Arts For Life™ Participation & Adjudication Handbook

Adopted: July 1, 2021
Version Effective Date: 01 Jan 2027
Version: 2.0

Making a dramatic difference...

The purpose of this HANDBOOK is two-fold:

1) It represents official policies and guidelines governing the operation of the Theatre Recognition Guild as approved by the AFL Board.
2) It provides detailed information about how every aspect of the recognition process works for participating groups and TRG judges.

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Making a dramatic difference...

1.

WELCOME & INTRODUCTIONS

AFL Basics & Who's Who

ARTS FOR LIFE MISSION

Founded in 1994, St. Louis' **Arts For Life** is a non-profit charitable organization that:

- Fosters and encourages the growth of community theatre groups, especially in light of declining school programs;
- Promotes and enhances the image of community theatre;
- Educates and informs the general public about the theatrical opportunities provided by member groups

A special event, the **Best Performance Awards**, was organized beginning in 1999 to recognize artistic and technical excellence in community theatre musical productions throughout the metropolitan St. Louis area.

AFL Mission - BPAS - 1999

AFL MISSION (cont.)

Since its founding **Arts For Life** has naturally expanded its mission:

- Producing special benefit performances with proceeds targeting urgent needs;
- Offering competitive annual scholarships to students pursuing an arts education at the university level;
- Partnering in an Adopt-A-Student program for underserved local high school students, many with nontraditional backgrounds;
- Donating monthly to local non-profit organizations

In 2015 a second special event, the **Theatre Mask Awards**, was instituted to recognize excellence in non-musical community theatre.

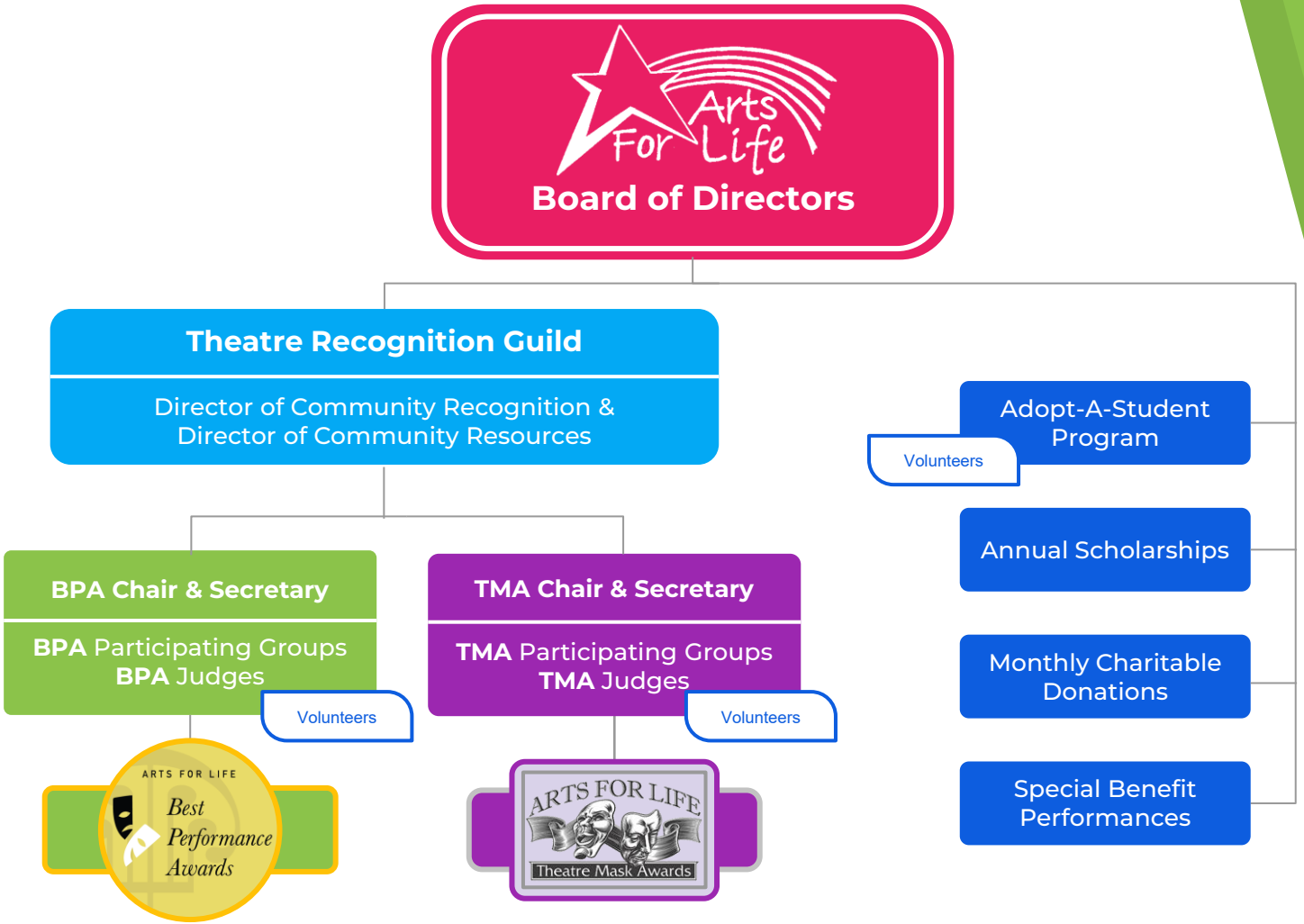
AFL ORGANIZATION

Arts For Life is an **100% VOLUNTEER** group.

- A **BOARD OF DIRECTORS** governs the **AFL organization**;
- The **BOARD** manages all AFL operations and charitable works and also produces the **Best Performance Awards (BPAs)** and the **Theatre Mask Awards (TMAs)**;
- The **DIRECTOR OF COMMUNITY RECOGNITION** heads the **Theatre Recognition Guild (TRG)** with extensive support and assistance from the **DIRECTOR OF COMMUNITY RESOURCES.**
- The **TRG** comprises two (2) branches - the **BPA Branch** for musical theater and the **TMA Branch** for non-musical theatre. Each branch has a Chair & Secretary who regularly interact with Participating Groups and TRG judges.

AFL Board

AFL Organization



FUNCTIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES

AFL BOARD

THEATRE RECOGNITION GUILD (TRG)

DIrector of Community Recognition
Open

Director of Community Resources
Kim Klick

- Promoting & Interpreting AFL Event Policies, Rules, and Guidelines regarding Participation, Eligibility, Updates/Changes & Enforcement.
- Conflict & Dispute Investigation & Resolution.
- Communicating with President & Board Regarding TRG Activities
- Bringing All TRG Policy Questions/Issues to the Board for Consideration & Approval.
- Ensuring Uniform & Consistent Interpretation of AFL Rules & Policies.
- Maintaining Official TRG Records for All Events and Honorees.

EVENT:
Best Performance Awards (BPAs)
Producer: AFL Board

Mark Lull
BPA Chair

Kim Klick
BPA Secretary
<--(dual role)

EVENT:
Theatre Mask Awards (TMAs)
Producer: AFL Board

Carrie Simpson
TMA Chair

Joan Reding
TMA Secretary

- Overall Administration in Support of both BPA and TMA Events.
- Maintaining Confidential & Secure Score Collection & Tabulating System.
- Recording Scores
- Tabulating Scores and Preparing Prospective Nominee/Award Lists.
- Communicating with Participating Groups.
- Communicating with Judges.
- Preparation and Dissemination of Judge Training Materials.
- Recruiting, Vetting, and Training of Prospective Judges.
- Assigning Judges to Eligible Productions of Participating Groups.
- Reporting Any Disputes/Issues to Director of Community Recognition and/or Community Resources & Assisting with Resolution As Appropriate.

Both the BPA and TMA Branches perform all the functions listed at right but those individuals responsible for each function vary by branch, e.g., the BPA Chair assigns judges for musical productions, whereas the TMA Secretary does so for plays .

AFL ORGANIZATION (cont.)

Beginning in 2020 all JUDGES became members of the **Theatre Recognition Guild (TRG)**.

- Judges for the **Best Performance Awards** comprise the **BPA Branch** of the **TRG** and adjudicate adult and youth musicals;
- Judges for the **Theatre Mask Awards** comprise the **TMA Branch** of the **TRG** and adjudicate adult plays - dramas and comedies;
- The **BPA Chair & Secretary** administer the **BPA Branch** and The **TMA Chair & Secretary** administer the **TMA Branch;**
- **Both branches** function **independently** but since 2021 the TMA branch has operated under the same rules and guidelines as the BPA branch;
- Judges may serve in either **one (1)** of the two branches, but not both.

Theatre Recognition Guild

Operational Unity

Since 2021, when the operation of the 2 branches of the **Theatre Recognition Guild** were realigned and integrated, both branches have operated under the exact same TRG rules and procedures.

Two Branches - Same Rules!

Best Performance Awards

Kim Klick

BPA Secretary - *Primary Contact & Administration*

You can reach me at afltrg@artsforlife.org

Emergency TEXT MSGS ONLY: +1 (314) 650-3112

Mark Lull

BPA Chair - *Judging Assignments*

You can reach me at flyeroftwa@aol.org

Emergency TEXT MSGS ONLY: +1 (618) 558-4009

BPAs

Contacts

Theatre Mask Awards

Carrie Simpson

TMA Chair - *Administration & Add'l. Contact*

You can reach me at lolachingr@gmail.com

Emergency TEXT MSGS ONLY: +1 (636) 734-1371

Joan Reding

TMA Secretary - *Judging Assignments & Main Contact*

You can reach me at afltma@artsforlife.org

Emergency TEXT MSGS ONLY: +1

TMAs

Contacts

Note: Not all groups are currently participating in Arts for Life.

BPA PARTICIPATING GROUPS

BY STATE - Present, Past & Potential

Missouri

- Act Two Theatre
- Alpha Player of Florissant
- Aspire Youth Performing Arts
- Chesterfield YMCA Perf. Arts
- Christ Memorial Prods.
- Clayton Community Theatre
- COCA Theatre Co.
- Crusader Players
- Dayspring Arts & Education
- Debut Theatre Company
- Gateway Center for Perf. Arts
- Gifted Productions
- Hawthorne Players
- Ignite Theatre Company
- Jewish Community Center Youth Theatre Program
- Kirkwood Theatre Guild
- Kirkwood Youth Theatre

Missouri (cont.)

- KTK Productions
- Myriad Productions
- Now That's Theatre
- NextGen Productions STL
- O'Fallon TheatreWorks
- Over Due Theatre Company
- Rock Show Productions
- Shooting Star Productions
- Spotlight Productions
- Spotlight Community Theatre
- St. John's UCC Performing Arts Camp
- St. Louis Summer Players
- Stages Performing Arts Academy
- Stray Pups Youth Theatre
- Summerstage, Inc.
- Take Two Productions
- Theatre Guild of Webster Groves

Missouri (cont.)

- Wentzville Christian Church
- Wentzville Connections Theatre Company
- Young People's Theatre

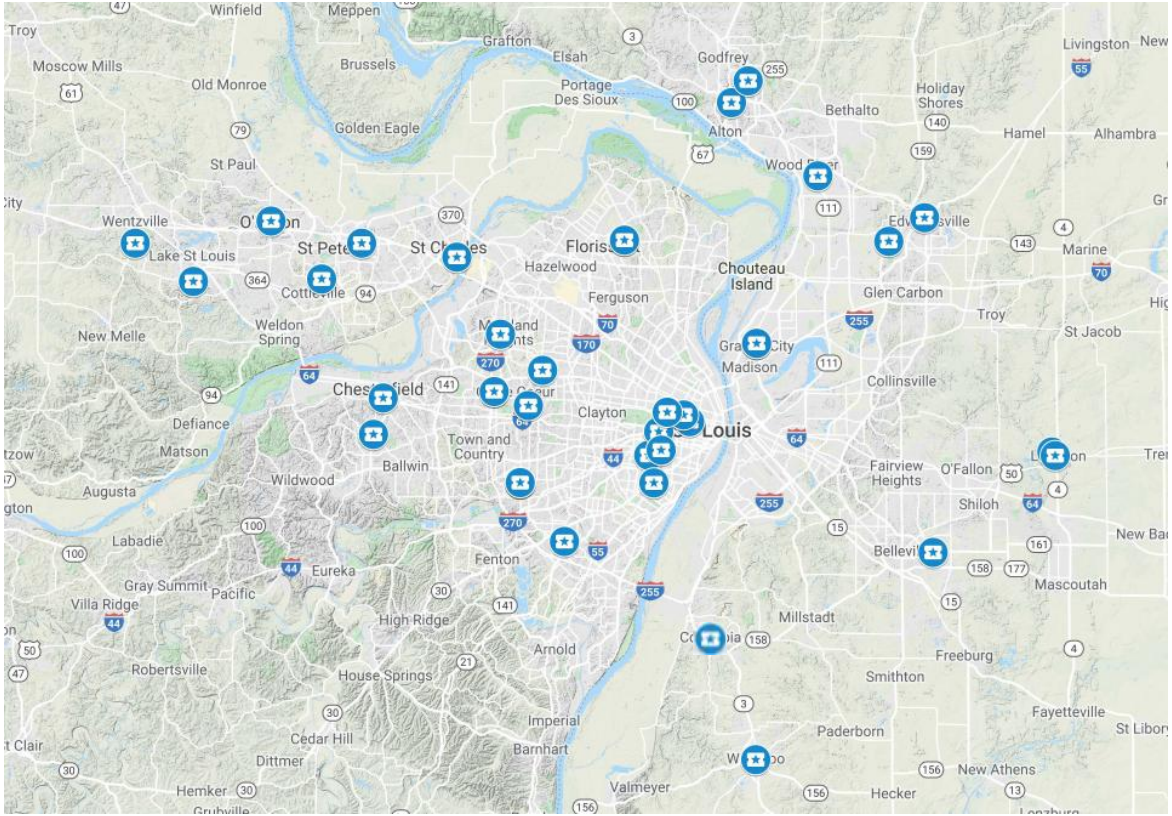
Illinois

- The Actors' Attic
- Alfresco Productions
- Alton Little Theatre
- Curtains Up Theatre Company
- Goshen Theatre Project
- Hard Road Theatre
- Looking Glass Playhouse
- Monroe Actors Stage Company
- Riverbend Theatre
- Take A Bow Showcase

