

ACT-CO FESTIVAL

WHAT IS FESTIVAL?



The ACT-CO Festival is a celebration of community theatre across our region. Community theatres from Toronto, York, Durham, Peel, Halton, Dufferin, Simcoe and Muskoka are eligible to participate. The Festival is divided into three categories: comedies, dramas, and musicals. Each category has a single adjudicator who will see all the productions in that category. The adjudicator is hired by ACT-CO. An adjudicator is an experienced theatre professional and teacher, who is knowledgeable regarding community theatre.

When a group enters Festival, the adjudicator will come to your theatre for one of your scheduled performances, and provide an adjudication of that evening's performance. After the performance, if you choose, the adjudicator will give a 10-15 minute "public adjudication" to the audience, providing them with some insights about the play, your production, and the challenges and achievements of that evening's performance.

After the audience has left, the members of the group receive a more detailed "private adjudication." The private adjudication is 60-90 minutes long. The adjudicator and the members of the production will have a thorough dialogue about all the areas of the production: the acting, the direction, the design, and the technical elements. The adjudicator will provide praise, constructive criticism, and useful techniques to help you with future productions. The members of the production can ask questions and engage the adjudicator's expertise.

At the end of the Festival, each adjudicator chooses nominees and recipients of awards, called "Theas", presented in categories recognizing a variety of artistic achievements, including Best Production. These awards are announced and presented at the annual ACT-CO Gala.

One of the three "Best Productions" is chosen by the adjudicators to represent ACT-CO at the Theatre Ontario Festival. This annual festival is an on-site festival, held in a different city each year, with every region's representative transporting their production to the festival for a scheduled performance night in May. The performance is adjudicated again, by a different adjudicator, as part of a five-day celebration of theatre across the province.

If you have any questions about Festival, including the specifics of an adjudication and the complete list of awards, please contact ACT-CO Festival Chair, at festival@actco.ca.

APPLICATION INFORMATION

FESTIVAL FEES must be paid by the Festival entry deadline, **Tuesday, September 12, 2016**. The cost of each adjudication is **\$325**.

MEMBERSHIP FEES must be paid by the Festival entry deadline.

CATEGORIES. A production may be entered in **ONLY ONE** category. If there is any doubt as to which category is appropriate, please contact the Festival Scheduler.

ADJUDICATION DATES are allocated in the order in which complete applications are received, but allocation also considers adjudicator availability, and the schedule as a whole.

SCRIPTS & LIBRETTOS should accompany application forms. If you cannot enclose the script,

it **MUST** be received by ACT-CO at least **FOUR WEEKS** prior to adjudication night. Failure to forward the appropriate material on time may jeopardize your adjudication. Groups entering musicals shall provide a libretto; the full piano score must be available to the adjudicator on the night of the adjudication. Scripts and librettos become the property of ACT-CO unless you clearly indicate in writing when submitting your application that they must be returned. If you have been provided with an electronic copy of the script or libretto, please send that to the Festival Chair. It will be shared with the Adjudicator via Dropbox.

SEATING will be required for the Adjudication party. Please set aside four (4) seats together. They are best situated in the mid-section, on the aisle. A configuration of 2 in front and 2 behind will minimize the disturbance of patrons that might be caused by the adjudicator's light or note-taking.

PUBLIC ADJUDICATION. The public adjudication is at the option of the group. If the group does not want to receive a public adjudication, please specify that on your application form. If scheduled, the audience **must** be informed prior to the performance that there will be a public adjudication and invited to remain at the conclusion of the performance. This information may be supplied as an insert into the program, a notice in the lobby or an announcement by a member of the group. A brief explanation of the adjudication process might prove helpful to audience members. The public adjudication commences approximately five minutes after the conclusion of the performance. Enough time will be provided for audience members who wish, to leave the theatre, and to allow cast and crew to be positioned where they may clearly hear the Adjudicator's comments during the public adjudication. The adjudicator will be introduced to the audience by a member of the ACT-CO Board.

CONFIRMATION of receipt of your application and adjudication dates will be sent to you as quickly as possible.

HOST is required by the company on the adjudication night. Please ensure that this person is at the theatre one-hour prior to curtain to receive the adjudication party and review any special preparations for the adjudication, including time restrictions for the evening. This person must also have the authority to make decisions in an emergency.

