



THE CARBONELL AWARDS SOUTH FLORIDA'S THEATER & ARTS HONORS

The Carbonell Awards Welcome Four New Judges for 2024-2025 Theatre Season



L-R: Charles Baran, Jody Leshinsky, Jorge Ignacio Perez, Savannah Whaley

(South Florida – September 4, 2024) The **Carbonell Awards**, South Florida's most highly coveted recognition of theatrical production and performance excellence, today announced four new judges. They will bring the total number of Carbonell judges to 47, including 19 in Broward County, 11 in Miami-Dade, and 17 in Palm Beach County. Collectively, they will see and evaluate nearly 100 different productions at more than 30 professional theaters. The current theater season runs between September 1, 2024, and August 31, 2025.

The four new Carbonell judges are:

+ **Charles Baran** (*Palm Aire*) is an actor, singer, comedian, published author and Senior Writer and Brand Ambassador for South Florida's *OutClique Magazine*. His debut mystery novel set in Wilton Manor and titled *Rhoda Rage and the Goldfish Letter* was recently released. As an actor he has appeared in such New York productions as *Aunt Jack* at Theatre for the New City, and *The Cradle Will Rock* at Theatre 80 St. Marks in the East Village, plus in *Peter and the Starcatcher* at Winnepesaukee Playhouse in New Hampshire, *The Fantasticks* at Pennsylvania's Allenberry Playhouse, and in *Rogers and Hammerstein's Cinderella* at the Wick Theater in Boca Raton. In 2023 he played writer Truman Capote in Jay Allen Pressman's *Tru* at Empire Stage in Fort Lauderdale. His comedic music videos *Home* and *Pelican* have garnered thousands of views on YouTube, and he's the winner of the 2015 NYC MAC Cabaret Award for Best Male Debut for his one man show *Recipes for Disaster!*

+ **Jody Leshinsky** (*Lauderhill*) is a longtime former officer (President, Secretary) and board member of the Carbonell Awards. Currently she is Life Enrichment Manager at John Knox Village of Florida and was formerly cultural venues programming manager for the Pompano

Beach Cultural Affairs Department. She has nearly 40 years of arts administration experience in South Florida, including three decades at the Broward Cultural Division.

+ Jorge Perez (*Miami*) graduated from Journalism at the University of Havana in 1992. For a decade, he worked as a journalist and press photographer, theater columnist and editor in various publications on the island. In 2001 he went into exile in Barcelona, until 2012 when he settled in Miami, where he currently resides. He was editor of CubaNet News and worked for eight years as a correspondent for the EFE agency in Miami. He currently writes his personal blog *Sin reservas, querido Bob*, where he publishes reviews of theater, music and travel reports. He is the author of the memoir *Historias de depiladoras y batidoras americanas* (Neo Club Press Ediciones, 2014) and has another book of chronicles from Barcelona, *Pasajeros en transito*.

+ Savannah Whaley (*Lauderhill*) began her career in New York City where she worked for Broadway and off-Broadway producers, Second Stage Theater, INTAR Hispanic American Arts Center, Theatre Row and the Big Apple Circus. In her more than three decades as an arts publicist in South Florida prior to her recent retirement, she managed public relations for The Broward Center for the Performing Arts and its affiliate venues, regional companies and independent producers. In the late 1990s, she wrote the theater column for *Miami New Times/New Times Broward Palm Beach*. She was a founding board member of the South Florida Theatre League and her previous experience with the Carbonell Awards includes serving as a voter, board member and managing director.

For a complete list of Carbonell Awards Judges for the 2024-2025 theater seasons, please click [here](#).

About The Carbonell Awards

The Carbonell Awards fosters the artistic growth of professional theater in South Florida by celebrating the excellence and diversity of our theater artists, providing scholarships, and building audience appreciation and civic pride by highlighting achievements of our theater community. More than 30 professional theater companies in Broward, Miami-Dade and Palm Beach Counties participate in the awards process every year. The Carbonell Awards also celebrate the accomplishments of local artistic leaders by presenting various Special Awards.

Along with New York's Drama Desk and Chicago's Joseph Jefferson Awards, the Carbonell Awards are among the nation's oldest regional arts awards and predate others, including Washington, D.C.'s Helen Hayes Awards. The Carbonell Awards are named after the internationally renowned sculptor Manuel Carbonell, who designed the signature solid bronze and marble award given annually to Carbonell Award winners. Over the last 47 years, the Carbonell family has donated more than \$250,000 in awards.