



**EMBARGO UNTIL TUESDAY, APRIL 22 AT 7AM ET**

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**DIRECTOR AUTUMN ANGELETTIE TO RECEIVE THE 2025 BARBARA WHITMAN AWARD FROM STAGE DIRECTORS AND CHOREOGRAPHERS FOUNDATION**

**DMITRI VICTOR BARCOMI, FRAN DE LEON, EMILY LYON, AND CAITLIN RYAN O'CONNELL ANNOUNCED AS FINALISTS**

(April 22, 2025— 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 four finalists for the **2025 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.

**Autumn Angelettie** has been chosen to receive the **2025 Barbara Whitman Award**. Angelettie said of her selection, "I am a director driven by a core question first posed by June Jordan, '...as a Black feminist, I must ask myself: Where is the love? How is my own lifework serving to end these tyrannies, these corrosions of sacred possibility?' The cultivation of art to build a better world is my lifework, and it is an extraordinary honor for my voice and artistry to be recognized in this way. Words can hardly encapsulate my gratitude to Barbara Whitman, SDCF, the award committee, and Shanara Gabrielle, Artistic Director of Theater Alliance, for the nomination. At a time where the theatre, and our world, face critical dangers, this award is an affirmation and a humbling investment in my practice that I intend to honor through continuing the work toward cultural transformation."

**Dmitri Victor Barcomi, Fran de Leon, Emily Lyon, and Caitlin Ryan O'Connell** were all recognized as finalists for the award. All finalists will receive a \$1,000 unrestricted award.

Angelettie was selected for this honor through a multi-round committee process. The first-round committee included Chris Burney, Luis Castro, Melissa Crespo, cara hinh, Leigh Silverman, and Tamilla Woodard. The second-round committee included Rebecca Aparicio, Barbara Whitman, Benita de Wit, Tamilla Woodard.

Says Whitman, "It was another extraordinary year of applicants for this Award and on behalf of the committee, I am thrilled that Autumn has been selected as this year's awardee. She is joined by four wonderful finalists who are all worth knowing. I'm excited to see where their careers take them."

Learn more about our awardee and finalists below or at this website: <https://sdcfoundation.org/2025-barbara-whitman-award-recipient-and-finalists/>

## **About Autumn Angelettie**

**Autumn Angelettie** (she/her) is a theatrical director and multi-hyphenate artist from Greater Philadelphia, based in New York City. As an abolitionist, feminist theatre maker and cultural worker, Autumn thrives crafting mission-oriented work that is subversively joyful, spiritually fulfilling, and rich with the force that fuels art for liberation: hope. Autumn is currently the Associate Director on the Broadway production of Kimberly Belflower's *John Proctor Is the Villain* (NYT Critics Pick). Her recent direction includes the regional premiere of *Covenant* (Theater Alliance, Helen Hayes Nomination, Outstanding Director - Hayes) and *Mud; or when things get messy and how we live with it* (Connelly Theater, SheNYC Theater Festival Award Winner - Best Director). Autumn was the 2023-24 Roundabout Directing Fellow, during which time she assisted on the Broadway revival of *Home*, and the world premieres of *Jonah* and *Covenant*. Autumn has developed new works with Mabou Mines, the 24 Hour Plays Nationals and Broadway, the International Human Rights Art Festival, the Makers' Ensemble, and Moxie Arts NY. She is also a proud member of the Roundabout Directors Group Cohort 4 and SDC. BFA: the Chadwick A. Boseman College of Fine Arts at the illustrious Howard University.

## **About the Finalists:**

**Dmitri Victor Barcomi** is a transsexual transdisciplinary theater director and creator from New York City. His artistic interests include working with unusual source materials, technological experimentation, international theatrical collaborations, and honoring queer icons. Dmitri's work has been seen throughout New York at Lincoln Center, PAC NYC, Target Margin, many weird spots downtown, and internationally at the Edinburgh Fringe and the Teatr Słowackiego in Kraków. Recent projects include directing for National Queer Theater's Obie award winning Criminal Queerness Festival, which produces plays from countries where LGBTQ identities are censored/criminalized, and founding the first ever Museum of Drag! Upcoming collaborations include Lincoln Bio at The Brick, May 2025, and the Criminal Queerness Festival at HERE Arts Center, June 2025. Dmitri holds a BA in Theater and French from The New School, and an MFA in Directing from an Ivy League institution that must take accountability for its participation in both the ongoing genocide in Palestine and the suppression of free speech of its student body. Keep up with Dmitri at [mxbarcomi.com](http://mxbarcomi.com)

**Fran de Leon** is a director, actor, writer, and educator born in Downtown LA, raised in Hollywood and Manila. Her solo show, *Faces of America*, toured to over 500 venues across 49 states, including performances for the United Nations Associations, California and New York.