PRIVATE ROOM (or quiet area close to the theatre) is required for the adjudicator to make notes privately. The room should be available at least thirty minutes prior to the start of the performance, and during intermission. Light refreshments are not expected, but appreciated. At a minimum, please provide water for the adjudicator. **No member of the group should be present in the private room.**

PRIVATE ADJUDICATION will commence approximately ten minutes after the conclusion of the Public Adjudication. **All members of the Group are invited to attend the Private Adjudication.** The Private Adjudication will be 60-90 minutes in length. Please ensure your group provides adequate time following the production to ensure all aspects of the production can be covered. Maps to any secondary location **MUST** be available for the adjudication party.

AWARD ELIGIBILITY FORMS are distributed (or available for download on the website) and must be completed by the group and delivered to ACT-CO on adjudication night. Failure to accurately complete and submit the Award Eligibility Forms will be penalized by the ACT-CO Board.

POST-ADJUDICATION EVALUATION FORMS are distributed (or available for download on the website) for groups to comment on and evaluate the adjudication. We strongly encourage the group to complete and submit this form following their adjudication. ACT-CO receives the

evaluations in confidentiality and gathers the feedback to ensure quality adjudications.

THEATRE ONTARIO FESTIVAL. One participating group in the ACT-CO FESTIVAL will be invited by the Board, through the Festival Chair, to represent ACT-CO at the Theatre Ontario Festival. This invitation will be extended at the conclusion of the awards presentations at the ACT-CO Gala. Prior to the Gala, group executives, casts, and production teams should discuss their desire and ability to remount their presentation. Each group shall ensure that someone at the Gala is authorized to respond on their behalf. Failure to do so will be taken as a negative response.

COPYRIGHT. The actual script/libretto being used must be the exact text being performed and must be an original edition and not a photocopy, unless the script/libretto is out-of-print, or the number of available scripts are restricted by the rights-holder. If any changes are made to the script, written permission from the rights holder to make said changes must be obtained and forwarded to ACT-CO. Please contact your rights holder, playwright, or their agent if you have any questions regarding the issue of copyright infringement. They can best determine if any changes your group is considering will violate the copyright.

PROFESSIONALS. The ACT-CO Festival awards are intended to recognize outstanding achievements by community theatre artists, and not achievements by professional artists working on community theatre productions. Professional artists are not eligible for ACT-CO Festival awards. All groups entering Festival will be expected to identify any professionals participating in a production prior to adjudication.

WITHDRAWAL. Groups may withdraw from Festival at any time, but no refunds shall be issued after the Festival Application deadline.

CANCELLATION In the event that ACT-CO is unable to provide the scheduled adjudication due to illness, weather, or other emergency or unforeseen circumstance, ACT-CO reserves the right to cancel the adjudication with full refund of the entry fee to the group.

ELIGIBILITY OF EVENINGS OF ONE-ACT PLAYS. Festival entries must be a minimum of **70 minutes in length**. In the event that a group wishes to enter an evening of shorter plays as a single entry, it must meet the following conditions:

- there are two or more plays in the production; and
- each play is between 30 minutes and 60 minutes in length; and
- the plays have a common thread or theme such as director, cast, playwright; publication or subject matter; and
- the group provides a written explanation of how their production meets this criteria;
- upon approval by the ACT-CO Board of Directors.

Such entries will be ineligible to be ACT-CO's entry to the Theatre Ontario Festival.

ELIGIBILITY OF REVIVALS. A "revival" is defined as the presentation of the same script by the same theatre group within ten years of a previous entry into Festival. In a revival, no person in the same capacity as in the original production shall be eligible for awards. If more than 50% of the director, producer, stage manager, cast and designers are the same as in the original production, then the production shall not be eligible for Best Presentation.

VIDEOTAPING. Videotaping or recording of the adjudication is not permitted. Posting of Adjudicator's comments on a Website or Social Media is not permitted. ACT-CO will request the removal of the post.