BPA Groups

THE BIG BPA MAP

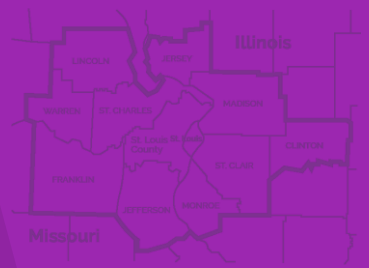
Wenzville, Mo ➡ Alton, IL ➡ Lebanon, IL ➡ Waterloo, IL



BPA Groups

TMA PARTICIPATING GROUPS

BY STATE - Present, Past & Potential



Missouri

- Act Two Theatre
- Clayton Community Theatre
- Harbor Theatrics
- Hawthorne Players
- Kirkwood Theatre Guild
- KTK Productions
- O'Fallon TheatreWorks
- Over Due Theatre Company
- Spotlight Community Theatre
- Theatre Guild of Webster Groves

Illinois

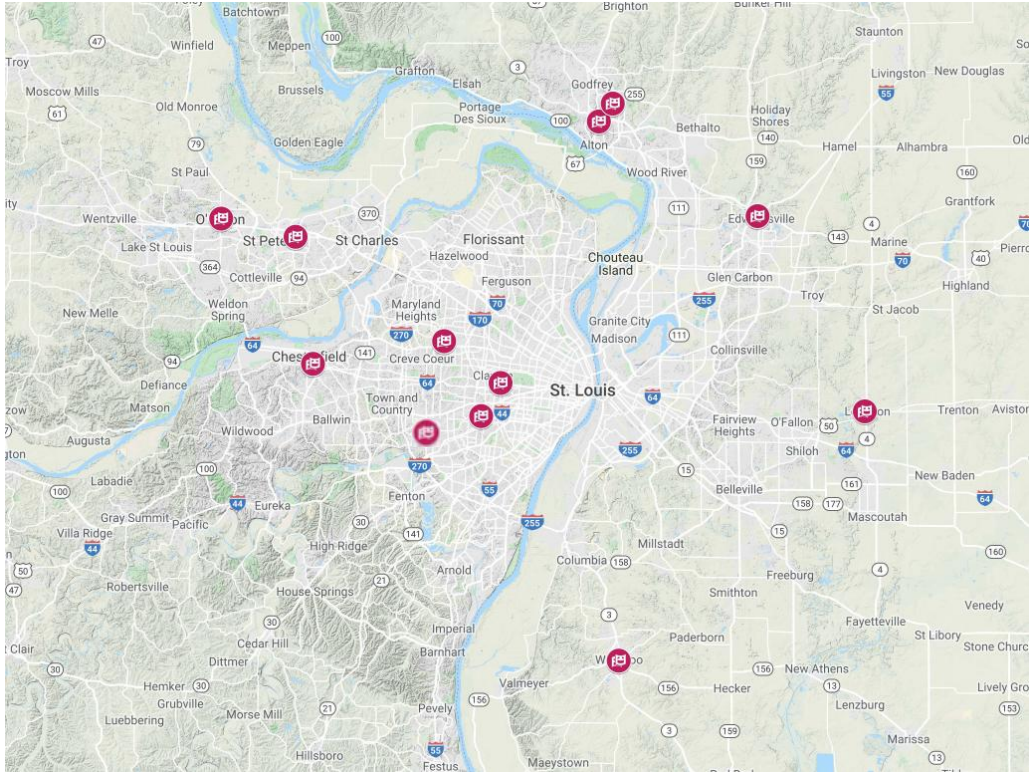
- The Actors' Attic
- Alfresco Productions
- Alton Little Theater
- Curtains Up Theatre Company
- Goshen Theatre Project
- Looking Glass Playhouse
- Monroe Actors Stage Company
- Riverbend Theatre

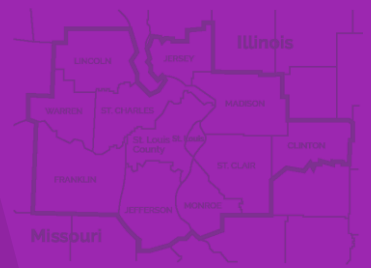
Note: Not all groups are currently participating in Arts for Life.

TMA Groups

THE BIG TMA MAP

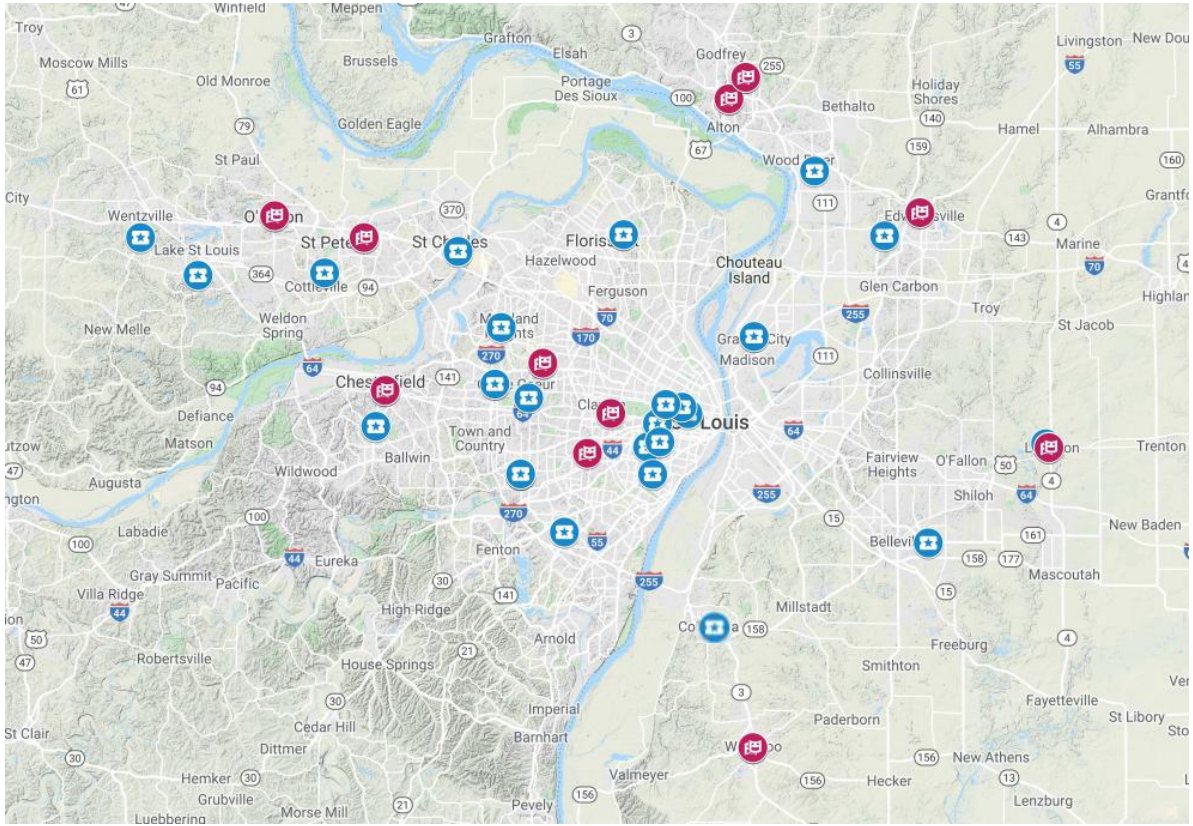
O'Fallon, Mo ➡ Alton, IL ➡ Lebanon, IL ➡ Waterloo, IL

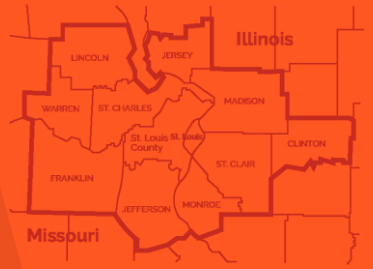




TMA Groups

THE BIG BPA & TMA COMBO MAP





AFL Groups

2.

PARTICIPATING GROUP ELIGIBILITY GUIDELINES

How to Get AFL to Consider Your Production

OFFICIAL GUIDELINES FOR PARTICIPATING GROUPS

Please Read and understand these requirements carefully

- To ensure fairness we are very specific. We WANT you to be informed.
- There are no “gotchas” — we DON’T WANT anyone caught unaware.

Responsibility for correctly adhering to these requirements lies with participating groups

- We’ll inform you, remind you, cajole you, etc. but ultimately we can only act upon the information you provide to us. It’s up to you to get it right.

We apply these requirements uniformly to all groups

- We can’t make exceptions - for missed deadlines, failure to notify, etc. - Fairness demands it. Know your responsibilities and deadlines.

PARTICIPATING GROUP
ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

Eligible Community Theatre Groups (formerly §12.5.1 rev. 2021)

To participate in Arts For Life's Best Performance Awards and Theatre Mask Awards a performing group must qualify as one of the following three (3) types of entities where stage performers are not paid:

1) **Independent Non-profit Community Theatre**

2) **Municipal Program and/or Church Ministry**

3) **Community or Continuing Education Program for Youth**

Eligibility - Types

PARTICIPATING GROUP
ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

Independent Non-profit Community Theatre Performing Organizations (Charitable)

1) Must be a non-profit in "Good Standing" in the State of Missouri or Illinois.
   a) Must be registered as a "Domestic Non-Profit" corporation in the state where it is located.
   b) Must timely file required reports with their respective Secretaries of State to maintain "Good Standing."

2) Must have an EIN and a 501(c)(3) determination letter from the Internal Revenue Service.

3) May present adult and/or youth productions.

PARTICIPATING GROUP
ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

Performing Organizations <u>Subordinate to a Nominally Tax-Exempt Organization</u> (such as a Church or Municipality)

1) The parent organization, by nature of its exempt purpose, must be intrinsically entitled to tax-exemption in the state where it is located (e.g., church or municipality). Note: some organizations in this category may also have official 501(c)(3) status.

2) The subordinate performing group must be 100% under the administrative and financial control of the parent organization.

3) The parent organization *should* be clearly identified and credited in all publicity and marketing materials that promote the performing group and in theatrical programs for specific productions.

4) May present adult and/or youth productions.

PARTICIPATING GROUP
ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

A Performing Organization That Conducts a Bonafide Community or Continuing Education Program for Youth under the Auspices of an Accredited Educational Institution

1) The educational institution is fully accredited in the state where it is located or is a joint venture of multiple accredited institutions and has a valid, enforceable agreement with the performing group if a “for hire” relationship exists.

2) The performing organization conducts performances at a facility of the sponsoring institution(s).

3) The continuing education program must appear in the course catalog (or equivalent) and must be open to all who enroll. It makes assistance available to disadvantaged participants according to the regular aid policies of the educational institution and is Title IV/Title IX compliant.

PARTICIPATING GROUP
ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

A Performing Organization That Conducts a Bonafide Community or Continuing Education for Youth under the Auspices of an Accredited Educational Institution (cont.)

4) The continuing education program is distinct and completely separate from the regular curricular activities of the educational institution's drama, music and/or arts departments. It is not a "school" or "departmental" production nor a "co-mingled" one.

5) The educational institution or consortium *should* be clearly identified and credited in all publicity and marketing materials that promote the performing group and in theatrical programs for specific productions.

6) May present YOUTH PRODUCTIONS ONLY.

PARTICIPATING GROUP
ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

Verification of Eligibility

At its discretion Arts For Life may confirm a participating group's eligibility at any time. AFL may or may not provisionally assign judges to productions of **new** groups with the understanding that their non-profit status must be officially confirmed before their productions will be eligible for recognition. If a new group fails to achieve non-profit status by the end of the calendar year in which their production(s) occurred, then the productions of the new group shall be ruled ineligible for recognition (even if provisional judges were assigned and scores received). Should this occur, the new group shall then become ineligible to reapply for AFL participation until it has operated for one full year under valid non-profit status as determined by state and federal filings. **Obtaining and maintaining non-profit status is solely the responsibility of participating groups.**

PARTICIPATING GROUP
ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

Separate Entities — The following types of theatre are NOT defined as Community Theatre by AFL:

- Youth Community Theatre — Youth Community Theatre eligibility is separately defined next.
- Professional Equity Theatre
- Professional Non-Equity Theatre
- University, College, Community College & High School Theatre
- Special Participation Theatre (where participants are not determined by competitive auditions and special needs protocols are in place).

Eligibility - Separate Types

PARTICIPATING GROUP
ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

Youth Community Theatre (formerly §12.6)

ALL participation guidelines that apply to Community Theatre apply equally to Youth Community Theatre. Youth Community Theatre productions have the following additional requirements:

1) The ENTIRE cast is <u>under</u> the age of 21 years old on the opening night of the production without exception (20 or under) and no cast member is compensated in any way. There can be NO adult cast members or the production will be ruled ineligible for youth consideration.

