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Alumna Receives Jeff Award for Best Actress

June 13, 2012

BLOOMINGTON, Ill. – Illinois Wesleyan University graduate Melanie Keller '97 was recently honored as best actress at the Non-Equity Joseph Jefferson Awards (The Jeff Awards) in Chicago.

Keller was named Best Actress in a Principal Role in a Play for her work in "East of Berlin & The Russian Play," a production of two plays by Hannah Moscovitch at Signal Ensemble Theatre.

The Jeff Awards acknowledge excellence in theatre in the Chicago area, evaluating over 250 theatrical productions for awards announced twice annually. Founded in 1968, the Jeff Awards foster the artistic growth of area theatres and theatre artists.

A theater arts and English double major at Illinois Wesleyan, Keller trained at the Birmingham Conservatory of Stratford and the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art in London. She was previously nominated for a Jeff Citation for Best Supporting Actress for her performance in Signal's "The Weir." Also an artistic associate with First Folio Theatre, Keller's credits there include "Blithe Spirit," "Twelfth Night," "Private Lives," "Angel Street," "Jeeves in Bloom" and "The Turn of the Screw." A Signal Ensemble Theatre member since 2005, she has appeared in Signal productions of "She Stoops to Conquer" "Landslide" and "Much Ado about Nothing."

Keller was named the Chicago Fellow sent to the Stratford Festival of Canada, where she won a Tyrone Guthrie award. Other credits include "A Life" (Northlight Theatre), "Hamlet" and "King John" (Chicago Shakespeare), and productions with Next Theatre, Metropolis, BackStage and Strawdog. She will appear next as Portia in "The Merchant of Venice" at [First Folio Theatre](#), directed by fellow alum Alison C. Vesely '79.



Melanie Keller

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