ADJUDICATION EXPECTATIONS AND GUIDELINES

General Guidelines

Adjudicators are hired based on their expertise as theatre professionals, and his/her ability to teach and communicate to community theatre artists. The adjudication is an educational process, and will have the following:

- Positive reinforcement about what the company did well;
- Tools to help the company improve in the areas where it could do better;
- Detailed references to all areas of the production;
- Two-way dialogue between the adjudicator and the participants;
- Sensitivity to the participants;
- Balanced and tempered commentary between on-stage and off-stage participants;
- Understanding of the company, and the conditions, opportunities and restrictions of their theatre (this can often be achieved through dialogue with the designers at the private adjudication.)

The adjudicator shall not refer to other productions he/she has adjudicated in the Festival. As the Festival is competitive, the Adjudicator shall refrain from using superlatives (e.g. "the best") during the adjudication.

Specific Areas To Be Covered

Public Adjudication (10-15 minutes long)

This is a "general" assessment of the production, at the group's option. The goal of the public adjudication is to provide the audience with observations and insights about the play (such as the context of its creation and production history), and the challenges and achievements of that evening's performance, illustrated with specific references to the production. The public adjudication should not include a Q&A with the audience.

Private Adjudication (60-90 minutes long)

A detailed assessment of the production which covers, in detail, all production areas and individual performances. The adjudicator will lead an open dialogue between the adjudicator and the company. The adjudicator will use leading questions to get the group talking, if necessary.

1. SET: Does the set reflect and enhance the interpretation of the play? Does it capture its mood? Does it function well? Does it complement other design areas? (This should include comment on set construction, painting and dressing.)

2. LIGHTING: Does the lighting reflect and enhance the interpretation of the play? Does it capture its mood? Does it function well? Does it complement other design areas? Was it executed correctly?

3. COSTUMES: Do the costumes reflect and enhance the interpretation of the play? Do they capture its mood? Do they function well? Do they complement other design areas? Do they suit the characters?

4. SOUND: Does the choice of music and sound effects reflect and enhance the interpretation of the play? Does it capture its mood? Does it complement other design areas? Were the levels correct? Were they well-timed? Were they well-executed? How could it be improved?

5. PROPERTIES: Do the properties reflect and enhance the interpretation of the play? Do they function well? Do they complement other design areas?

6. HAIR AND MAKE-UP: Does the hair and make-up reflect and enhance the interpretation of the play? Do they function well? Do they complement other design areas? Are they appropriate for the production and setting? Was there any special hairstyles or make-up needed? Was it executed well?

7. DIRECTION: How has the director interpreted the play? Is the interpretation well-reasoned? Does the interpretation show understanding of and integrity to the author's intention? How has the director executed that interpretation? Does the production have pace (as opposed to speed)? Does the play build to its climax? Are there levels to the production? How well did the director block the characters? How did the director use the design elements to complement the interpretation of the play?

8. ACTING: Each member of the cast will be mentioned individually, except in the case of large ensembles such as a chorus where the individuals work together as an integrated unit, and who will be mentioned as a collective. Does the actor thoroughly understand his/her character? Did the actor understand the text? Was the character well-interpreted? How did the actor use his/her voice? Did the performance have 'colour'? Did the actor 'listen' to himself/herself and the other actors on stage? Did the actor remain in character when he or she was not speaking nor actively participating in the scene, or did the actor 'ham it up' or upstage other actors and the play? Was the character convincing at all times? How well did the actor move? Was the actor's performance integrated with the others on stage or was it more of an individual performance?

9. DANCING AND CHOREOGRAPHY: Did the choreography reflect the mood in the scene? Was it original and innovative? Was the dancing well executed?

10. SINGING: Are the voices strong enough? How well are the songs interpreted and executed? Is there balance between the voices and orchestra?

11. STAGE MANAGEMENT: How well is the play stage managed? Does the show start on time? Were set changes executed well?

11. MUSICAL DIRECTION: How well does the Musical Director interpret the score? Is it an intelligent and sensitive interpretation? Has the MD succeeded in transmitting his or her interpretation to the orchestra? Has the MD elicited the best from the orchestra? Does the orchestra properly accompany the singers?

12. PRODUCTION: This area shall include all other production staff. How is the play stage managed? Does backstage crew work well? Does the show start on time? What is the entire 'feeling' of the show, as this will reflect the stamp of the producer. In multi-scene productions, how were set changes executed?