2) Presenting groups may be dedicated Youth Community Theatres or Community Theatres presenting youth productions.

PARTICIPATING GROUP
ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

Youth Community Theatre (cont.)

3) Youth Community Theatre productions designated as "theatre camp" productions are considered Youth Community Theatre as long as the production is not directly connected with a school or school district curriculum and/or school extra-curricular events.

4) Youth Community Theatre productions will be recognized separately from Community Theatre productions and have youth-specific recognition categories as determined by AFL.

A youth continuing education program that is distinct and completely separate from the regular curricular activities of an educational institution's drama, music and/or arts departments is eligible for consideration. See general eligibility guidelines above for Community Theatre above for more details.

PARTICIPATING GROUP
ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

Youth Productions of Community Theatres (formerly §12.6.3.)

Productions designated as “youth productions” of Community Theatres are considered Youth Community Theatre and:

- Must declare the production a “youth production” in all publicity and media materials before auditions are held.
- Must adhere to the “under 21 years old on opening night” rule as for Youth Community Theatre for the entire cast.
- If a Community Theatre production has been designated as a “youth production” and includes any cast member over the age restriction it shall be ruled ineligible for recognition as a youth production.

PARTICIPATING GROUP
ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

Geographic Area of Eligibility (formerly §12.5.4.)

AFL will consider for recognition any eligible production by a participating group within the following geographic region:

- The St. Louis, MO-IL Metro East metropolitan area.
- AFL defines this region generally as a circular area encompassing a 35-mile radius from the heart of Clayton, MO (63105) at the intersection of S Central Ave & Carondolet Ave.
- This encompasses the following locations: Wentzville, MO (W), Jerseyville, IL (N), Trenton & Lebanon, IL (E), Festus, MO & Waterloo, IL (S)

PARTICIPATING GROUP
ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

Eligible Productions (formerly §12.5.2 - rev. 2021)

An **eligible AFL production** is one that:

- Held performances in a major New York City/Broadway theatre or in a professional regional or touring theatre outside of New York City prior to being made available for licensing to the stock, amateur, &/or school theatre circuit.

- Was originally conceived and produced for a core audience over eight years of age.

Eligibility - Productions

PARTICIPATING GROUP
ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

Eligible Productions (cont.)

- Is officially available to be licensed for performance by an amateur community theatre from the licensing entity that manages such licenses on behalf of the rightsholder(s) for such play or musical.
- Is officially licensed by an AFL participating group from the licensing entity that manages such licenses on behalf of the rightsholder(s) for such play or musical. We will NOT recognize unlicensed or bootleg productions.
- Is the published full-length standard or high school edition/version. For shows with multiple full-length versions, all licensable full-length versions are eligible.

PARTICIPATING GROUP
ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

Eligible Productions (cont.)

- The following editions and versions are **INELIGIBLE**, including:
  - *MTI:* Broadway Junior (Jr.) - including Disney, TYA (Theatre For Young Audiences), KIDS Series
  - *Concord Theatricals:* G2K (Getting To Know) Series, 101 Collection (Middle School Editions), YPE (Young Performers Editions)
  - *Theatrical Rights Worldwide (TRW):* Young @ Part
  - Typically *any work* classified by the licensing entity as a short play or musical or similar.

This list is not exhaustive and may in future include any new shortened editions marketed by licensing entities. If entire subplots/characters or scenes/songs have been eliminated from the standard edition then it is likely an ineligible version.

PARTICIPATING GROUP ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

Eligible Productions (cont.)

- Concert versions are not permitted. Musical reviews & collections of 1-act plays must satisfy all of the criteria as for regular plays & musicals.
- In special instances AFL may consider unpublished ORIGINAL works if the persons creating the work (author [book writer], composer, lyricist, etc.) fully grant the participating group performance rights AND the work meets other requirements for length, content, suitability, etc. AFL will review such eligibility on a case-by-case basis. Participating groups wishing to perform such works should make a proposal to AFL well before participation forms are due to confirm eligibility. Ad hoc musical reviews lacking a unified published book are ineligible.

PARTICIPATING GROUP ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

Repetitive Productions (formerly §12.5.8)

- A specific production is considered ineligible for recognition if produced within three (3) award years of its initial production by the same participating group. Example: If a group produces *To Kill A Mockingbird* in 2021 then that group will not be eligible for recognition again for this particular play until the 2025 award year.

- Different authorized versions of the same property, e.g., *Anything Goes (1962) & Anything Goes (1989)*, shall be considered the "same" production for purposes of this section.

PARTICIPATING GROUP ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

Open Auditions (formerly part of §12.5.2)

- Any community theatre group that restricts auditions for a production to only certain members of the general public shall not have that production considered for recognition.

- For its production to be considered for recognition a community theatre group must hold widely publicized auditions open to the general public and allow anyone in the community to participate and compete for all available roles.

Rules regarding compensated on-stage performers and precast roles are found elsewhere in this HANDBOOK.

PARTICIPATING GROUP
ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

Age Appropriate Casting (formerly §12.5.7)

- AFL reserves the right to declare roles and/or productions ineligible due the the casting of performers too young (or old) to be cast in certain roles in a community theatre production.
- This criterion may be used to distinguish between regular and youth community theater productions at AFL's discretion.
- The recognition of a juvenile in an adult production follows the following general guideline: "a kid in a kid's role." Adults in childen's roles as specifically addressed in the script, i.e. *You're A Good Man Charlie Brown* or *25th Annual…Spelling Bee*, are recognized as adults.

Eligibility - Age

PARTICIPATING GROUP
ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

Age Appropriate Casting (cont.)

- To be considered a “Juvenile” in an adult production a performer must be <u>under</u> the age of 14 years old on opening night without exception (13 or under).

- Adults in roles intended for juveniles may be declared ineligible at AFL’s discretion. The recognition categories **Best Performance by a Juvenile** and **Outstanding Juvenile Performance** are intended for “a kid in a kid’s role” appearing in an otherwise non-youth production. The category was created to promote and celebrate juvenile achievement. We recognize the nature of community theatre sometimes dictates difficult casting choices, but adults cast in traditionally juvenile roles will be subject to added scrutiny.

PARTICIPATING GROUP
ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

Performer Eligibility (formerly §12.5.3 rev. 2021)

For the purposes of Arts For Life, a **Qualifying Role** is:

- A role in which the character is named in the script (including eponymous characters taking the name of the performer);
- Is one that provides a vehicle for the actor or actress to demonstrate his/her unique ability to deliver an exceptional performance;
- And, provides the performer the ability to interact with other performers in scenes and/or songs as applicable.

PARTICIPATING GROUP
ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

Performer Eligibility (formerly §12.5.3, 12.5.5, 12.5.6)

To be eligible for consideration and nomination the performer and role must be listed in the official opening night program of the production.

- All performers of qualifying roles listed in such program will be considered for recognition.
- Generically listed ensemble/chorus roles such as "Men", "Servants" or "Children" will not be considered for recognition.
- Certain "generic" groupings (e.g., Quartet 1, Quartet 2, Quartet 3, Quartet 4 or Sailor Chanty Trio) may be considered for “Duo/Group” recognition provided such named performers alway appear together and do not perform other roles.

PARTICIPATING GROUP
ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

Performer Eligibility (cont.)

- Performers who perform multiple roles will be considered for the totality of all the roles listed in the program and ascribed to them. Performers of multiple roles are not eligible to be considered for “Duo/Group” and will prevent other performers in a “Duo/Group” with them from being considered for “Duo/Group.”

- Roles that are divided among multiple performers over multiple performances are not eligible for consideration. (double casting)

- Exceptions for stand-ins and emergency substitutes will be considered on a situational basis. Substitute performers must appear in a majority of performances to be considered.

PARTICIPATING GROUP
ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

Performer Eligibility (cont.)

Compensated stage performers are ineligible for recognition and nomination. AFL may declare roles and/or productions ineligible due to the presence of paid stage performers at its sole discretion:

- All performers appearing on stage must be 100% unpaid volunteers in order to be eligible for recognition. A stage performer who receives any payment or emolument, either directly or indirectly, of any kind, is ineligible, including: gas money, meal vouchers, stipends, etc.
- Performers in precast roles are considered to have received consideration in the form of "an offer to appear" and are similarly ineligible for consideration. Groups *should* mention all precast roles in audition notices.
- Group organized meals provided to the entire cast & crew between matinée and evening performances are allowed.

Eligibility - No Pay

PARTICIPATING GROUP
ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

Performer Eligibility (cont.)

- No paid stage performer shall ever compete for recognition against eligible non-paid stage performers.
- Professional actors (including Equity) may be considered for recognition provided they receive NO compensation for performing and have competed for their role through open auditions as have all other performers. Equity requires such performers to execute a contract with the group and/or to obtain waivers for members to perform in an unpaid capacity. Equity rarely grants such waivers.
- AFL may acknowledge superior (but otherwise ineligible) compensated performances separately from regular recognition categories as “special” recognition.

Eligibility - No Pay

PARTICIPATING GROUP
DUTIES & RESPONSIBILITIES

Participating Group Responsibilities List (formerly § 12.5.9 & 12.5.10 and 12.6.7 & 12.6.8)

To participate in any Arts For Life recognition program (BPAs, Youth BPAs & TMAs) groups are required do the following:

- For each production complete and return a participation form to their respective branch Secretary/Chair not less that 8 weeks before the date of the opening performance of the production. Groups may submit multiple productions on a single participation form.

- Include in participation forms all information required by their respective branch Secretary/Chair, including performance dates and times, venue location and directions, specific performances that members of the TRG may attend along with any additional unique stipulations concerning reservation timing, limited availability of TRG judge tickets, restrictions, etc.

PARTICIPATING GROUP DUTIES & RESPONSIBILITIES

Participating Group Responsibilities List (cont.)

- Groups must offer a minimum of three (3) regular performances that AFL judges can attend for purposes of adjudication. This may not include dress rehearsals or brush-ups. TRG judges may only adjudicate performances where paying members of the general public are admitted. Special performances, such as “sensory” performances, cannot be adjudicated and do not count towards the minimum number of regular performances offered. At least one (1) performance *should* be at a different time, e.g., a matinée, if possible. Non-standard scheduling (e.g., over one week, from Monday to Saturday) is permitted.

- Groups must provide up to 12 complimentary tickets/seats (one for each TRG adjudicator assigned to their production) that can be used at any eligible performance. Participating groups *should*, if possible, maintain a running list of every judge who attends a production and notify branch Secretaries/Chairs in the event of no-shows.

PARTICIPATING GROUP
DUTIES & RESPONSIBILITIES

Participating Group Responsibilities List (cont.)

- Groups may offer complimentary companion seats to TRG judges if they so desire. This is completely optional and not required. Judges may not request companion seats if they are not offered. Operational details should be clearly spelled out by participating groups in their participation forms.
- Must provide their branch Secretary/Chair a bonafide opening night PROGRAM and/or CAST LIST (that includes a list of musical numbers with principal performers for musical productions) by the Monday immediately preceding the opening night of the production. This may be delivered electronically in the form of a PDF file or equivalent. Any deviations from the submitted final program must be announced prior to each performance and the Secretary/Chair notified before the end of the closing performance.
- Must cooperate in obtaining contact (address, e-mail, phone, etc.) and publicity information for cast members/potential nominees from their group.

PARTICIPATING GROUP DUTIES & RESPONSIBILITIES

Participating Group Responsibilities List (cont.)

- In the event a group receives one or more nominations, it shall provide to Arts For Life, in a timely manner, any requested photographic, biographic or other materials (such as logo artwork) necessary to promote the group's recognition in a readily useable electronic format. Furthermore, groups shall execute a general license and hold harmless release agreement with Arts For Life allowing it to use the requested materials ROYALTY FREE for our purposes (Arts For Life is a not-for-profit organization and cannot use such materials for commercial purposes). If requested materials were created by a "for hire" contractor (such as a professional photographer), it shall be the responsibility of the participating group to execute any necessary licenses and to pay royalties (if any) to the contractor allowing AFL's royalty-free use of these materials.

3.

JUDGING

How the Adjudication Process Works

WHY YOU WERE SELECTED

For your experience in theatre generally

- Whether on stage or backstage, you have a background in one or many areas of theatrical production.
- You're an avid audience member/supporter of community theatre.

For your dedicated support of ALL community theatre

- Regardless of your personal affiliations you've committed to being fair and unbiased. We expect it.

For your sense of responsibility

- You've promised to fulfill the volunteer commitment you are making to view and to impartially adjudicate ALL shows assigned to you. We count on it.

Why You?

WHAT YOU CAN EXPECT

The Theatre Recognition Guild relies 100% on volunteer judges.

- There is no compensation; only profuse APPRECIATION!

Being a TRG Judge is a full year commitment

- Commences in January 1 and ends in December 31.
- Regardless of your involvements with participating groups.
- If you need to be relieved, please ask. We'd rather help you out of the commitment than have missed shows.

As a TRG Judge you can expect

- To view & adjudicate up to 12-16 musicals or 10-12 non-musical plays during the calendar year depending on your branch.
- To score every category/role on the official ballot for each show.
- To electronically submit each ballot ("score sheet") for tabulation.

BPA & TMA JUDGING CYCLE EXPLAINED

1. No later than **eight weeks** before the first performance Participating Groups submit a **Participation Form** requesting that their production be adjudicated by the TRG. If a production is accepted, it becomes **BPA Eligible** or **TMA Eligible** and is included in all AFL media & communication.