Director (select): "God Will Do the Rest," by Nicholas Pilapil, produced by Artists at Play and the Latino Theatre Company (LA Times Best Bet, Stage Raw Recommended, 16 Broadway World nominations); "The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee," and "Everybody" (5C Performing Arts); "Sacrifice Zone Los Angeles," (LA County Natural History Museum); "Into the Woods" (Pasadena Playhouse's Tony Award winning season).

Writing Commissions: "Valor," and "Lola's Banig" (Center Theatre Group); "Bully" (Segerstrom Center for the Arts TYA); "Time Freeze Space" (12th Night Repertory/ ETC).

New Play Development: "Proud Marys," by Jennifer Paz & Anthony Federov (East West Players); "Have to Believe We are Magic," by Sara Guerrero (TheatreSquared); "Little Tokyo Goes Nuclear," by Alison Minami (CTG).

Other companies Fran has worked with include: the Geffen Playhouse, South Coast Rep, Playmakers' Rep, The Music Center of Los Angeles, Mixed Blood Theatre, Playwrights' Arena, Garry Marshall Theater.

TV credits include recurring roles on "For All Mankind" and "For All the People," as well as guest stars on "Criminal Minds," "Speechless," and "The Brothers Sun."

Affiliations: Will & Company; Core Member of Critical Mass Performance Group, Adjunct Faculty of University of Southern California School of Dramatic Arts.

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**Emily Lyon** is a director, artistic director, and dramaturg that carves out the humor and authenticity in new and classic texts. She co-created, leads, and curates Expand the Canon – a call to action to include a global intersection of historic women writers in the canon of classics – as Artistic Director of Hedgepig Ensemble. Expand the Canon highlights 52 plays by 50 historic gender-expansive writers from 1600-1990, and has partnered with companies across the country including Classic Stage Company, Fiasco Theater, American Shakespeare Center, Roundabout, INTAR, Island Shakespeare Festival, The Acting Company, The Folger, and more. As a freelance director, Lyon has directed 9 world premieres, many classic plays, and worked with The Folger, The Brick, Hudson Valley Shakespeare Festival, Geva Theatre, The Old Globe, LaMaMa, Yale Rep, The Royal Shakespeare Company, University of Michigan, and others. Her productions have won Best Direction and Best Production (sheNYC), Best Ensemble (MITF), Best Actress (FringeNYC), and Best Premiere (UnitedSolo). As a freelance dramaturg, she's worked with writers on shaping 25+ new plays, including the world premiere of Kate Hamill's *Sense & Sensibility* and Diana Ly's *Sex and the Abbey*, as well as editing classical texts, including many of the Expand the Canon plays, an English-Spanish bilingual *Hamlet* (readings at The Public, The Folger, CTH, TAC), and *The Tempest* directed by Michael Greif for Shakespeare in the Park. Drama League Directing Fellow, SDC Associate. Find out more at [EmilyALyon.com](http://EmilyALyon.com) and [ExpandTheCanon.com](http://ExpandTheCanon.com).

**Caitlin Ryan O'Connell** is a theater director and teaching artist based in Brooklyn. She has directed and developed work at Little Island, Clubbed Thumb, The Bushwick Starr, The Public, Ars Nova, The Lark, Roundabout, New Georges, The Hearth, Fault Line Theatre, Montana Repertory Theatre, Actors Theatre of Louisville, and The Denver Center. In 2018, Caitlin co-created a [Senior Center Storytelling](#) program with Rachel Kauder Nalebuff supported by The Bushwick Starr. She teaches theater classes at senior centers throughout Bushwick and mentors artists who join the program as co-teachers. She has also taught at Wellesley College, NYU's Playwrights Horizons Theater School, The New School, Powerhouse Theater Training Company, The National Theatre Institute, and with the International Theatre Project in Rwanda. Caitlin is New Georges affiliated artist and was an [Audrey Residency](#) in 2023 and 2018. She is a former Clubbed Thumb directing fellow, Actors Theatre directing apprentice, New Georges Jam member, and alum of Lincoln Center Theater's Directors Lab 2017. BA Wellesley College, MFA Brown University.

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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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