



CATS 2026

Awards Ceremony

21 June 2026



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Introduction

Thank you so much for joining our CATS Awards Ceremony 2026, and welcome to our special midsummer celebration of all that's been achieved in Scottish theatre over the last 12 months. This year, we are thrilled to be presenting our CATS Awards at the beautifully refurbished Citizens Theatre, which reopened last September to the absolute delight of everyone who loves theatre in Scotland. We owe our warmest thanks to the whole Citizens' team for their tremendous help, support and generosity in hosting this year's awards ceremony and party, and we are delighted to be here with them today.

We are also delighted that our special guest star is Gavin Mitchell, one of so many leading actors, in Scotland and beyond, who began their careers at the Citizens' under the leadership of the late, great artistic director Giles Havergal, who sadly passed away last summer. We remember Giles even as we celebrate the reopening of the theatre he loved, and are delighted that Gavin will be here with us to mark both the theatre's reopening, and the terrific achievements of Scotland's theatre makers over the past year.

Once again, this year, we are making awards across ten categories, including our exciting new Best Pantomime Award, introduced for the first time last year. And once again, we owe a huge vote of thanks to our sponsors, without whom our annual celebration of theatre in Scotland would not be possible. Our warmest thanks to Nick Hern Books, Equity, BECTU, Theatre Studies at the University of Glasgow, BB Hair Collective and the Gilded Balloon, for their continuing invaluable support, to our guarantors Creative Scotland, and also to the very generous Corney and Barrow providers of our sparkling celebration drinks this year!

Finally, though, our biggest vote of thanks, as ever, goes to the artists and makers who continue to achieve creative miracles on Scotland's stages, in both good times and bad. As theatre critics and writers in these troubled times, we believe that the role of our theatres in enabling Scotland to speak thoughtfully and joyfully to itself, and to the wider world, has never been more important; and it is our privilege to celebrate it today, with you. Enjoy the ceremony; and please join us afterwards in the beautiful new Citizens foyer for a party to remember!

Joyce McMillan
Co-Convener, CATS Awards
June 2026

Critics' Awards for Theatre in Scotland Judging Panel 2026

Mary Brennan (The Herald)

Mark Brown (Sunday National and The Daily Telegraph)

Anna Burnside (Across the Arts and Corr Blimey!)

Neil Cooper (The Herald)

Dominic Corr (Corr Blimey!)

Thom Dibdin (AllEdinburghTheatre.com)

Mark Fisher (The Guardian)

Joyce McMillan (The Scotsman)

Fergus Morgan (The Stage)

David Pollock (Freelance Reviewer)

Arusa Qureshi (The Stage/Freelance)

Allan Radcliffe (The Times)

Hugh Simpson (AllEdinburghTheatre.com)

Simon Thompson (WhatsOnStage)

Guest Presenter

Gavin Mitchell



Guest presenter of the 2026 Awards is leading Scottish actor Gavin Mitchell, who played the inimitable Booby the Barman in the long-running television series *Still Game*.

Mitchell, who is currently starring as the USA's second president, John Adams, in the Fox Nation docudrama series *The White House*, also presented Scotland's prestigious theatre awards at the Festival Theatre, Edinburgh, in 2017. He is currently filming the latest series of *Shetland*, and will be back on stage in Glasgow this Christmas in *Scrooge —The Musical* at the SEC Armadillo.

Running Order

WELCOME

Joyce McMillan introduces today's event and welcomes guest presenter Gavin Mitchell

CATS 2026

The main event. In order of presentation:

OUTSTANDING PERFORMANCE

Sponsored by Theatre Studies at the University of Glasgow and introduced by Arusa Qureshi & Neil Cooper

BEST ENSEMBLE

Sponsored by Equity and introduced by Mark Fisher

BEST DIRECTOR

Introduced by Mark Brown

BEST DESIGN

Sponsored by BBHair Collective and introduced by Simon Thompson

BEST MUSIC & SOUND

Introduced by Hugh Simpson

BEST TECHNICAL PRESENTATION

Sponsored by BECTU and introduced by Mark Brown

OUTSTANDING PANTOMIME

Introduced by Dominic Corr

BEST PRODUCTION FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

Sponsored by Gilded Balloon
and introduced by Anna
Burnside

BEST NEW PLAY

Introduced by Fergus Morgan

BEST PRODUCTION

Introduced by Joyce McMillan

THANK YOU

A vote of thanks to all

We would like to now invite you to celebrate the nominees and winners alike by attending the after-show party.
All welcome and enjoy!

This year's CATS Awards will be BSL interpreted by Sarah Forrester and Amy Cheskin.





Saint Joan ©Miheala Bodlovic.