2. Each TRG Branch's Secretary/Chair, after considering conflicts, **randomly assigns a group of judges** to each eligible production. This group comprises the **"adjudication panel"** for that show. Among each panel are 2 alternates known only to the Secretaries/Chairs. Neither Judges nor Participating Groups know who is or is not an alternate.

3. Both TRG Branches publish judging assignments a minimum of **4 weeks** before the first performance of each production whenever possible (certain busy periods may require some minimal leeway).

Adjudication Cycle

JUDGING CYCLE (cont.)

4. The Secretaries/Chairs supply Participating Groups with **a list of assigned judges** (the adjudication panel) for each show.

5. Participating Groups stipulate **how judges may make reservations and obtain 1 complimentary ticket** to attend the show for purposes of adjudication. Participating groups may specify which performances may be attended (or not) and other procedures. *Judges must observe each group's requirements closely.*

6. Judging **assignments and attendance parameters for each production are published weekly** (usually Monday mornings) in **"Update"** newsletters and/or sent via e-mail directly to every judge by each branch. Depending on how full the calendar is, assignments may be published "as necessary" on a less-than-weekly schedule.

JUDGING CYCLE (cont.)

7. Judges **make reservations** and/or obtain their 1 complimentary ticket **according to the process specified by each Participating Group**. *Judges must be vigilant in observing reserve-by dates and other procedures required by the Participating Group.*

8. Each judge attends a performance of the production. Branch Chairs/Secretaries prepare **a score sheet** for the production **based on the published program** and inform judges of the link to the score sheet for each show. Links can be sent directly to judges and/or published weekly in **"Update"** newsletters.

9. **Within 2 weeks from the final performance** judges assigned to that production must submit scores online for **every recognition category** using the provided score sheet link. Each judge is assigned a unique judge's number and password combination that permits access to online the score sheets. After 2 weeks score sheets are closed, scores received thereafter are deemed invalid and judges are considered to have missed the performance without a valid excuse.

JUDGING CYCLE (cont.)

10. The process **repeats for each production**.
11. **Late in the year** (usually late November or early December) the TRG Branches separately convene ad hoc “Classification Meetings” to review every eligible role that has been performed during the award year. At the BPA meeting EVERY role is assigned to an official recognition category as determined by the committee. The TMA meeting classifies productions as either dramatic or comedic & resolves any questions of “leading” or “supporting”. The meeting is by invitation from among TRG judges in each branch who’ve seen the most productions and/or those who have an encyclopedic knowledge of the shows & their characters.
12. At the **end of the year scores are tabulated** and **nominees are determined** for each recognition category.

During certain times of the year, when Participating Groups have scheduled multiple overlapping productions concurrently, it can be hectic. Up to 7 BPA productions have at times been scheduled on some weekends. If this happens, you may be asked to judge more than one show per weekend, so it’s very important to maintain your calendars. In contrast the TMA may be temporarily dormant owing to a seasonal lack of scheduled productions.

4.

CATEGORY DESCRIPTIONS & ADJUDICATION CRITERIA

What TRG Judges Will Evaluate

“

The best and most beautiful things in the world cannot be seen or even touched - they must be felt with the heart.

—Helen Keller

“

That which is striking and beautiful is not always good, but that which is good is always beautiful.

—Ninon de L’Enclos

WHAT ARE YOU LOOKING FOR?

- You must only assess what you experience from the seat in which you are sitting at the moment you are sitting there as an audience member.
- You are there to do a job, not just to enjoy the production (which we hope you do, but that would be lagniappe…).
- It is your job to actively observe all of the details (or missed details), as well as the "picture" as a whole.

DON'T PROJECT HYPOTHETICALS INTO YOUR SCORES.

Judge only what you see

WHAT ARE YOU **NOT** LOOKING FOR?

- It is NOT YOUR JOB to judge story content!
- Almost without exception all productions you attend will NOT be original - they will be “revivals” of previously produced material.
- You may “hate” the show because: it deals with difficult or controversial subject matter; it is outdated; it doesn’t have fun songs (or you are unfamiliar with them); etc. — This does not matter!
- We evaluate **EXECUTION** — NOT CONTENT.
- You must respect this distinction to be a fair judge.

Judge only execution quality

“

There's not a tune you can hum.
There's not a tune you go bum-bum-bum-di-dum.
You need a tune you can bum-bum-bum-di-dum ?
Give me a melody!

Why can't you throw 'em a crumb?
What's wrong with letting 'em tap their toes a bit?
I'll let you know when Stravinsky has a hit ?
Give me some melody!

—Stephen Sondheim
Merrily We Roll Along

WHAT ELSE IS **NOT** A JUDGE'S TASK?

- Oh, you love the show? This too is IRRELEVANT.
- Some people like "traditional works"; others enjoy "bleeding edge"; some like "clever and witty"; some "broad and kitschy" - these traits we do NOT assess.
- We are **JUDGES**, not critics. We evaluate **EXECUTION.**
- There is no category for the best book/story; no category for "made me feel happy/great" (or sad).
- You must RESIST the (understandable) impulse for a production's written content & narrative to affect your scores. Reward performance and execution only.

Don't judge the book & lyrics

ADJUDICATION CATEGORIES

There are three (3) types of recognition categories:

- Technical Elements — Sets, Lights, Costumes
- Overall Elements — Choreography, Music Directing, Directing & Overall Production
- Performances — Subdivided by Type of Role

BPA CATEGORY LIST - OFFICIAL

OVERALL CREATIVE BEST ACHIEVEMENT

★in Choreography
★in Music Directing
★in Directing

BEST MUSICAL PRODUCTION

★ - Small Ensemble
★ - Large Ensemble

Note: The decision whether to award separate large and small ensemble BEST MUSICAL PRODUCTION awards or one overall award is made annually by the AFL board depending on the number of qualifying productions.

TECHNICAL CREATIVE BEST ACHIEVEMENT

★in Costume Design
★in Set Design
★in Lighting Design

AFL does not recognize Sound Design

OPTIONAL

★Special Achievement
★Lifetime Achievement
★Founders Recognition

OPTIONAL

Musical Performance

BEST PERFORMANCES

BEST PERFORMANCE BY AN ACTOR/ACTRESS

★in a Leading Role
★in a Featured Role
★in a Cameo Role
★in a Supporting Role
★in a Comedic Role
★in a Non-Singing Role

BEST PERFORMANCE

★by a Duo/Group
★by a Juvenile

★Best

★Best Featured Dancer

BPA Categories

BPA YOUTH CATEGORY LIST - OFFICIAL

BPA Youth Categories

OVERALL CREATIVE BEST ACHIEVEMENT

★in Youth Choreography
★in Youth Music Directing
★in Youth Directing

BEST YOUTH MUSICAL PRODUCTION

★(any ensemble sIze)

TECHNICAL CREATIVE BEST ACHIEVEMENT

★in Youth Costume Design
★in Youth Set Design
★in Youth Lighting Design

BEST PERFORMANCE BY AN ACTOR/ACTRESS

★in a Youth Leading Role
★in a Youth Supporting Role

OPTIONAL YOUTH BEST PERFORMANCES

★Best Youth Musical Performance
★Best Youth Featured Dancer

Note: (Parenthetical) information in not part of the award title.

TMA CATEGORY LIST - OFFICIAL

OVERALL CREATIVE

OUTSTANDING

★Direction of a Dramatic Play
★Direction of a Comedic Play

PRODUCTION

OUTSTANDING

★Dramatic Play
★Comedic Play
★Large Ensemble (Drama or Comedy)
★Small Ensemble (Drama or Comedy)

TECHNICAL CREATIVE

OUTSTANDING

★Costume Design for a Play (Drama or Comedy)
★Set Design for a Play (Drama or Comedy)
★Lighting Design for a Play (Drama or Comedy)

OPTIONAL

★LIfetime Achievement
★Outstanding Original Play

OUTSTANDING [...] ACTOR/ACTRESS IN A DRAMATIC PLAY

★Leading
★Supporting

OUTSTANDING [...] ACTOR/ACTRESS IN A COMEDIC PLAY

★Leading
★Supporting

OUTSTANDING JUVENILE IN A PLAY

★(Drama or Comedy or Both)

Note: (Parenthetical) information in not part of the award title.

TMA Categories

RECOGNITION CATEGORIES (formerly §12.7)

The category descriptions given below govern AFL recognition under the following guidelines:

- An on-stage performer many be nominated in **only one (1)** performing category in a musical or play even though the descriptions of multiple categories may appear to be applicable and/or overlap. Final competitive category determinations will officially be made at annual branch classification meetings late in the adjudication year.
- Creative and technical artists may be nominated in **multiple creative and technical craft categories**, when applicable.
- Unless otherwise noted category descriptions apply equally, whether for BPA or TMA recognition, and for both adult and youth recognition.
- AFL reserves the right to determine the specific achievement &/or performance categories recognized and awarded, combine categories, omit categories, etc. depending on the particular circumstances of the award year - at its sole discretion.

RECOGNITION CATEGORIES

Best Musical Production (- Small Ensemble; - Large Ensemble) - BPA
Best Youth Musical Production - BPA Youth (formerly §12.7.1)
Includes all elements of the production, as well as the difficulty involved in producing the show.
Recipient: Theater Group. The nomination is sent to the Board President and may be accepted by the President, Artistic Director, or another group member as predesignated by the Theater Group; Director may accept in the absence of a group representative.

Large BPA Ensembles are defined as having 16 or more on-stage performers. Small BPA Ensembles are defined as having 15 or fewer on-stage performers. Stagehands (whether costumed or not) who do more than move scenery, etc. &/or who perform spoken dialog, singing or do anything vaguely performance-like (e.g., being a member of a crowd scene) while visible to the audience shall be counted as a member of the company for the purpose of "large/small" determination. AFL reserves the right to make the final determination of ensemble size for the purposes of recognition.

RECOGNITION CATEGORIES

Outstanding Comedic Play - TMA (added 2021)
Presented to a theatre group producing an eligible comedy recognized by the TMA Branch of the TRG to have the highest average score based on all aspects of the production.
Recipient: Theatre Group as represented by its President/Chair, Artistic Director, etc.; or the Director may accept in the absence of a group representative.

Outstanding Dramatic Play - TMA (added 2021)
Presented to a theatre group producing an eligible drama recognized by the TMA Branch of the TRG to have the highest average score based on all aspects of the production.
Recipient: Theatre Group as represented by its President/Chair, Artistic Director, etc.; Director may accept in the absence of a group representative.

RECOGNITION CATEGORIES

Outstanding Small Ensemble - TMA (added 2021; revised 2023)
Outstanding Large Ensemble - TMA (added 2021; revised 2023)

Presented to the theatre group and all performers of an eligible production (drama or comedy) recognized by the TMA Branch of the TRG as having the highest average score based on a direct assessment of the OVERALL PERFORMANCE of the ENTIRE CAST/ENSEMBLE for that production. Each judge shall enter a SINGLE score for "ENSEMBLE" for each production. [Revised & effective beginning 2023 judging year.] Recipient: The trophy is awarded to the Theatre Group and a certificate to each cast member. This in essence an acting award for the ensemble as a cohesive whole.

Small TMA Ensembles are defined as having 3 to 7 on-stage performers.
Large TMA Ensembles are defined as having 8 or more on-stage performers. Anyone appearing on-stage (whether costumed or not) who performs spoken dialog, singing or does anything remotely performance-like (e.g., augmenting a crowd scene) while visible to the audience shall be counted as a member of the company for the purpose of the "large/small" determination. AFL reserves the right to make the final determination of ensemble size for the purposes of recognition. [The prior version of this award (based on the average of the individual performance scores of all cast members) is retired effective 1 Jan 2023.]

RECOGNITION CATEGORIES

Best Achievement in Directing - BPA (formerly §12.7.2)
Best Achievement in Youth Directing - BPA Youth
Staging, flow, creativity and interpretation of show & character; appropriate character casting and talent utilization. This category stands separate from Best Musical Production categories.
Potential recipients: Director, Co-Director(s)

Outstanding Direction of a Comedic Play - TMA (added 2021)
Outstanding Direction of a Dramatic Play - TMA
Presented to the corresponding director (separately for drama & comedy) who implements a unified vision of the play on stage. The director of the dramatic play and the director of the comedic play will present a point of view that penetrates all aspects of the production including staging, flow of show, creativity, interpretation of the show and characters, and appropriate casting.
Potential recipients: Director, Co-Director(s)

RECOGNITION CATEGORIES

Best Achievement in Music Directing - BPA (formerly §12.7.3)
Best Achievement in Youth Music Directing - BPA Youth
All aspects of music, including quality, intonation, balance, blend, tempo and the performance of the orchestra and the singing chorus as well as appropriate vocal casting and sensitive accompaniment. Should the highest scoring production not have used an orchestra comprised of a minimum of 3 living human musicians, the award shall be for "Best Achievement in Vocal Directing" or "Best Achievement in Youth Vocal Directing," but only in that instance.
Potential recipients: Music Director, Vocal Director, Orchestra Conductor, Lead Synth/Keyboard Programmer (if original work)

Best Achievement in Choreography - BPA (formerly §12.7.4)
Best Achievement in Youth Choreography - BPA Youth
Originality, staging and interpretation of dance with technical difficulty appropriate to the expertise of performers and precision of execution.
Potential recipients: Choreographer, Asst. Choreographer, Dance Captain (if significant creative contribution)

RECOGNITION CATEGORIES

Best Achievement in Costume Design - BPA (formerly §12.7.5)
Best Achievement in Youth Costume Design - BPA Youth
Appropriate, historically accurate, and visually spectacular costumes, i.e., color, complementariness, creation, etc. Emphasis is on a completely unified/cohesive design (regardless of costume source) and may include wigs, hair arrangements including facial make-up & accessories. Difficulty may be assessed with respect to construction vs. renting, number of costumes, level of detail, and assessment of a period's difficulty in being represented.
Potential recipients: Costume Designer, Hair/Wig/Makeup Designer, Lead Stitcher

Outstanding Costume Design for a Play - TMA (added 2021)
(Drama OR Comedy)
Presented to a costume designer for creating appropriate, historically accurate, and visually spectacular costumes with regard to color and fit, coordination with and complimenting lights and set, creation, etc. Period plays must be costumed accurately for the time setting to receive high marks. Details that lend to scoring include wigs, hair arrangements (including facial), make-up & fashion accessories.
Potential recipients: Costume Designer, Hair/Wig/Makeup Designer, Lead Stitcher

RECOGNITION CATEGORIES

Best Achievement in Lighting Design - BPA (formerly §12.7.6)
Best Achievement in Youth Lighting Design - BPA Youth
Flawless execution of technical lighting produced by a artistic & creative lighting design that enhances the overall production.
Potential recipients: Lighting Designer, Special Effects Designer, Lead Operator

Outstanding Lighting Design for a Play - TMA (added 2021)
(Drama OR Comedy)
Presented to a lighting designer for flawless execution of artistic lighting design that both enhances the overall production of the play and specifically enriches the set and costume design through visibility, naturalism, composition, period, atmosphere or unique effects.
Potential recipients: Lighting Designer, Special Effects Designer, Lead Operator

Note: For a separate live operator to be eligible he/she must be present and actively running the show at the board for the entire run.

