



# Festival 2019 News

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## TWENTY-SIXTH ANNUAL LOS ANGELES WOMEN'S THEATRE FESTIVAL ANNOUNCES HONOREES

The 26<sup>th</sup> Annual Los Angeles Women's Theatre Festival (LAWTF) will honor five women for their exceptional career and life achievements in the Opening Night Champagne Gala and Awards Ceremony on March 22, 2019 at 7:00 p.m. at Theatre 68, 5112 Lankershim Blvd., North Hollywood, CA 91601. The deserving honorees who have made laudable contributions to the world of theatre are listed here:

Jenifer Lewis will be bestowed with the Eternity Award, given to an artist or individual whose lifetime achievements have made a lasting contribution to the world of theatre. Ms. Lewis is a veteran of Broadway (*Eubie!*, *Comin' Uptown*, *Rock 'N Roll!*, *The First 5,000 Years*, *Hairspray*) and regional theatre (portraying the title role in the Seattle cast of *Hello, Dolly!*). Her autobiographical comedy and music show *The Diva Is Dismissed* played Off-Broadway at the Public Theatre. Her career

spans 47 feature films and hundreds of television appearances, with series regular roles on three hit series: *Black-ish*; *Strong Medicine*; and *Courthouse*. She is a much in-demand voice artist. Her singing career on the concert stage includes over 200 concerts in 49 states and four continents. She is the author of a memoir, *The Mother of Black Hollywood*.

Leslie Ishii will be the recipient of the Integrity Award, presented to an artist or individual who has brought credibility and dignity to her work. Ms. Ishii is an actor, director, teaching artist, producer, facilitator and community activist, with extensive credits in all these areas of endeavor. She has appeared on Broadway (*James Clavell's Shogun: The Musical*), in Hollywood (recurring roles on *Lost*, *The Bold and the Beautiful*, and parts in feature films), on regional stages (Mark Taper Forum, South Coast Rep, Cornerstone Theatre, American Conservatory Theatre, and El Teatro Campesino). She has directed for Center Theatre Group, Artists at Play, Oregon Shakespeare Festival, East West Players, Joseph Papp Public Theatre (NYC) and Perseverance Theatre (Alaska). She has worked extensively for Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (National Cultural Navigation Theatre Project, Consortium of Asian American Theaters and Artists, Theatre Communications Group, more).

Sandra Tsing Loh will receive the Maverick Award, presented to an artist or individual whose work has set a high standard of individuality and self-styled creativity. Actor, comedian and author, Ms. Tsing Loh is one of L.A.'s best-known solo performers, with shows including *The Madwoman in the Volvo*, *Mother on Fire*, *I Worry*, *Aliens in America*, and *Bad Sex with Bud Kemp*. A three-actor version of her show *Sugar Plum Fairy* debuted at South Coast Rep in 2017. She appeared at

The Broad Stage in a stand-up show, *The B\*\*\*\* Is Back: An All-Too-Intimate Conversation*. She workshopped a new piece, *Blue State*, at the Ojai Playwrights Conference. She was designated a Distinguished Alumna by Cal Tech, where she obtained a BS in Physics. Her daily radio broadcast *The Loh Down on Science* is heard by 4 million people weekly. Her broadcast *The Loh Life* is heard weekly on NPR. The author of numerous books, she is an adjunct associate professor of Drama at UC Irvine, where she also teaches Science Communication.

Whitney Weston will receive the Rainbow Award, bestowed on an artist or individual for her diverse contributions in fostering non-traditional and multicultural theatre works. Ms. Weston co-founded the Greenway Arts Alliance with Pierson Blaetz in 1997, which has operated the Greenway Court Theatre in the Fairfax District of Los Angeles since 2000. She is a lifelong activist, committed to keeping the arts and the community working together. Greenway produces and presents theatre, spoken word, media arts and dance performances that represent and reflect the unheard voices and rich diversity of Los Angeles. Ms. Weston has received recognition for her activities from the NAACP, Los Angeles Drama Critics Circle, L.A. Weekly, Women in Theatre Red Carpet Award, and has been recognized for outstanding service by the L.A. Mayor's Office, L.A. City Council and LAUSD's School Board and Administrators' Union.

Carol Channing is this year's recipient of the Infinity Award, memorializing exceptional achievements of a theatre artist. The term "legendary" is not hyperbole in describing the late Ms. Channing's stature in the American theatre. The recipient of three Tony ® Awards, including one for Lifetime Achievement, her Broadway

credits include *Hello, Dolly!* (the original production plus two revivals), *Lend an Ear* (Theatre World Award), *Proof Thro' the Night*, *Show Girl*, *Lorelei*, *Gentlemen Prefer Blondes*, *Four on a Garden*, *The Vamp*, *Wonderful Town*, and *Let's Face It!* She also appeared in touring productions of *Hello, Dolly!*, *Jerry's Girls*, *Legends!*, and *Sugar Babies*. She also appeared in films and extensively on television. She won a Golden Globe for her performance in the film *Thoroughly Modern Millie* and received a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame. Ms. Channing advocated strongly for arts education for children.

There will be special live performances at the Gala in addition to the awards presentation. Performers include:

Vannia Ibarquen in *Yma*. This dance excerpt celebrates Yma Sumac, the only Peruvian woman bestowed with a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame.

Juli Kim in *For Those Who Dream*. This dance is attribute to beauty in the midst of finding resiliency in the human spirit.

Vickilyn Reynolds in *Hattie McDaniel.... What I Need You to Know!* This excerpt of the musical play gives a glimpse of the first African American to receive an Oscar® in Hollywood.

Founded by Executive Producer Adilah Barnes and Miriam Reed, the Los Angeles Women's Theatre Festival is an annual event unique among Los Angeles cultural institutions and should not be missed as LAWTF celebrates its 26<sup>th</sup> year.

The Los Angeles Women's Theatre Festival is a non-profit organization. The Los Angeles Women's Theatre Festival organization is made possible this year in part by the Department of Cultural Affairs of the City of Los Angeles, City of West Hollywood, Los Angeles County Arts Commission, City National Bank, Union Bank, City of Culver City in association with Sony Entertainment, KPFK 90.7 and Adilah Barnes Productions.

Admission to the Gala on Friday March 22 at 7:00 p.m. is \$50 or two tickets for \$90 (includes reception and Champagne). For the other programs on Saturday and Sunday, ticket prices this year include general admission single show tickets at \$25.00 in advance or \$30.00 at the door. A VIP all-access pass for the entire weekend is available for \$150. Reservations: (818) 760-0408 or go to <http://www.lawtf.org> To join and follow LAWTF on Facebook and Twitter, click on their links at <http://www.lawtf.org>