical producer Barbara Whitman in 2021, this award recognizes a woman, trans, or non-binary director who has developed a clear and distinctive artistic voice and demonstrated unique vision in their theatrical work. This award is meant to heighten visibility for a director & their work in the field as well as support the work of the director with an unrestricted award of \$10,000.

**Rebecca Aparicio** has been chosen to receive the **2024 Barbara Whitman Award**. Aparicio said of her selection, "Thank you to SDCF, Barbara Whitman, the committee, and my nominator for this incredible recognition and honor. As the child of two Cuban immigrants, I am *"ni de aqui, ni de alla/*neither from here, nor from there" informing the work I create. My mission is to amplify stories of resilience, power, and joy from the Latinx and global majority community, and to give voice to our collectively underrepresented communities. This award comes at a pivotal crossroads in my career, reaffirming the need to continue amplifying these stories despite the challenges I may face on the road ahead."

Directors **Jo Cattell, Bo Frazier, Cara Hinh, Lanise Antoine Shelley, and Benita de Wit** were all recognized as finalists for the award. All finalists will receive a \$1,000 unrestricted award.

Aparicio was selected for this honor through a multi-round committee process. The first-round committee included Chris Burney, Elizabeth Carter, Luis Castro, Victoria Collado, and Kendra Ware. The second-round committee included Marya Sea Kaminski, Elena Velasco, Kendra Ware, and Barbara Whitman.

Says Whitman, "I'm thrilled that Rebecca has been named the winner of this year's award, and I'm equally excited that we were able to name five other exceptional directors as finalists. As is the case each and every year, the strength of the applicants was outstanding, and it was very difficult to pick just one winner. I'm honored to help lift up the work of these exceptional artists."

Learn more about our awardee and finalists below or at this website: <https://sdcfoundation.org/2024-barbara-whitman-award-recipient-and-finalists/>

## **About Rebecca Aparicio**

**Rebecca Aparicio** (she/her/ella) is a Cuban American, New York-based, bilingual director and writer of new work rooted in social and human justice. Recent directing: *Siluetas* by Erlina Ortiz and Robi Hager (Powerstreet Theatre, upcoming), *Las Borinqueñas* by Nelson Diaz-Marcano (Ensemble Studio Theatre), *Jardin Salvaje* by Karen Zacarias (GALA Hispanic Theatre), *Beastgirl*, based on the chapbook by Elizabeth Acevedo, book by C. Quintana and music by Janelle Lawrence (Kennedy Center, 3 Helen Hayes nominations); *The House on the Lagoon* by Caridad Svich (Gala Hispanic Theatre, Winner Best Direction Broadway World-DC), and *Sarita* by Maria Irene Fornes (Roundabout Theatre Refocus Series). As a director, she's developed new work with American Repertory Theater, Philadelphia Theatre Company, McCarter Theatre, O'Neill Theatre Center, Playwrights Center, Musical Theatre Factory, The Flea Theatre, Classical Theatre of Harlem, National Black Theatre, and more. Past Fellowships include: Roundabout Theatre's Inaugural Directing Group, MTC Jonathan Alper Directing Fellow, The COOP's Clusterf\*\*k Writing Cohort, and a two-time SDCF Observership Award recipient. As a writer, her work includes the award-winning musical *Pedro Pan* (New York Musical Festival, Musical Theatre Factory, Rhinebeck Writers Retreat, FringeNYC), *Tree Tales* (Prospect Theatre, commission), *Hindsight 2020* (Live & In Color, commission), *Legacy* (Prospect Theatre), and *The Garcia Sisters* (Red Mountain Theatre, commission). Rebecca is a staff member of Latinx Playwrights Circle, a steering committee member of the Latinx Theatre Commons, board member at Rhinebeck Writers Retreat, and is a founding member of Magic Forest Theatre (dedicated to creating new musicals for young audiences).  
RebeccaAparicio.com