RECOGNITION CATEGORIES

Best Achievement in Set Design - BPA (formerly §12.7.7)
Best Achievement in Youth Set Design - BPA Youth
Creative & practical stage construction lending to timeliness of scene changes and enhancement of the story as well as being complementary to the technical designs of lighting, sound and special effects.
Potential recipients: Set Designer, Lead Carpenter, Lead Set Dresser

Outstanding Set Design — TMA (added 2021)
(Drama OR Comedy)
Presented to a set designer for creative & practical stage construction that augments the stage picture. It reflects the way the stage is composed artistically in regard to props, shapes and colors and use of space vis-a-vis actors. Creation of atmosphere, period and place are essential. In addition, timeliness of scene changes is part of the design.
Potential recipients: Set Designer, Lead Carpenter, Lead Set Dresser

RECOGNITON CATEGORIES

Special Achievement - BPA (formerly §12.7.8)
(optional)
BOARD AWARD
Recognition of a unique application of theater on the local level.

Outstanding Original Play - TMA (added 2021)
(optional)
JURIED
Presented to an author/playwright for an original play produced in the St. Louis, MO - IL Metro East area receiving an average score of seven (7) or better. The play should be judged on audience effect, writing and ease of producing. Note: an average score of 7 is a minimum qualification. This is a juried award and if a play qualifies score-wise, then the judges who adjudicated the show will subsequently be polled as to whether they deem the work is worthy of the award or not. A very high percentage of judges must agree to be confer the award.
Recipient: Author/Playwright

RECOGNITION CATEGORIES

Lifetime Achievement - BPA **(formerly §12.7.9)**
(Optional)
BOARD AWARD
A person or persons in the arts who has/have contributed significantly to the Arts, who was born in the St. Louis area and/or spent formative or creative years in the St. Louis area, and whose accomplishments and/or contributions have had a pronounced international, national or local impact on our cultural heritage.

Lifetime Achievement - TMA **(added 2021)**
(Optional)
BOARD AWARD
A living professional in the arts who has contributed significantly to the Arts, who was either born in the St. Louis area, spent formative or creative years in the St. Louis area, and whose accomplishments and/or contributions have had a pronounced international, national or local impact on our cultural heritage.

RECOGNITION CATEGORIES

Best Performance by an Actor/Actress in a Leading Role - BPA
Best Performance by a Youth Actor/Actress in a Leading Role - BPA Youth
(formerly §12.7.10 & 12.7.19)
A principal role directly involved with the main plot and that has the greatest number of lines and/or musical numbers.
For youth recognition this includes leading and featured roles.

Outstanding Leading Actor/Actress in a Comedic Play - TMA (added 2021)
Outstanding Leading Actor/Actress in a Dramatic Play - TMA (added 2021)
Presented to performers with a principal role around which the main plot revolves.

RECOGNITION CATEGORIES

Best Performance by an Actor/Actress in a Featured Role - BPA (formerly §12.7.11)
A secondary principal role in which the character may be involved with his or her own subplot. The size of the role is second to the Leading role but greater than any supporting roles.

Best Performance by a Duo/Group - BPA (definition added 2021):
Recognizes a group of two (2) or more performers who, almost without exception, perform contemporaneously on stage and whose relationship to the production depends completely upon interaction with other member(s) of the duo/group to be meaningful. Duo/Groups are NOT required to be singing performers. Duo/Group performers may not perform multiple roles if they wish to be eligible in this category. If any member of a Duo/Group performs multiple roles, then the entire Duo/Group becomes ineligible for recognition.

RECOGNITION CATEGORIES

Best Performance by an Actor/Actress in a Supporting Role - BPA
Best Performance by an Youth Actor/Actress in a Supporting Role - BPA Youth
(formerly §12.7.12)
A secondary role in which the character is not directly involved in their own subplot but which is still of a substantial size greater than that of a Cameo role.
For youth recognition this includes all roles other than leading or featured.

Outstanding Supporting Actor/Actress in a Dramatic Play - TMA
Outstanding Supporting Actor/Actress in a Comedic Play - TMA
(added 2021)
Presented to performers in secondary roles that either support the main character(s), involve a secondary plot, or both.

RECOGNITION CATEGORIES

Best Performance by a Juvenile - BPA (formerly §12.7.18)
(not always recognized)
Any role in which the performer is 13 years old or younger playing a character intended to be 13 years of age or younger, delivering an exceptional performance in a Community Theatre (adult) production.

Outstanding Juvenile Performance in a Play - TMA (added 2021)
(Dramatic OR Comedic)
Presented to a child performer in a play who is 13 years old or younger playing a role INTENDED for a character UNDER the age of 13. This recognition is given at the discretion of the TMA Branch of the TRG.

RECOGNITION CATEGORIES

Best Performance by an Actor/Actress in a Comedic Role - BPA
(formerly §12.7.13)
Any comedic role is eligible but cannot be duplicated with any other performing role. Leading roles, although possibly comedic, may not be considered here.

Best Performance by an Actor/Actress in a Cameo Role - BPA
(formerly §12.7.14)
A minor role with little or no involvement in the plot progression but significant in some key way to the show.

Best Performance by an Actor/Actress in a Non-Singing Role - BPA
(formerly §12.7.15)
Any role with dialogue and exceptional acting but without a solo or ensemble song. Participation in choral numbers is allowed with reference to this category.

RECOGNITION CATEGORIES

Best Musical Performance by an Actor/Actress - BPA
Best Musical Performance by a Youth Actor/Actress - BPA Youth
(formerly §12.7.16 & §12.7.20)
(Optional, not always recognized)
JURIED
Any member of the the cast performing a solo or performing throughout the show either vocally or instrumentally and whose performance transcends what is expected from a superior performance.

Best Musical Performance by a Featured Dancer - BPA
Best Musical Performance by a Youth Featured Dancer - BPA Youth
(formerly §12.7.17)
(Optional, not always recognized)
JURIED
Any member of the cast (male or female) performing a solo, duo, trio or quatro dance, minimum of 20 bars of music. This definitely does not include a dancer singled out ot the dancing chorus.

GENDER IDENTITY (approved 2021)

- For the purposes of Arts For Life programs, performers are typically adjudicated on the basis of their gender identification, not the gender of the role that they played.
- Performers identifying as **non-binary** or **gender-fluid** may choose EITHER:
  - to select the gender classification (actor or actress) in which they wish to be adjudicated (regardless of the gender of the role)

  OR

  - they may be adjudicated based on the gender of the role they played.

Participating Groups are responsible for providing any cast member gender classification preference(s) by the time they submit their program/cast lists.

CATEGORY CLASSIFICATION MEETING

(added 2021)

Near the end of each award year **both** branch Secretaries/Chairs shall convene an ad hoc meeting to review every eligible role that has been performed during the award year (independently for both the BPA & TMA Branches).
Attendees shall be known as the "Category Committee."

- These meetings shall include the branch Secretary **and** Chair (when possible) and, for each branch, those TRG Judges known to have adjudicated and/or attended the greatest number of eligible productions and also those judges known to have a wide-ranging general knowledge of productions and their characters. The AFL President shall be a de facto member of each branch's Category Committee.
- Category Committee membership is by invitation of the Branch Secretary/Chair who is responsible for judging assignments at their discretion.
- The Category Committee shall assign an official recognition category to each eligible role. The TMA Branch shall classify entire productions as being either dramatic or comedic in nature and resolve questions of whether roles are "leading" or "supporting."
- When assigning categories the Category Committee shall consider, in order, 1) category of past winners; 2) category of past nominees; 3) current judge category recommendations from score sheets; and 4) general knowledge of each production, in determining a consensus category choices.
- The final determinations of the Category Committees shall govern recognition categories for that award year only. All determination are based on the role, NOT the performer.

NUMBER OF NOMINEES (formerly in §12.3)

- The Top Scores in each category are the official nominees and the Top Score overall is the awardee.

- The Director of Community Recognition may set the number of eligible nominees to no higher than six (6) per category at her/his discretion upon recommendation of the branch Chairs/Secretaries.

- With respect to potential ties reported by TRG Branch Chairs/Secretaries using the standard scoring method, the Director of Community Recognition will attempt to resolve ties using an established alternative calculation method. (Note: all scores are computed anonymously.) This applies to both potential nominees and awardees. If the alternative method is unable to resolve the ties, then all ties will be awarded and/or additional tied nominees will be officially named.

THE CORE EVALUATION FOCUS FOR JUDGES

First and foremost you should assess each category based on three **(3) PRIMARY FACTORS.**
For each element ask yourself these questions:

1. **Does it serve the story being told?**
2. **Is it appropriate to the piece and to the performing space?** (within the context of the director's vision)
3. **Is it of consistent quality throughout the production?**

THE CORE EVALUATION FOCUS FOR JUDGES (cont.)

In addition to the 3 guiding principles:

- You **must** also consider **LEVEL OF DIFFICULTY.**
- You **must** adhere to the **SPECIFIC CRITERIA** for each adjudication category.
- You **should** base your scores on what is **"average"** at participating AFL community theatres according to **YOUR** own personal viewing experience.

CHOREOGRAPHY CRITERIA

In judging dance **choreography** consider:

Overall

- Does the dance serve the story and is it appropriate to the music?
- Composition — appropriate steps, formation work, transitions between formations and into and out of dances themselves.
- Is the style consistent & appropriate throughout the show?
- Overall flow within dance numbers as well as within the entire show.
- Execution — is it clean & appropriate to the technical level of performers?

Level of Difficulty

Are there large production numbers; a lot of dance numbers (*DANCE* show)? Does it require intricate styles (ballet, tap, etc.)

Creativity — is its style original and inventive? Does it feel fresh?

Integrity to score — does the dance match the music stylistically?

Sensitivity — Is dancing considerate of and integrated with singing and acting?

CHOREOGRAPHY SHOULD NOT BE COMPARED TO FILM VERSIONS OF A SHOW. DON'T REWARD "VERY GOOD COPIES" OF MOVIE DANCES.

MUSIC DIRECTING CRITERIA

In judging **music directing** consider:

Overall

• Does the music serve the story?
– Is it seamless from scenes into songs?
– Are the theatrical aspects of the music evident?
– Is scene change music used appropriately?
– Are tempos appropriate to the flow & pace of the production?

• Are the ensemble vocals well executed?
– Consider balance, intonation, complete coverage of harmonies, diction, phrasing, rhythm & style of the vocal ensemble.

• Is the orchestral accompaniment well executed?
– Consider the balance and blend in the pit among sections (reeds, brass, strings, rhythm).
– Consider intonation within and among sections.
– Is the pit balanced with singers and ensemble?
– Are key changes, tempo/rhythmic changes and other transitions seamless and unobtrusive or does it take a few moments for things to smooth out?
– Is the size of the pit appropriate to the piece and to the space? Are there any obvious "holes" (missing instruments) in the orchestra that impact the musical presentation?

• Are any changes to the accompaniment (made to accommodate the available number of musicians) effective and true to the spirit & style of the original orchestrations?

MUSIC DIRECTING CRITERIA (cont.)

Level of Difficulty

• The sheer amount of music. For a long show with lots of music it is very strenuous to play in the pit.

• The size of the orchestra — lining up a large traditional pit is a large task.
— Are all parts covered?
— Are substitutions used effectively?

• The complexity of the score
— Example: Sondheim vs. Rodgers & Hammerstein.
— Lots of doublings (one player playing multiple instruments). Reeds do this a lot.
— Requirements for odd, exotic or rare instruments, e.g., harp, didgeridoo, sitar, RMI, Hammond B3, etc.

• The size of the vocal ensemble and the complexity of the vocal score.
— Is it a large chorus with difficult harmonies? Or does the chorus sing in unison? Have choral harmonies been simplified from the original?

IMPORTANT NOTE: Many groups (for a number of legitimate reasons) are using both pre-recorded tracks (cd, iPad, etc.) and/or orchestra replacement software in lieu of a live orchestra. USE OF THESE TOOLS, BY THEIR VERY NATURE, IMPLIES A LOWER LEVEL OF DIFFICULTY. You must consider this when judging music directing. A show without a live orchestra can only be considered to have had vocal directing. Look at the program and see if any live musicians are listed or if "tracks," e.g., MT Pit, are being used.

