POZ Awards 2021 / Best in Film or Television

Read about the nominees, then scroll down to vote for your favorite!

October 18, 2021

Welcome to the 6th Annual POZ Awards, spotlighting the best of HIV in media and culture.

The POZ editorial staff selects the nominees, but POZ readers choose the winners.

Eligible nominees were active or were presented, published or produced between October 1, 2020, and September 30, 2021.

This year's POZ Awards are a little different, since many of our regular categories went unfilled due to challenges stemming from the COVID-19 pandemic. Stage, movie theaters, music venues, and artists of all kinds were affected by this newest virus, and cultural awards reflect that. Even the Tony Awards had to eliminate categories this year. So, in that regard, you can think of this year's POZ Awards as being just like the Tonys.

Be sure to vote for your favorite nominees by the World AIDS Day deadline: Wednesday, December 1, 2021.

VOTING IS CLOSED

Here are the nominees:

Vice Versa: The Neglected Pandemic (Documentary Film)

Vice Versa is a feature documentary aimed at showing a comprehensive look at what it's like to be living with HIV in 2021. Beginning with the current state of the world in complete coronavirus panic, the film, narrated by Queer Eye's (and one of last year's POZ Award nominees) Jonathan Van Ness, the film explores HIV history from the '80s on, using personal accounts, insights from different communities and organizations, exploring gender, race, sexual orientation and the political and medical advancements. We get to hear not only from Van Ness, but the film also invites folks like Broadway's handsome Hamilton star Javier Munoz into the conversation. The two-hour film premiered on VICE but is available on YouTube.

Doin’ My Drugs (Documentary Film)

A performer and songwriter who sports a wild mane of hair on his head, musician Thomas Muchimba Buttenshøn has been living with HIV for over 30 years and has made HIV awareness his personal mission. Just in time for World AIDS Day 2020, a documentary chronicling his life premiered, telling the inspiring story of this talented songwriter born with HIV to a Danish father and Zambian mother, who both succumbed to AIDS when Buttenshøn was young. In the documentary, which asks the question, “can songs save the world?”, he comes together with an amazing group of musicians to raise awareness and promote HIV testing. Buttenshøn’s music is highlighted in the film, produced by 16-time Grammy Award-winning producer Thom Russo Jr, and features powerful concert footage shot on three continents: Europe, Africa and North America (the United States). The film is lush with a soulful soundtrack, telling a story that shows that creativity and heart can create new ways to get HIV messages across.

It’s a Sin (TV Series)

The British miniseries, written and created by Russell T. Davies of Queer as Folk fame, follows a group of young, cheeky, gay men and their friends as they navigate sex, love and friendship while the threat of a mysterious virus loomed. This sometimes funny and sometimes tragic depiction of the AIDS crisis of the 1980s in the United Kingdom, It’s a Sin has quickly become part of the cannon of HIV cultural history, like The Normal Heart and Angels in America before it. With its adorable cast and honest and frank depictions of sex, relationships and the early frightening days of the HIV pandemic, It’s a Sin was a hit with folks on both sides of the pond. All we have to say is “La.”

POSE (TV Series)

Oh, the ferociousness, the fierceness, the fabulousness! The third and final season of the Ryan Murphy production of POSE was released this year, and it did not disappoint. The series that began in New York’s ballroom scene of the 1980s and introduced the first ever cast lead by transgender and queer actors, was brought into the ’90s. Our favorite characters Blanca, Elektra, Pray Tell, Angel et al, were back, and now forging ahead in a world devastated by AIDS. Through all their trials, their love for each other as chosen family was the foundation of the story, and we felt like we were chosen to be a part of it too. Kudos to this brilliant cast and company, telling the queerest story ever on primetime. Category is: EMMY!

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