2026 Nominees

Nominees for the 2026 categories:

OUTSTANDING PERFORMANCE

- **Lærke Schjærff Engelbrecht** *What I'm Here For* (Vanishing Point/Teater Katapult)
- **Sandy Grierson** *Make it Happen* (National Theatre of Scotland/Dundee Rep and Edinburgh International Festival)
- **Jessica Hardwick** *GUSH* (Traverse Theatre)
- **Robert Jack** *Weans in the Woods* (Macrobert Arts Centre)
- **Mandipa Kabanda** *Saint Joan* (Raw Material/Perth Theatre/ Aberdeen Performing Arts in association with Citizens Theatre)
- **Johnny McKnight** *She's Behind You!* (Traverse Theatre/ National Theatre of Scotland)
- **Karine Polwart** *Windblown* (Raw Material)
- **Sam Stopford** *Doctor Faustus* (Bard in the Botanics)

BEST ENSEMBLE

- **Stand & Deliver: The Lee Jeans Sit-In** (National Theatre of Scotland/Tron Theatre)
- **The High Life** (National Theatre of Scotland/Dundee Rep)
- **Waiting for Godot** (Citizens Theatre/Liverpool Everyman & Playhouse/Octagon Theatre Bolton)
- **Water Colour** (Pitlochry Festival Theatre/Byre Theatre/ Playwright's Studio, Scotland)

BEST DIRECTOR

- **Lucy Ireland and Jim Manganello** *Arlington* (Shotput)
- **Stewart Laing** *Saint Joan* (Raw Material/Perth Theatre/ Aberdeen Performing Arts in association with Citizens Theatre)
- **Dominic Hill** *Waiting for Godot* (Citizens Theatre/Liverpool Everyman & Playhouse/Octagon Theatre Bolton)
- **Matthew Lenton** *What I'm Here For* (Vanishing Point/Teater Katapult)

BEST DESIGN

- **Anna Yates** (set and costume), **Emma Jones** (lighting) and **Rob Willoughby** (video), *Arlington* (Shotput)
- **Rae Smith** (set and costume) and **Bruno Poet** (lighting), *One Day* (Royal Lyceum Edinburgh/Melting Pot)
- **Mai Katsume** (set and costume) and **Simon Wilkinson** (lighting), *What I'm Here For* (Vanishing Point/Teater Katapult)
- **Neil Haynes** (set), **Jamie Wardrop** (AV), **Lizzie Powell** (LX) and **Vicki Brown** (costume), *Windblown* (Raw Material)

BEST MUSIC & SOUND

- **Forbes Masson, Alan Cumming, Johnny McKnight, Sarah de Tute, Tommy Penny** and **Sarah Travis** *The High Life* (National Theatre of Scotland/Dundee Rep)
- **Dave Hook** *Wallace* (Raw Material/A Play, A Pie and A Pint)
- **Mark Melville** *What I'm Here For* (Vanishing Point/Teater Katapult)
- **Karine Polwart, Pippa Murphy** and **Dave Milligan** *Windblown* (Raw Material)

BEST TECHNICAL PRESENTATION

- **Arlington** (Shotput)
- **Saint Joan** (Raw Material/Perth Theatre/Aberdeen Performing Arts in association with Citizens Theatre)
- **The Glass Menagerie** (Dundee Rep/Citizens Theatre/Royal Lyceum Edinburgh)
- **What I'm Here For** (Vanishing Point/Teater Katapult)

OUTSTANDING PANTOMIME

- **Aladdie** (Gaiety Theatre)
- **Oor Wee Mummy McGoose** (The King's Kirkcaldy)
- **Puss in Boots** (Carrigans, Blantyre/R&G Productions)
- **The Snow Queen** (Perth Theatre)

BEST PRODUCTION FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

- **Beauty and the Beast** (Citizens Theatre)
- **Cinderella (A Fairy Tale)** (Royal Lyceum Edinburgh)
- **Ideas Jukebox** (Independent Arts Projects)
- **Tongue Twister** (Edinburgh International Children's Festival/Imagine)

BEST NEW PLAY

- **Séan O'Neil** *FISH* (A Play, A Pie and A Pint)
- **Frances Poet** *Stand & Deliver: The Lee Jeans Sit-In* (National Theatre of Scotland/Tron Theatre)
- **Milly Sweeney** *Water Colour* (Pitlochry Festival Theatre/Byre Theatre/Playwright's Studio, Scotland)
- **Karine Polwart** *Windblown* (Raw Material)

BEST PRODUCTION

- **She's Behind You!** (Traverse Theatre/National Theatre of Scotland)
- **The High Life** (National Theatre of Scotland/Dundee Rep)
- **Waiting for Godot** (Citizens Theatre/Liverpool Everyman & Playhouse/Octagon Theatre Bolton)
- **Windblown** (Raw Material)

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Waiting for Godot: ©Miheala Bodlovic.



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