MUSIC DIRECTING CRITERIA (cont.)

Additional Considerations:

• Judging Music Directing requires more than simply deciding whether the show "sounds good." It is probably the least understood of the categories we judge because experiencing music is an individual and very subjective act. Key Hint: Listen to the times when the music "changes." When the key, tempo, or style changes – is it a smooth or jarring experience?
— Judge based on what is average to YOU. If everything you see "sounds good," then you should be scoring a lot of "5's" & "6's" for music directing.

• Music Directors often have no control over the sound balance! A good rule of thumb is that if you cannot SEE the music director/orchestra, then they probably cannot hear the cast very well. In this case the Sound Person most likely has control of the balance.

• In addition, new sound technologies (such the Hearback System now employed by some community theaters) give the entire responsibility for the balance to the Sound Person. The Music Director has no ability to control the balance with these systems.

SO, it may be very difficult to determine who is to "blame" at shows where you find yourself unable to hear either the singers or the orchestra (or both). Also, in community theatre chorus members and secondary supporting players are seldom mic'd and it may be particularly challenging to judge these performer.

In any event do your best to distinguish between music and sound. We do not currently judge sound design.

DIRECTING CRITERIA

In judging **Directing** consider:

Overall

• Effective storytelling.
– Continuity, pace, blocking - is it appropriate & compelling?
– Character development and fully expressive variety of movement as opposed to "traffic management."

• Blending of all technical elements.
– Effective use of performance venue/space.
– Fully developed and cohesive mise-en-scene.

• Vision/Concept clear to cast and designers; presented to the audience as a coherent interpretation. Commitment to vision plainly evident in the smooth unfolding of the production.

• Appropriate Casting.

• For musicals: seamless integration of the songs and dances into the show as the story is being told.

Level of Difficulty

• Size and complexity of the show: *THE FANTASTICKS* vs. *MISS SAIGON*; *WAITING FOR GODOT* vs. *THE LIFE AND ADVENTURES OF NICHOLAS NICKELBY.*

• Production Challenges. Difficult space. Smooth flow of scenes.
NOTE: In shows where you experience slow scene changes try to determine whether the set design or the directing is the culprit.

OVERALL PRODUCTION CRITERIA

In judging the **overall production** consider:

Overall Presentation:

- Was the STORY told effectively?
  - *were the major IDEAs of the work fully developed and conveyed to the audience?*

- Did the blending of performance and technical elements create a cohesive and coherent presentation?
  - *Continuity*
  - *Pace/Flow*
  - *Emotional Impact*

- Did it leave a "positive" impression and would you recommend it to friends?

Level of Difficulty

Production challenges inherent to the complexity of the chosen production should be considered, e.g. *I DO, I DO* vs. *MISS SAIGON* and *LOVE LETTERS* vs. *NOISES OFF.*

Space challenges — Are you seeing the entire production from your seat? All elements? Church basement or fully equipped theatre?

Technical challenges — Unit set or multiple scene changes? Two simple chairs or flying helicopters? CD, "Piano, bass & drums" or 33-piece orchestra?

COSTUME DESIGN CRITERIA

In judging this technical category you evaluate the following:

- Overall COSTUME DESIGN
- MAKEUP DESIGN (including specialty makeup)
- HAIR DESIGN

Judge only what you see/experience.

Costumes

COSTUME DESIGN CRITERIA (cont.)

In judging **costumes** consider:

Overall Design

- Serves the story — is consistent and appropriate to the period.
- Complements the action & overall vision.
- Ease of performance.
- Color palette works with the SET DESIGN and the LIGHTING DESIGN.

Level of Difficulty

Is it an unusual period? Are there many costume changes? Is it a very large cast that required a lot of costumes?

Authenticity

Notes:

— This category tends to be a little "upside-down." Judges focus on one little detail that is wrong in a "huge" costume plot and deduct points for a small oversight. "The costumes were great, but one guy was wearing Doc Martens." Or: "I could see the bra strap of a girl at the end of the tap line."

— Look at the playbill. If you find a long list of costume personnel or special notes about "certain costumes created by ...." then that is a higher degree of difficulty than if people bring in street clothes from their closets. Conversely, if you see bunch of complex costumes but NOT a long list of costumers, it's reasonable to assume that the production rented/borrowed costumes. Look for clues of this in the program. Renting/borrowing is a lower degree of difficulty.
Example: *BEAUTY & THE BEAST* — the costumes may be fabulous, but most times they are rented.

COSTUME DESIGN CRITERIA (cont.)

The "**Big Costume Controversy**"

Should shows with constructed costumes be adjudicated better than those that rent or pull?

The costume designer works with the director and others to discuss the needs of the show before coming up with a unified "look" and a series of sketches to illustrate looks for individual characters.

The designer then works with the wardrobe team of the production to decide which items are:

- already in company stock
- which can be adapted from existing company stock
- which should be rented/hired
- which should be bought, **and**
- which should be made from scratch.

We suggest that "design" is a holistic term that encompasses both the overall unified look **AND** the way it is achieved.

No costume plot is ever 100% "pure" one way or the other. Clever adaptation of existing costumes can be far more creative (and effective) than building from scratch OR renting. Only **IF you can determine the source** may you consider it as a component of DIFFICULTY. BUT, **don't guess** - if you don't know the source with certainty, you cannot fairly consider it.

COSTUME CRITERIA - MAKEUP

In judging consider:

Makeup Component

• Serves the story — aids projection of character; accurate to period; consistent.

• Incorporates 6 key elements of character analysis — HEARTH.

- ➢ Heredity
- ➢ Environment - occupation, geographic location, time, etc.
- ➢ Age
- ➢ Race
- ➢ Temperament - personality, emotional state, etc.
- ➢ Health

• Complements costumes & lighting.

Level of Difficulty

Specialty makeup, large casts, makeup changes (aging characters during the production).

Authenticity

Notes:

— Scan lobby photos during intermission. How good was the makeup in comparison to what the actor looks like normally? Some makeup (e.g., "alien," "zombie," and "fun caricature") is not all that hard to execute even though it may take a great deal of creativity. Painting someone green or aging them effectively is a much more subtle makeup design. Makeup, if done right, shouldn't even be noticeable. IT IS YOUR JOB TO NOTICE.

— Make sure **everyone** (including men) are wearing makeup and you can see facial features, e.g. eyes, etc.

COSTUME CRITERIA - HAIR

In judging consider:

Hair Component

• Serves the story — aids projection of character; style is accurate to period and consistent.

• Consistent with and complements costume and makeup. (And lights.)

• Wigs are appropriate to the story and stay secure throughout.

Level of Difficulty

Specialty wigs, large casts, style changes (aging characters during the production).

Authenticity

Notes:

— As with overall costume design, it is notable how much a single "wrong" hairdo can affect a judge's "hair" component for costumes in a large cast production or a production with complex hair design. Weigh fairly within the context of level of difficulty.

— Should "fantasy" hairdos for amoeba's really score higher than difficult period hairdos and wigs? This is not to say that "fantasy" hairdos are intrinsically silly, but as far as it relates to level of difficulty, is it really all that demanding to put gel in one's hair to make it stand at a crazy angle. Particularly when the whole hairdo is a made up "creation" and has no real-world basis for comparison.

SET DESIGN CRITERIA

In judging this technical discipline you evaluate the following:

- Overall SET DESIGN - including set changes
- SET CONSTRUCTION
- SET PAINTING and/or PROJECTIONS
- SET DECORATION and DRESSING
- PROPERTIES
- SPECIAL EFFECTS (other than lighting effects).

Not all elements may be present - so judge only what you actually see/experience.

SET DESIGN CRITERIA (cont.)

In judging **sets** consider:

Overall Design

• Serves the story and the space — smooth flow between and within scenes, entrances are appropriate. Set is appropriate to the scope of the show.

— Is the design too big for the space?
— Is the design "complete?"

• Creative solutions to obstacles (in the space or inherent to the show).

— Examples: Working around pillars or low ceilings. Taking into account whether the space is a real theatre vs. an auditorium, gym, converted church or storefront, etc.

• Period and place appropriate. Helps define and set the mood of the piece.

— reflects concept: realistic vs. abstract; presentational vs. representational; standard 4 walls vs. standalone units

• Is consistent with and complements the other technical elements: lights, costumes, etc.

• Visual interest, style and balance.

• Sight lines considered — masking is adequate and appropriate.

• Effect of set changes on the overall speed and flow of production.

SET DESIGN CRITERIA (cont.)

Level of Difficulty

How great was the "artistic challenge?" Just because they managed to get 25 set changes accomplished on a small stage does not necessarily mean the design itself was challenging. Construction may have been difficult . . . but the Set Design? Some of the most artistic designs are not always incredibly detailed replicas of life. Sometimes artistic and aesthetic excellence can be found in an elegantly simple set design — and these can be notoriously difficult to execute effectively.

Authenticity

Notes:

— Is there intricate detail in various elements: trim, stairs, windows, doors, arches, etc. or are they basic and plain?

— Was the set designed with multiple areas and levels, or just one level because it was easier to build?

— Does the set have "depth" or is it flat? Are walls and other surfaces aged or do they look like someone just laid down a paint roller? Is there an attempt to create a unique "mini world" from floor to ceiling or is it played in front of generic black drapes?

SET CRITERIA - CONSTRUCTION

In judging consider:

Construction Component

- Serves the set design and the story. Is safe for the performers. Facilitates scene changes (quiet, simple, timely).
- Creative use of materials in creating the illusion of reality.
- Workmanship.
  - *Even the most simplistic sets can have shoddy workmanship, which detracts from the overall illusion of reality.*
- Attention to detail.
  - *Example: Is the window real or painted? If real is it a practical (working) window?*
- Do things "make sense" and fit properly?
  - *Example: In a room set in modern times, are there light switches and plugs on the walls? Are there heating registers? Do all the windows and doors have proper hardware & casings? Etc.*
  - *Example: When a door is opened, does the audience see something appropriate on the other side (like an exterior or another room versus a black flat or curtain)?*

SET CRITERIA - CONSTRUCTION (cont.)

Level of Difficulty

A superlative set design does NOT mean set construction was hard. The most detailed, perfectly dressed single room set with a couple of doors is easily achievable with a few flats.

Look past the “wow” and think about what it really took to build it. If it is a single level with 3 walls and a couple of entrances, adjust your score down for level of difficulty.

— *Example: A two-level set that revolves is much harder to build than an room with flats and door.*

Unobtrusive set changes are very difficult to accomplish well with limited resources.

Notes:

— Are there elements (trap doors, shadow effects, etc.) incorporated into the set that need to be lit from below or behind?

— Does the outside of the house have a realistic look (siding, shingles) or is it just painted flats?

—How difficult was it to work with the materials: styrofoam, wood, drywall, steel, glass, etc.?

—Are practical doors and windows operable and do they work well?

—Stairways are difficult to build; fancy curving ones with fancy railings and baluster even more so.

SET CRITERIA - PAINTING

In judging consider:

Painting Component

- Serves the set design and the story & aids in setting place and time.
- Textures and colors are appropriate.
- Creativity and artistry.
- Attention to detail.
  - *Are the borders/lines even?*
  - *Does paint bleed through from a prior show?*
  - *Does the apartment building through the window look real and proportional?*
  - *Do the colors on the wall clash with other elements (lights/costumes)?*
  - *Are there elements left unfinished or sloppy?*
- Painting is consistent with and complements the other technical elements: lights, costumes, etc.

Level of Difficulty

Large scale panoramic drops, intricate design, painted floor, etc.

Notes:

- Again, look past the "wow" and think about what it really took to paint the set. Is it the painting that deserves credit for making the walls look "lived in" or is it the set dressing that is responsible?
- Look for texturing/aging, 3-dimensional feel, stenciling, or sponging instead of a flat wall.

SET CRITERIA - DRESSING

In judging consider:

Dressing/Decoration Component

• Enhances and complements the set design and the story without hindering the flow/movement of actors or scene changes.

• Helps set place, period, and mood. Also reflects the characters or the story. Should be appropriate for the space.

NOTE: Set Decoration/Dressing elements are items that are NOT picked up by the actors. If it's picked up by an actor during the performance, it's a PROPERTY.

Level of Difficulty

Unusual demands of the story or set design, need to enhance reality

Notes:

— This criterion is usually easy for judges to evaluate because really good set decoration is fairly obvious. The stuff on the walls and the furniture were meticulously researched and aesthetically displayed.

—How much stuff and how hard it was to acquire is where level of difficulty should be considered (e.g., having a real telephone switchboard in *BELLS ARE RINGING*). A modern day show where all the stuff on stage is available in any middle class home is a lot easier to dress than a period piece or one where period furniture, art and other "knick-knacks" must be tracked down and acquired. Look to the playbill for tips. Was the furniture built? Is there a long list of "thank you's" for loan of specialty items.

SET CRITERIA - PROPERTIES

PROPS ARE ITEMS THAT ARE PICKED UP AND/OR USED BY THE ACTORS ON STAGE, INCLUDING AUTOMOBILES.

In judging consider:

Properties Component

- Enhances the storytelling.
- Placement on stage & ease of use (as appropriate).
- Appropriate to time, place and character. Authentic appearance.
- Accuracy.
  - Was the whiskey the right color? Did the bar contain the correct glassware for drinks served? Was it a fencing foil when a sabre was specified?

Level of Difficulty

Large numbers of props, unusual items, food (cooked/prepared on stage).