## **About the Finalists:**

**Jo Cattell** (Playwright/Director) is a leading voice in the convergence of live theatre and immersive technologies, reimagining storytelling possibilities through the development and creation of new plays with tech. Her work has appeared at Sundance Film Festival, the BBC, Sky Television, Cirque du Soleil, and multiple US and UK theaters. She is a member of the LightPoets theatre collective, whose immersive graphic novel, *Particle Ink: The House Of Shattered Prisms*, will be opening at MGM Luxor in 2024. The LightPoet's recently created *Particle Ink: Speed Of Dark*, which performed in Las Vegas 2022. LightPoets also created Particle Ink's onstage metaverse for TED:2022 where the audience witnessed a world-first syncing of AR over 1400 devices with live performance. She is resident artist at the world-renowned Electronic Visualization Lab at the University of Illinois, with whom she created *Hummingbird*, an immersive theatrical experience with VR which has been performed in the Goodman Theatre, Chicago Children's Theatre and at Siggraph, Canada. She is a 3Arts awardee, a Joan Mitchell Center Fellow, a 2021 Illinois Artist Fellow and a Perkins Coie awardee. Cattell was the Maggio Directing Fellow at Chicago's Goodman Theatre. She is currently Head of content and co-creator at Kaleidoco, an innovative technology and entertainment company creating original IP and technology.

**Bo Frazier** (they/them) is a two-time Jeff Award-Nominated director, producer, and deviser. As a transfemme, non-binary, queer, and neurodivergent theatre artist, they are interested in traditionally excluded stories told in extremely imaginative ways. Recently, Bo directed the 2023 all-trans production of *tick, tick...BOOM!* featured in American Theatre Magazine, garnering 5 Jeff Award Nominations including Best Director and Best Musical. They were also one of the #VG9 staff members fighting for Victory Gardens Theater to stay alive in 2022. Bo's international career includes stints in London, NYC, and Chicago, where they have worked with companies such as Goodman Theatre, National Theatre London, Signature Theatre, Dixon Place, NAMT, AMTP, Theatre167, Heartbeat Opera, Indiana Repertory Theatre, Riverside Theatre, Sideshow Theatre, Rivendell Theatre Ensemble and London Theatre Workshop which they co-founded. SELECT DIRECTING/CHOREOGRAPHY: *Botticelli in the Fire* by Jordan Tannahill (Jeff Award Nom-Best Director), *Hit the Wall* by Ike Holter, *Men on Boats* by Jaclyn Backhaus, *Love & Information* by Caryl Churchill, *Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time* by Simon Stephens, and Associate Director for the London Premiere of *bare: the rock musical*. Bo has developed/directed new work by Dillon Chitto, Jaime Jarrett, Dakota Parobek,

C. Meaker, Leigh M Marshall, and KT Peterson. They started their career as a musical theatre performer, most notably appearing in the London Revival of Sondheim's *Assassins*. MFA Directing – University of Iowa alongside the Iowa Playwright's Workshop. FINALIST: Princess Grace Award. Represented by Bret Adams Ltd. [www.bofrazier.com](http://www.bofrazier.com)

**cara hinh** (they/she) is a queer, fat, Việt, and Hoosier theatre maker. They rejoice in work that uplifts the messy intersectionalities of holding multiple identities. Select credits include Transfer direction of *Sanctuary City* at Arena Stage and Berkeley Rep, *Little Women* at Perseverance Theatre, *Buried Ruins* with the SỔng Collective, *love you long time (already)* at Atlantic MixFest. Cara has been a Drama League Fellow, member of the '20-22 Roundabout Directors Group, a Directing Apprentice at Actors Theatre of Louisville, SDC Observer on Hadestown and a Fellow at Baltimore Center Stage. [carahinh.com](http://carahinh.com)

**Lanise Antoine Shelley** (She/her) is a Haitian actress, director, painter, and host of the podcast, "When They Were Young; Amplifying Voices of Adoptees." As a director, Lanise is spurred by the rigor of classical adaptations and committed to illuminating uncharted BIPOC classics from the diaspora. She was last seen collaborating with Red Bull Theater, Jackalope Theater, Pioneer Theater, Lookingglass Theater (AD), Chicago Shakespeare (AD), 16th St Theater, The Mercury Store, Paramount Theater, associate producing the indie film, "Fresh Hell" and others. She was previously awarded Black Theatre Coalition AMEX Directing Fellow 2023, Drama League Classical Directing Fellow, Stratford Shakespeare's Chicago Fellow, and Victory Gardens Theater Directing Fellow.

