



## **EMBARGO UNTIL SEPT 18<sup>TH</sup> 11 AM ET**

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### **CHRISTOPHER ASHLEY TO RECEIVE PRESTIGIOUS “MR. ABBOTT” AWARD**

**Stage Directors and Choreographers Foundation (SDCF) to Celebrate Tony Award-Winning Director Christopher Ashley for Outstanding Contributions to Broadway**

**Tony-nominated actor Jenn Colella and two-time Tony Award-winning actor Brian Stokes Mitchell will serve as Honorary Co-Chairs for Celebration March 31, 2025**

(September 18, 2024 – New York, NY) **Stage Directors and Choreographers Foundation (SDCF)**, the not-for-profit foundation of Stage Directors and Choreographers Society (SDC), today announced that acclaimed director Christopher Ashley will be honored with the “Mr. Abbott” Award, given to a Broadway director or choreographer. The award will be presented at the Foundation’s annual Gala on March 31, 2025 at City Winery in New York City.

Chairing the “Mr. Abbott” Award Committee are Broadway producer **Sue Frost**; Executive Vice President/Head of International Business Development for The John Gore Organization **Kumiko Yoshii**; celebrated playwright, screenwriter, librettist, and director **Doug Wright**; and SDCF Trustee **Justin Emeka**. Proceeds from the Gala will benefit the programs of SDCF.

“On behalf of the SDCF Board of Trustees, we are thrilled to honor Christopher Ashley this season for his contributions to the American Theatre,” stated SDCF Director Dani Barlow. “The range of his work—which includes such exceptional new musicals and plays as his Tony Award winning production of *Come from Away* and numerous premieres —is extraordinary. Each piece he directs brings a spirit of collaboration and joy to his fellow artists—and, of course, to audiences. Chris’s extraordinary craft and artistry, along with serving as Artistic Director of La Jolla Playhouse, have shaped work on Broadway—and beyond—for many years and will continue to do so for many more years to come.”

The “Mr. Abbott” Award, presented by SDCF on behalf of directors and choreographers to one of their peers, is named in honor of the late renowned director **George Abbott**. “As a previous “Mr. Abbott” Awardee, I want to celebrate Chris who is so deserving of this recognition,” stated 2015 “Mr. Abbott Award Winner James Lapine. “He is not only one of our most talented directors but has always been kind, generous, and supportive of his peers. Big time congratulations.”

Past recipients represent the best of the profession and include Michael Bennett, Arvin Brown, Vinnette Carroll, Graciela Daniele, Gordon Davidson, Agnes de Mille, Zelda Fichandler, Cy Feuer, Bob Fosse, Peter Gennaro, Garson Kanin, James Lapine, Kenny Leon, Gillian Lynne, Kathleen & Rob Marshall, Marshall W. Mason, Lynne Meadow, Jerry Mitchell, Mike Nichols, Trevor Nunn, Jack O'Brien, Harold Prince, Lloyd Richards, Donald Saddler, Gene Saks, Andrei Serban, Susan Stroman, Daniel Sullivan, Julie Taymor, Tommy Tune, George C. Wolfe, Jerry Zaks, as well as Victoria Traube, first-ever recipient of a Special "Mr. Abbott" Award.

### **About CHRISTOPHER ASHLEY**

Won the Tony Award for his direction of the stage production of *Come From Away* on Broadway, and serves as the Rich Family Artistic Director of the Tony Award-winning La Jolla Playhouse in San Diego, CA. In addition to *Come From Away*, other Broadway credits include; *Diana: The Musical*; *Escape to Margaritaville*, *Xanadu*, *Leap of Faith* (Drama Desk Award nomination); *Memphis* (Tony, Outer Critics Circle nominations); *All Shook Up*, *The Rocky Horror Show* (Tony, Drama Desk, Outer Critics Circle Award nominations). Film credits include *Diana: The Musical* on Netflix, the feature films *Jeffrey* and *Lucky Stiff*, and the American Playhouse production of *Blown Sideways Through Life* for PBS. At La Jolla Playhouse, Mr. Ashley directed the world-premiere productions of *The Untitled Unauthorized Hunter S. Thompson Musical*, *Babbitt*, *Come From Away*, *Diana: The Musical*, *Escape to Margaritaville*, *Memphis*, *The Darrell Hammond Project*, *Hollywood* and *Chasing the Song*. Other select Playhouse credits include *Freaky Friday*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and *Glengarry Glen Ross*. Mr. Ashley directed productions of *Come From Away* in London, Toronto, Australia and on national tour. Other tours include *Escape to Margaritaville*, *Memphis*, *Xanadu*, *All Shook Up* and *Seussical: The Musical*. Additional New York stage credits: *Blown Sideways Through Life*, *Jeffrey* (Lucille Lortel and Obie Awards), *The Most Fabulous Story Ever Told*, *Valhalla* (Lucille Lortel nomination – Outstanding Direction), *Regrets Only*, *Wonder of the World*, *Communicating Doors*, *Bunny Bunny*, *The Night Hank Williams Died*, and *Fires in the Mirror* (Lucille Lortel Award), among others. Mr. Ashley is the recipient of the Princess Grace Award, the Drama League Director Fellowship and an NEA/TCG Director Fellowship.

For more information about the "Mr. Abbott" Award and other SDC Foundation programs, please call Dani Barlow SDC Foundation Director, at 646.524.2226.

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### **About Stage Directors and Choreographers Foundation**

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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