Notes:

- As easy as good set dressing is to spot, it can sometimes be quite challenging to distinguish it from good props. Great set dressing may be hard to acquire, but a few pieces of stationery, an old phone and a fountain pen are quite trivial. Just because a single prop has a large impact on a scene doesn't necessarily mean the prop was difficult to acquire. The car in *CHITTY, CHITTY, BANG, BANG* may be spectacular, but was it simply rented? Was it the prop itself that was great, or was it's the actor's creative use of the prop that should be credited in his/her individual performance? Or perhaps the director should be credited for the idea of using the prop effectively?

SET CRITERIA - EFFECTS

SPECIAL EFFECTS INCLUDE:

— **Pyrotechnics** (Flash, Fire, Sparks, etc.) but NOT strobes or fire effects generated by props or lighting.

—**Rain or Water** on stage but NOT rain, clouds, water effects generated by lighting.

—**Smoke and Fog** but NOT the use of haze to accent lighting in the lighting design.

—**Video and Projections** but NOT the use of gobos, patterns or lighting textures. There is a trend of increased use of projections for scenic elements. Are they bright enough? Do actors cast shadows because of projector placement? Do they blend well with physical set elements or are they jarring?

—**Flying of Actors or Props** but it does NOT include a set that intentionally falls apart *(THE SKIN OF OUR TEETH/MARY POPPINS/etc.)* — that's set construction.

In judging **effects** consider:

Creative, Appropriate and Safe Use of Effect(s)

- Serves the story, advances the plot without distraction and without causing audience discomfort.

Level of Difficulty

Was it safely employed? Was it a large or unusual effect? Were you surprised? Do you wonder how it was accomplished? Use of projections can lower difficulty.

Notes:

— Special Effects are not often listed in the program. Ask yourself: Was it an effect that required a *SPECIAL DEDICATED TECHNICIAN to design, set up and/or run?*

LIGHTING DESIGN CRITERIA

In judging this technical discipline you evaluate the following:

- The overall LIGHTING DESIGN - including cues

Lighting design should include anything that uses lighting instruments, including practical (working) electrics (e.g., table lamps), gobos, strobes, star drops, moving lights, gobo rotators, and color changers, etc.

Although fog and smoke are frequently used to enhance the effectiveness of lighting, they can also be considered special effects of the SET DESIGN.

LIGHTING DESIGN CRITERIA (cont.)

In judging **lights** consider:

Overall Design

- Enhances the story.
  - Establishes Time
    - > Time of Day (morning, crepuscule, etc.)
    - > Era (1700's candlelight, 1880's gaslight, 1960's flourescent, etc.
  - Establishes Place (interior, exterior, woods, North Pole, etc.)
  - Establishes Mood (happy, somber, dark, mysterious, etc.)
- Creatively defines space.
  - Emphasizes where the action is taking place - focuses attention where the audience should be looking
  - Aids the flow of the production
  - Enhances emotions in each scene
  - Effectively uses color, texture, and shadow
- Works in conjunction with other design elements and enhances them.
  - Is consistent with and complements other technical elements: sets, costumes, sound, etc.
- Effectively and appropriately illuminates the stage and the actors.

IF YOU CANNOT SEE THE ACTORS OR YOU CANNOT DETERMINE WHERE YOUR FOCUS SHOULD BE, THEN THE LIGHTING DESIGN IS PROBABLY NOT EFFECTIVE.

LIGHTING DESIGN CRITERIA (cont.)

Level of Difficulty

Numerous area lights; specials; moving lights; all appropriate effects (gobos, strobes, color changers, etc.) blend into overall storytelling without drawing attention to themselves UNLESS the lighting effects are the "story" (e.g., *THE WHO'S TOMMY*).

Notes:

What were they able to achieve with available resources?

- Some theatres have limited equipment. Were the designers able to accomplish the above using what they had to work with? Other theatres have quite elaborate setups that require significant effort. Did they take full advantage of their equipment?

Other things to consider:

- How many different looks did they achieve?
- Did they use long slow cues to build intensity with the emotion of the scene?
- Did they create the passage of time with light?
- Were the lights distracting or overdone?
- Did they use follow spots effectively and unobtrusively? Follow spot usage is important in musicals to frame the "stars" among the ensemble in large numbers.

INDIVIDUAL PERFORMANCES
CRITERIA

In judging **acting and singing** you consider the following:

Creative Aspects of Performance:

- Character serves the story and is **believable** - choices are clear, rational and consistent.

Technical (Stagecraft) Aspects of Performance:

- Maintains focus throughout; projection, diction & dialect (if applicable) are appropriate; movement & physicality are appropriate and consistent for development of character. “Plays well with other performers.” Knows his/her lines.
- ***Additional considerations for musical performances:*** vocal &/or dance abilities are appropriate and consistent to the character. Able to maintain/build focus, intensity and characterization through musical &/or dance numbers as appropriate to the story.

INDIVIDUAL PERFORMANCES
CRITERIA (cont.)

In judging **acting and singing** consider also:

Level of Difficulty:

• Number of lines; range of songs; amount of dance; lots of costume changes; large range of emotion; physicality of the role; major transformation to accomplish role; multiple roles; and, yes,

• Was the role skillfully executed relative to difficulty — was it "good?" — but be aware good is relative when scoring performances...

Frequently Asked Question:

So what you're saying is that I need to adjust my scoring like an Olympic judge based on difficulty?

— To an extent, YES. Consider the lead male role in *LOVE LETTERS* vs. the title role in *HAMLET*. No matter how good someone is in *LOVE LETTERS*, they are still reading their lines off a paper. They didn't have to memorize them. While the person performing in *LOVE LETTERS* may have been absolutely smashing, does the difficulty of that role deserve a "10?" Perhaps an "8" might be the highest that the role could achieve?

— ***Performance categories are difficult to adjust for level of difficulty.*** It is clearer in technical categories. However, if you you are handing out "10's," then both the performance AND the level of difficulty should be "legendary."

INDIVIDUAL PERFORMANCES
CRITERIA (cont.)

In judging **individual musical performances** also consider the following:

Numbers sung by leading, featured & cameo players and duos/groups:

- Judge the musical numbers (songs) that these performers sing as a *COMPONENT OF THEIR INDIVIDUAL PERFORMANCE*. Consider ensemble/chorus singing as a *COMPONENT OF MUSIC DIRECTING*.
  - A prominent character who sings brilliantly would not help improve scores for MUSIC DIRECTING if the chorus/ ensemble can't maintain pitch or if the orchestra can't read the key signatures or maintain proper tempos.
- Likewise, shoddy accompaniment or a tone deaf ensemble should not detract from a singer who manages an excellent performance despite less than stellar support from the pit and chorus.

5.

SCORING

The Important Work
of Being A Judge

OVERVIEW OF SCORING (formerly in 12.3)

After a production has been adjudicated by its assigned “panel” each individual TRG judge shall assign a score from one (1) to ten (10) for each eligible performance and achievement category. Judges shall award scores in whole points from 1 to 5 and beginning at 5.5 may award scores in half points, e.g., 8.5.

- Individual scores are collected by the branch Secretaries/Chairs on behalf of the Director of Community Recognition. Judges must report scores within 2 weeks after a show’s closing for them to be valid.
- A TRG judge must attend a production live and in person to have her/his score count. Scores based on remote viewing, post-closing videos, hearsay, etc. are prohibited.
- Final scores for each achievement or performance are tabulated according to board-approved procedures (detailed below).
- At the end of the awards year the Director of Community Recognition shall recommend approval of all nominees & winners to the full board.
- Individual achievements/performances failing to receive the minimum required number of scores shall not be eligible for recognition.

SCORING SCALE

1 - Abysmal
Legendarily Poor Achievement

2 - Poor
Extremely Deficient Achievement

3 - Inferior
Uniformly Deficient Achievement

4 - Fair
Slightly Deficient Achievement

5 - Average
Typical Achievement

5.5 —

6 - Good
Exceeds Average Achievement

6.5 —

7 - Superior
Superb & Authoritative Achievement

7.5 —

8 - Elite
One of Select Few Achievements

8.5 —

9 - Epic
Best of the Elite Achievements

9.5 —

10 - Legendary

Achievements Rarely Attain This Level

DO use the “in-between” HALVES (0.5) — It helps distinguish close scores at year’s end.

Description of Scoring Scale

SCORES ANOTHER WAY

You will see only numbers on the score sheet, but recall the WORDS to reinforce your thinking of the scale — they help. You can also think of scoring like this:

- If you believe a performance/achievement should is NOT nomination worthy — give it a score in the range of **1 to 6.5**
- If you believe it IS at least worthy of a ***nomination*** — give it a score of either **7** or **7.5**
- If you believe it is good enough to ***win*** — score it from **8 to 9.5**
- If you believe it was the most incredible achievement you have ever seen or heard for an incredibly difficult work and should clearly ***win "hands down"*** — then give it the ultimate score of **10**. However, **10 should be an EXTREMELY RARE score**. Imagine your having to write a compelling 500-word essay for each 10.

WE CHALLENGE ALL OF YOU… TO BE TOUGH JUDGES

Just because you enjoyed the whole evening of theater, doesn't mean every element and every performance deserved a 10. No show has a "10-worthy" degree of difficulty for every element & every performance — don't laugh: we have received ballots with ALL 10s.

- It is okay to give a lot of 5's
- 5 means it was fine, it neither impressed you, nor offended you.
- 5 is a fine score, and since no one is going to see your scores, don't be afraid to use your 5's
- On average we should receive scores in the **4, 5, 6 or 7** range 68% of the time. Scores should be **2, 3, 8, or 9** about 28% of the time (that's 14% for 2 or 3 and 14% for 8 or 9).
- **ONLY about 4% of your scores should be either 1 or 10.**
- And remember, 5 is what is average TO YOU.

TOP SCORES BY CATEGORY

To earn an 8 - 10 for OVERALL PRODUCTION

The show must have:

- Fully developed and effectively presented all the major ideas of the play or musical
- Left a uniformly high and positive overall impression
- Been a production you would highly recommend to others

The cast must have:

- Performed as a cohesive ensemble with few lapses in story or pace
- Represented each character completely and accurately leading to believable performances at all levels of the production
- Interacted in fitting/appropriate ways according to the story with other characters, the stage environment, the music, etc.
- Honored the playwright/composer and the work as a whole
- Added specific nuances that heightened the audience experience
- Maintained the “suspension of disbelief” from beginning to end

TOP SCORES BY CATEGORY

To earn an 8 - 10 a DIRECTOR should:

- Have had a consistent vision, and conveyed that vision through their interpretation of the play or musical
- Composed brilliant stage pictures to give additional meaning to the moments
- Paced the show in an appropriate and compelling way
- Made good use of the entire space
- Have created real variety in the movement of the show, not just “traffic pattern management”
- Have had a consistent and unified message in association with lighting, sound, set, costumes, props, and actors

TOP SCORES BY CATEGORY

To earn an 8 - 10 a CHOREOGRAPHER should:

- Have understood the director's vision for movement in the piece
- Conveyed that vision expertly through the interpretation and execution of DANCE throughout the play or musical
- Composed movement that enhanced and added emotional meaning to the shows moments
- Advanced the show in an appropriate and compelling way
- Made good use of the entire space
- Have employed an outstanding variety of movements in the show
- Have had a consistent vision in association with all elements: lighting, set, costumes, and actors

When you can no longer express emotion it in words, you sing...
When you can no longer express emotion in song, you DANCE!

TOP SCORES BY CATEGORY

To earn an 8 - 10 a MUSIC DIRECTOR should have:

- Understood the style of the piece and presented it effectively
- Conveyed that style expertly through musical interpretation and execution throughout the production
- Given the performers a solid foundation on which to base their vocal and visual expressions of song and dance: intonation, tempo, balance, transitions from scene to song to dance and back, coverage of parts, etc.
- Connected with the audience effectively to communicate important musical ideas and convey emotion - augmented the clear understanding of vocalists/chorus lyrics
- Advanced the show in an appropriate and compelling ways through effective pacing and flow
- Exhibited effective control over the orchestra and chorus to ensure faithful transmission of the ideas embodied in the score
- Conveyed a sensitive interpretation of the music that furthered the director's vision relative to all elements

TOP SCORES BY CATEGORY

To earn an 8 - 10 a SET DESIGNER should have:

- Created an environment that supported the production, and
- Seemed appropriate to the style or time period of the play or musical
- Created a reaction to the play or musical in a specific way, or created a focus on something particular in the play or musical
- Been successful in creating a believable space for the characters
- Elicited proper use of color, line, mass, and texture
- Provided a logical and suitable setting for the action of the play or musical
- Used colors, style, and layout that created an attractive/effective environment and were an effective foil to the lights and costumes
- Had scene changes (if any) that were handled efficiently while minimally disrupting the action of the production

TOP SCORES BY CATEGORY

To earn an 8 - 10 LIGHTING DESIGNER should have:

- Been extremely effective in focusing the attention of the audience to the action of the play or musical and created good visibility with focused actors/singers well framed
- Been highly effective in changing locations and moods and providing a logical and suitable time frame for the action of the play or musical
- (Where appropriate) used exceptional effects
- Been successful in enhancing the physical environment of the show by using colors and technical elements that complemented and enhanced the attractive presentation of settings and costumes
- Had scene change cues (if any) that were handled efficiently without disrupting the action of the production
- Used lighting & light cues to enhance the emotional impact of the play.