Lanise received an MFA from ART/MXAT at Harvard University; BFA from Cornish College of The Arts; a certificate in classical theater from BADA in Oxford, England; a certificate in classical theater from Birmingham Conservatory in Canada, and trained in voice/speech with Kristin Linklater in Scotland. [www.laniseantoineshelley.com](http://www.laniseantoineshelley.com)

**Benita de Wit** (they/them) is a New York-based Australian director of theatre and performance. Most recently they were the Resident Director for *Six* on Broadway and Assistant Director for *Straight Line Crazy* starring Ralph Fiennes. Previous directing credits include *Small Mouth Sounds* (Circle in the Square), *The Moors* (Theatre Row), *The Laramie Project* (Pace University), *Tartuffe* (Pace University), *Bat Out of Hell* (New York City Center, US & UK tours, Associate Director) and the Australian premieres of Anchuli Felicia King's *Slaughterhouse* (Belvoir St Theatre) and Kate Mulvey and Andy Peterson's *Razorhurst* (Hayes Theatre Co). Benita is an SDC Associate Member and a New Georges affiliated artist. They have been an artist in residence at Barn Arts, Catwalk Residency and Vox Theatre Festival and they have worked at The Playwrights Realm, Classic Stage Company, The Shed, Ensemble Studio Theatre, Exquisite Corpse Company, and internationally in London, Edinburgh and Australia. Their immersive and multidisciplinary work has been performed at National Sawdust, New York Public Library, Los Angeles County Museum of Art and Roulette Intermedium and has included concerts with new music ensemble Kinds of Kings, a music video for indie pop band Tenderheart Bitches and immersive performances in collaboration with technology artist Gabe BC. Benita has an MFA in Directing from Columbia University and is on Faculty at Circle in the Square Theatre School.

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**Barbara Whitman** is a theatrical producer who made her Broadway debut producing *A Raisin in the Sun*, starring Sean Combs, Phylicia Rashad, Audra McDonald, and Sanaa Lathan. Other Broadway credits include *Good Night, Oscar* starring Sean Hayes, *A Strange Loop* (Tony and Drama Desk Awards, Best Musical; Pulitzer Prize) *Diana – The Musical*, *Burn This* starring Adam Driver and Keri Russell, *Angels in America* (Tony and Drama Desk Award, Best Play Revival), *1984*, *The Glass Menagerie* starring Sally Fields, *War Paint* starring Patti LuPone and Christine Ebersole, *The Humans* (Tony Award, Best Play), *Oh, Hello* starring

Nick Kroll and John Mulaney, *Fully Committed* starring Jesse Tyler Ferguson, *Fun Home* (Tony Award, Best Musical), *Hedwig and the Angry Inch* (Tony and Drama Desk Award, Best Musical Revival), *Of Mice and Men* starring James Franco, *If/Then* starring Idina Menzel, *Hands on a Hardbody*, *Red* (Tony and Drama Desk Awards, Best Play), *Next to Normal* (Pulitzer Prize), *Hamlet* starring Jude Law, *33 Variations* starring Jane Fonda, *Mary Stuart*, *Legally Blonde - The Musical*, *The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee*, and *Dirty Rotten Scoundrels*. National tours include *Fun Home*, *Hedwig and the Angry Inch*, *If/Then*, *Murder for Two*, *Next to Normal*, *Legally Blonde – The Musical*, *...Spelling Bee*, *Dirty Rotten Scoundrels* and *Frost/Nixon*. A native New Yorker, Barbara attended NYU's Gallatin School and received an MFA in Theatre Management and Producing from Columbia University. She's a member of the Board of Governors and the Executive Committee of the Broadway League. She's also on the Columbia University School of the Arts Dean's Council. Upcoming productions include *A Strange Loop* at the Barbican Theatre in London.

Founded in 1965, **Stage Directors and Choreographers Foundation (SDCF)** celebrates, develops, and supports professional stage directors and choreographers throughout every phase of their careers. SDCF works to build a theatrical community that reflects the cultural, racial, and gender diversity of our nation by creating opportunities for artists of all backgrounds to bring their full, authentic selves to their work as creative leaders in the theatre. SDCF's goals are to provide opportunities to practice the crafts of directing and choreography; to gather and disseminate craft and career information; to promote the profession to emerging talent; to provide opportunities for exchange of knowledge among directors and choreographers; to increase the awareness of the value of directors' and choreographers' work; and to convene around issues affecting theatre artists. [sdcfoundation.org](http://sdcfoundation.org)

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