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**RECIPIENTS ANNOUNCED FOR THE AMERICAN THEATRE WING'S
ANDREW LLOYD WEBBER INITIATIVE 2021 UNIVERSITY SCHOLARSHIPS**

**INAUGURAL RECIPIENTS OF
STEWART F. LANE FELLOWSHIP FOR CAREER ADVANCEMENT
ALSO ANNOUNCED**

**INITIATIVE DISTRIBUTES OVER \$2.1M IN GRANTS AND SCHOLARSHIPS TO DATE IN
EFFORT TO CATALYZE SYSTEMIC CHANGE AND BOLSTER THE PIPELINE**

New York, NY (December 7th, 2021) — The American Theatre Wing has announced recipients of the Andrew Lloyd Webber Initiative 2021 University Scholarships, as well as the inaugural fellows of the newly launched Stewart F. Lane Fellowship for Career Advancement.

Created in 2016 with seed funding from the Andrew Lloyd Webber Foundation, the **Andrew Lloyd Webber Initiative (ALWI)** catalyzes change in the American Theatre by infusing new resources into the theatre ecosystem that bolster the pipeline for historically underrepresented talent – on stage and off. Through this initiative, the American Theatre Wing seeks to directly address several key systemic issues that create obstacles in the education and training pipeline, and which have contributed to the creation of a less equitable and less diverse American theatre.

This year, the program has been expanded thanks to the new Stewart F. Lane Fellowship for Career Advancement. The fellowship was created thanks to a generous \$200k endowment gift from Bonnie Comley and Stewart F. Lane to award graduating college seniors with the potential to make a positive, long-lasting contribution to the theatre industry. Selected from the matriculating class of University Scholarship recipients, this expansion of the Andrew Lloyd Webber Initiative will ease the transition from college to career with an unrestricted award that will allow them to put the resources wherever they are most needed to safeguard their long-term career.

On the decision to create the fellowship, Tony Award-winning Producer, writer, and entrepreneur Stewart F. Lane stated, “Any artform’s enduring relevancy is dependent on the strength of its emerging talent. The theater needs new perspectives, exciting ideas, and fresh voices. By alleviating some of the financial pressure that graduates face as they enter the workforce, we hope to give our fellows the inner space needed to focus and develop their talent.”

In announcing this new class of recipients, American Theatre Wing President & CEO Heather Hitchens

stated, “Reaching and supporting young artists at critical stages, such as the transition from high school to college, is essential to ensuring their successful development. Having established the Andrew Lloyd Webber Initiative 5 years ago, there’s a clear and growing need for supporting arts education across the country, and especially for historically underrepresented communities.”

She added, “As we further develop and deepen the impact of this program, it’s important to continually listen to the needs of these communities. We’re grateful that Bonnie and Stewart have joined us in answering the call by supporting students in their transition from college to career through the establishment of the Stewart F. Lane Fellowship for Career Advancement.”

The University Scholarships, one of three branches of the Andrew Lloyd Weber Initiative, represents one of the Wing’s most vigorous investments in direct support for underserved public school students. High School students in Grade 12 who demonstrate talent and ability in the theatre arts, but lack the resources to attend a four-year university program, are eligible to apply for a 4-Year University Scholarship. Recipients are provided with scholarships of up to \$10,000 towards their course fees, renewable for four years so long as a minimum GPA of 3.0 is maintained. The selected students include:

- Sound Designer & Stage Manager, Alena Serrano of Lake Worth, Florida, attending University of Michigan
- Composer/Lyricist & Actor, Chelsea Rose of Durham, North Carolina, attending University of North Carolina School of the Arts - recipient of the Elaine Sheinmel-Getter Memorial Scholarship
- Playwright, Composer/Lyricist, Dancer, Director & Actor, Jeyna Lynn Gonzales of Panama City Beach, Florida, attending University of California, Irvine
- Actor, Oluchi Nwaokorie of Jackson, Mississippi, attending University of Michigan
- Actor, Taylor Jackson of Hoover, Alabama, attending Pace University
- Lighting Designer, Thania Melendez of Houston, Texas, attending University of North Carolina School of the Arts

The Inaugural 2021 Stewart F. Lane Fellow for Career Advancement is:

- Arts Administrator, Carrli Cooper of Winter Garden, FL, graduate of University of Michigan – awarded \$10k

The \$200k gift from Bonnie Comley and Stewart F. Lane will go towards the \$1M matching challenge in support of the Andrew Lloyd Webber Initiative that was launched thanks to a new \$1M investment in the program from the Edwin Barbey Charitable Trust. This expanded support will pave the way for an infusion of hundreds of new underrepresented professionals into the theatre industry. To be part of the change and show your commitment to a next generation of theatre artists, creatives, and arts administrators who reflect the country and world we are living in, please consider making a contribution towards the matching challenge [here](#).

To learn more about the Andrew Lloyd Webber Initiative, including how to apply, please visit [our website](#).

ABOUT THE AMERICAN THEATRE WING

The American Theatre Wing is a not-for-profit organization, founded on the eve of America’s entry into WWI by 7 suffragists and theatre makers who came together to support the nation by harnessing the power of theatre. More than a century later, ATW’s vital work continues to be driven by the fundamental

belief that theatre is essential to our economic, educational, and social and emotional well-being as a society.

Through a powerful suite of programs that address all aspects of the national theatre ecology, ATW encourages the discovery of theatre by people of all ages, nurtures talent on stage and off, creates pathways for success for students and young professionals, and encourages the development of the art form itself by recognizing and supporting innovative and excellent work with awards and grants. Building a just, equitable and inclusive American theatre is a guiding principle of all of ATW's work and programs.

ATW's Andrew Lloyd Webber Initiative provides discovery, training, and career launching support to under-served young people. The Musical Theatre Songwriting challenge gives high school songwriters the opportunity to professionally record their original songs. SpringboardNYC provides a bridge from college to career for young actors working to establish themselves on Broadway. The digital Masterclass offerings for rising creative professionals provide free access to advice, insight, and training by theatre's top creative professionals. The Network for Emerging Leaders of the Theatre creates a pathway for young aspiring theatre administrators to have successful careers by providing inside information, technical assistance, networking opportunities, and mentoring. ATW incubates innovative theatre throughout the country with the National Theatre Company Grants and through the Jonathan Larson® Grants, which support emerging musical theatre writers with significant unrestricted support. ATW gives students, professionals and audiences alike a virtual backstage pass through the five-time Emmy-nominated "Working in the Theatre" documentary series which illuminates the creative process.

ATW is the founder and co-presenter (with The Broadway League) of the Tony Awards®, and home to the OBIE Awards.

Visit AmericanTheatreWing.org to learn more about the extensive programming and grant opportunities for students, theatre professionals, and audiences. For the latest updates and news, follow the Wing on [Facebook](#), [LinkedIn](#), [Instagram](#) and [Twitter](#).