TOP SCORES BY CATEGORY

To earn an 8 - 10 COSTUME DESIGNER should have:

- Used costumes that fully conveyed the essence of the characters and were “complete”
- Effectively and persuasively defined the time period of the play or musical from “head to toe” (wigs to shoes)
- Used costumes that were well executed and constructed
- Elicited proper use of line, texture, and color, especially in relation to settings and lighting
- Allowed for ease of movement by the character
- Used makeup, prosthetics and/or hair & wigs that contributed to the characterization and the overall appeal of the show
- Had costumes changes that enhanced rather than detracted from the pacing and flow of the show.

TOP SCORES BY CATEGORY

To earn an 7 - 10 PERFORMERS should have:

- **Used excellent TECHNIQUE:** How well the performers used their body, voice or instrument to express an idea, feeling or mood but also how their skills were properly executed in a routine. Diction/enunciation, dialect, movement, etc.
- **Been an effective INTERPRETATION:** How well the performers interpreted the creative vision of the choreographer &/or director into a unique expression on stage. The artistic "oomph" of the performance. Believability.
- **Have had outstanding PRESENCE and RASA:** The charisma of the performers that drew in the audience and commanded their attention; "rasa" refers to the agreeable quality of the emotional &/or aesthetic "juice" of the performance.
- **Been well INTEGRATED:** effective within the group or ensemble performances, supportive and interactive with other performers in a cohesive effort.
- **Encompassed a high degree of INTERACTIVITY** : The relationship between the performance and the audience, and how it was refined to give the audience more direct agency. "Selling it..." Energy, spontaneity, consistency.

IMPORTANT TO CONSIDER

The name "***Best Performance Awards***" notwithstanding, all recognition is for OUTSTANDING ACHIEVEMENT. You, as judges, ultimately determine what is "best." Keep this in mind; it'll make your task easier.

- Remain true to your own **personal** AFL community theatre experience.
- Rock your "5's". This is what is AVERAGE to YOU when it comes to AFL shows. If most shows are pretty good to you, then most shows should be a 5. If most are not so good … still 5.
  - Remain consistent: Stay true to your 5 throughout the year and the system will work to recognize and reward deserving nominees for their outstanding work.
  - Don't adjust your scoring because you feel you were too "easy" early or too "critical" early. And, don't go easy during the holidays at the end of the year.
  - It's really okay if the majority of your scores are 5 throughout the year.
  - Scores at the low end (1 or 2) and at the high end (9 or 10) should be extremely rare.
- Judge each production you see based on its own merits, not on expectations, the historical reputation of the company, or other productions of the show you might have seen in the past. Don't judge the story content.
- Don't try to rank the shows you saw. Judge everything on its own merits against your own AFL community theater experience. Start from "scratch" for each show you attend.

PSYCHOLOGICAL PITFALLS TO AVOID

Human nature is complex. It leads us to do things without knowing why. Avoid these common pitfalls of human nature when judging and scoring.

- HALO EFFECT: the tendency for an impression created in one area to influence your opinion in another area. This is why we don't allow the same score for every category. Don't score other performers highly just because the leads are fantastic. Also, if the overall production score is higher than every other category, there's a problem.
- CONFIRMATION BIAS: a type of cognitive bias that involves favoring information that confirms your previously existing beliefs or biases. "I've seen this actress before; she's good; therefore she'll be good in this show." Avoid doing this.
- MISINFORMATION EFFECT: the tendency for post-event information to interfere with your memory of the original event. It is easy to have your memory influenced by what you hear about the event from others. This is why you must NOT speak to other judges or attendees until well after the scoring deadline. Please score promptly.
- FUNCTIONAL FIXEDNESS: the tendency to see only one "right way" of doing something. Avoid scoring a show poorly because it's not like an earlier production you saw (or the way you would do it if given the chance).

DOs....

- Do stay true to your “5” throughout the season.
- Do submit ballots promptly (within 2 weeks of closing night).
- Do keep your programs/playbills.
- Do give a 1 or a 10 if such a score is truly deserved.
- Do score ALL elements and performances.
- Do use the program/playbill to help determine scoring of individual performances.
- Do score all overall and technical elements you see on stage, regardless of whether or not they are listed in the program/playbill.
- Do arrange for replacements with your Secretary/Chair early if needed.
- Do keep your Secretary/Chair apprised of your status with regard to conflicts and all aspects of your commitment to AFL.

...and DON'Ts

- Don't get frustrated with box office personnel.
- Don't wait to reserve your ticket.
- Don't be late to a performance - arrive well before 1st note of the overture or curtain up.
- Don't leave a performance early - not until after the final curtain call.
- Don't overlook a technical element because it isn't listed in the program/playbill.
- Don't base your scores on content or your feelings about "the script," including content that seems offensive to you.
- Don't base your scores on prior association with performers or technicians. Score the production elements/performances you see in THIS production.
- Don't score productions against each other. Don't compare to prior productions you might have seen.

SCORE PROCESSING
AFTER THEY ARE RECEIVED...

- Scores are collected by the branch Secretaries/Chairs on behalf of the Director of Community Recognition from the **12 judges assigned** to each production (10 regular and 2 alternate judges for each production) within **2 weeks** of the final performance of the production.
- For a category/performance to count and a score calculated, a minimum of **8 total unique scores** must be received from among the 12 assigned judges. (Note: we frequently receive more than 12 scores because non-assigned judges often attend and submit scores.)
- From the 10 non-alternate scores **the highest and lowest score are dropped** and an **official average score** is computed from the 8 remaining scores.
- If fewer than 10 non-alternate scores are received, then 1 or both of the alternate judge's scores are used (first) in place of missing regular scores.
- If only 8 or 9 total assigned scores are received, the lowest and highest scores are still dropped and the average score is computed from the remaining 7 or 6 scores, respectively. BUT, if scores from non-assigned qualified judges have been received they may be used (randomly selected) when official scores number fewer than 10.

SCORE PROCESSING
AFTER THEY ARE RECEIVED... (cont.)

- Eligibility is determined on a **"line item" basis**. That is: every individual performance or achievement category must receive the minimum number of 8 valid scores to be eligible and have an average score calculated. This is why we ask judges to be sure and score every achievement/performance on the score sheet.
- **Scoring Tabulation** and **the Assignment of Judges** are independent of one another. Those branch Secretaries/Chairs assigning judges (and naming alternates) do so independently and without any input from those collecting and calculating scores (and vice versa). Alternates are assigned in order and substituted for missing regular scores in the same order. Final scores are reviewed by an independent authority.
- Assigned **judges have the right to NOT score every category.** However, we do strongly encourage judges to score EVERY eligible performance/achievement — even if the score is a one (1) — lack of scores may result in a performance/achievement being ineligible for recognition.

6.

Additional Info

More Things You Need To Know

COMMON SENSE RULES OF CONDUCT FOR JUDGES

This basically boils down to “being an adult” and giving everyone the benefit of the doubt. Be kind.

1. Follow the directions of your branch Secretary/Chair (both BPA or TMA) carefully. She/he is the conduit between you and participating groups.
2. Observe proper protocol at all times .
3. Be a polite and cooperative guest — as a judge you represent AFL — you are an AFL Ambassador
4. When groups provide us comp tickets it means less money at the box office for them. NEVER request or try to finagle an additional free “companion” ticket. But, feel free to take advantage of any that are offered.

COMMON SENSE RULES OF CONDUCT FOR JUDGES (cont.)

5. Please do not discuss the show while attending. Especially avoid creating any unrealistic “expectations” by making qualitative comments to those involved with the production. If pressed for an opinion you may need to reveal that you are a judge and not at liberty to discuss the show. Do not discuss a show with other judges until after the scoring deadline passes.
6. You may not pick and choose shows to attend. Fairness and score validity dictate that you go where assigned.
7. Do inform your Secretary/Chair when you are unable to attend a show for any reason. And, please do so in a timely fashion so we may hopefully provide replacements.

COMMON SENSE RULES OF COMPORTMENT FOR JUDGES (cont.)

8. Be circumspect. Avoid any announcement of your status as a judge. Assume that you are being closely observed. You would be surprised the lengths to which some go to try to glean your assessment of the show.

9. Become familiar with this HANDBOOK and score your shows accordingly. Be consistent and remember each performance/element is judged individually based on YOUR AVERAGE AFL EXPERIENCE.

10. Be a good communicator. Monitor your e-mail. Report conflicts as soon as you know them. Advise your Secretary/Chair of any change in your status. Let us know of any problems you encounter.

Keep these things in mind and you will be a good AFL Ambassador.

HOW TO DEAL WITH PROBLEMS

The rule is simple: **DON'T!**

If you suspect that something (anything) is not right about a production, CONTACT YOUR SECRETARY/CHAIR and explain the situation. The Director of Community Recognition and the Director of Community Resources will determine how to proceed and any action that needs to be taken to investigate & resolve a situation.

BE CIRCUMSPECT. Things are seldom as they appear on the surface. Until we understand the situation, anything you say is conjecture and/or rumor. We WILL investigate and get back to you.

Be an observant "fly on the wall" but don't act personally to intervene.

AFL always want to be fair and transparent but we don't actively "police" bad actors - they almost always reveal themselves.

OTHER DUTIES & RESPONSIBILITIES

- You are only responsible for the shows you are assigned.
- BUT, please DO feel free to score shows that you attend but are not assigned and are not affiliated with.
- If you are not provided information about a show that you know is being presented by a group, then it is not under consideration by the TRG.
- Community Theater Group representatives may not judge any production associated with their respective groups.
- If you have direct involvement in or association with a production it means you are ineligible to judge that show. This includes ANY role in the production process: creative, performing, technical, marketing, house, etc.
- Under no circumstance may you score yourself as a judge.
- Your Secretary/Chair will contact you if you are needed as a replacement.

OTHER DUTIES & RESPONSIBILITIES (cont.)

- Do not try to get your own replacement should you be unable to attend any performance of an assigned show.
- Do NOT communicate directly with any theater group except to reserve tickets. If you have an issue, CONTACT YOUR SECRETARY OR CHAIR.
- An excessive number of unexcused misses will disqualify you from the TRG for current and future years. You must contact us by the weekend before a show opens or your absence will be unexcused EVEN IF WE ARE ABLE TO FIND A REPLACEMENT.
- All of your scores as a judge will be eliminated if you do not attend the minimum number of required shows by the end of the year.
- If you find the responsibility too great: please resign as soon as possible. We realize people's lives change — we understand.

The (original) 10 Commandments

1. Thou shalt follow all show directions & instructions requested by participating groups as conveyed to you by Theatre Recognition Guild leaders.

2. Thou shalt communicate your inability to attend assigned shows in a timely manner to YOUR Theater Recognition Guild Secretary/Chair.

3. Thou shalt not pick and choose which shows to attend — not that you would ever really have the chance to do so.

4. Thou shalt act as a polite guest when attending participating productions.

5. Thou shalt be circumspect and not flaunt your membership in the Theatre Recognition Guild.

6. Thou shalt not ask for special seating or accomodation solely because you are a judge.

7. Thou shalt never ask for an additional free companion ticket unless it is offered, nor shalt thou attempt to finagle one.

8. Thou shalt never discuss a production whilst attending the same; nor shalt thou discuss a production you are judging with another judge or anyone until the scoring deadline has passed.

9. Thou shalt vary thy scoring amongst all elements of a production and consider each element individually.

10. Thou shalt communicate ANY and ALL problems to your TRG Secretary/Chair but not to participating groups.

TICKETS AND RESERVATIONS

EACH COMPANY IS DIFFERENT!

- We communicate via e-mail. Weekly TRG Updates are e-mailed to all judges. Weekly Updates contain all judging assignments and detail how to make reservations at each participating group. They also contain directions to each performing venue. TMA Updates are more periodic as needed.
- You must make a reservation. Some groups have small houses and cannot “squeeze” you in. Some groups also restrict permitted dates of attendance.
- Your 1 ticket as a judge is free. Do not request more unless it’s offered (if so it’ll be noted in the Weekly TRG Update e-mail).
- PLEASE, be kind to box office personnel. They are usually volunteers like you and may not have the latest info.

TICKETS AND RESERVATIONS (cont.)

Plan Ahead!

- Don't wait to make reservations and risk a sold-out performance on "the only night you can go."

Avoid Closing Night!

- Closing night should be thought of as an "emergency alternate night." If you miss a show, we always want to have closing night to send a replacement in your stead.
- Every production has a minimum number of required performances that should provide judges enough opportunities to see the show. BUT, we have had cancellations on closing nights due to weather.

TICKETS AND RESERVATIONS (cont.)

Consider Traffic!

- It seems there is always major road construction going on somewhere in the St. Louis, MO-IL Metro East. As you must attend productions on both sides of the Mississippi River you should monitor traffic conditions on your planned route and plan for an alternate in the event you are likely delayed.

Arrive 15 to 30 Minutes Early!

- Some groups regularly have sellouts (especially in Illinois) and release any unclaimed tickets (including judges' tickets) 10 or 15 minute prior to curtain. Don't risk losing your seat.

TICKETS AND RESERVATIONS (cont.)

Make sure you leave extra time to find a theatre venue that is new to you!

- Always double-check the venue address and directions before you leave, after all this is community theater and some of our groups change venues or have multiple venues.

Don't make us have to castigate you in a frantic e-mail when a participating group tells us not enough judges have reserved!

- Be considerate — to both our participating groups and to your TRG Reps. As a volunteer judge you must always be aware of your responsibilities relative to the calendar and production schedules. Reserving on time is just being polite.

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We wish you a fun and enjoyable year as an AFL Judge. Our volunteers are the key to our success. Thank you!

— Arts For Life

One More Thing...

Any questions?

You can find us at afltrgchair@artsforlife.org

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