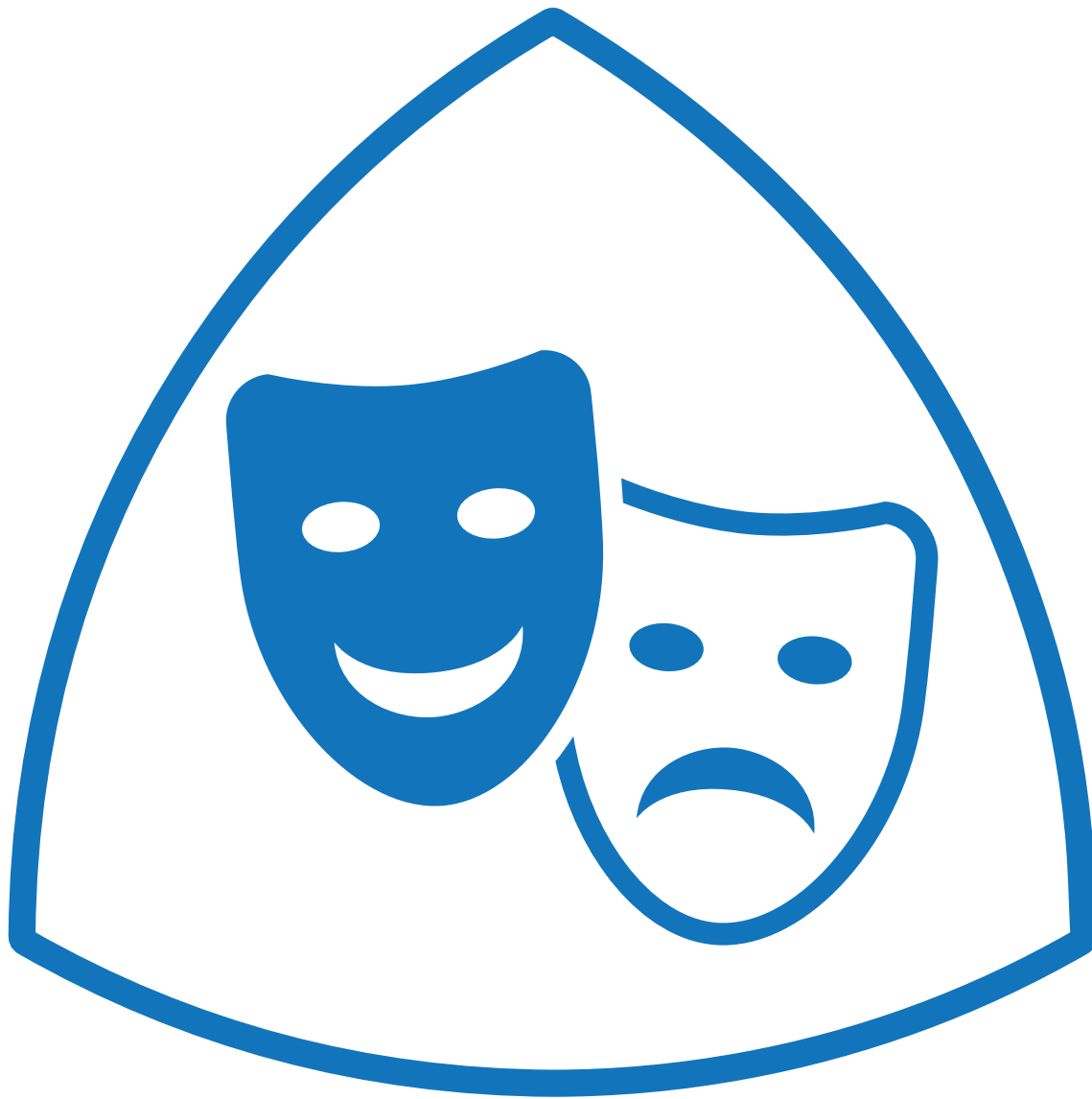


THEATRE



HANDBOOK



2023-24

www.wisdaa.org

Released September 12, 2023

Revision for the 2023-24 season:

New supervision and youth protection requirements implemented at University of Wisconsin System campuses that hold festivals/contests (see [Eligibility & Participation Rules online](#)), including providing proof of criminal background checks and completion of the [free] NFHS *Protecting Students from Abuse* course for all adults accompanying students. *Additional guidance for State Festival registration can be found within the Rules, Help, & FAQs section on the WISDAA website.*

New essay added: "Write it Yourself" by Mike Willis (p. 27).

Theatre Advisory Committee: The Theatre Advisory Committee meets annually. The Committee is composed of one director elected from each section and is chaired by the Theatre Advisor. Any suggestions for change or revision of Theatre contest structure or rules is discussed by the committee; recommendations are then presented to the Board of Control. Contact information for advisory committee and Board of Control members are available on the WISDAA website.

Theatre Goals & Objectives



The Association recognizes the value in encouraging a rich variety of theatrical productions throughout the state. The burden a director and cast may assume in the various types of theatre are of equal value. The major focus must be on skillfully presenting to the audience the understanding of the purpose and nature of the theatrical work by employing the appropriate theatrical means.

Association Goals

1. To provide a significant training ground for students in theatre arts.
2. To provide multiple opportunities for member schools to view each other's theatrical work.

Association Objectives

1. To emphasize actor training, script analysis, and the creative design and use of production elements.
2. To maintain a system of multiple production opportunities grounded in workshop and contest counseling.

Student Objectives

1. **Skill Objectives**
 - a. Develop skill in oral language and all expressive mechanisms (voice and bodily expression).
 - b. Develop understanding in psychological, moral, physical and socio-economic analysis of character

(analytic skills).

- c. Learn the elements of stagecraft and production (craft skills).

2. Intellectual Objectives

- a. Understanding the investigation of literature, history of divergent societies and cultures, and drama as a social force (cognitive base).
- b. Develop an appreciation of an aesthetic and intellectual activity (affective base).
- c. Learn the channels for creative dramatic work through original productions and alternative forms of theatrical expressions such as dance, mime, etc., (creative base).

3. Social Objectives

- a. To realize the simultaneous opportunities for leadership and group participation (group-level cooperation).
- b. Meeting and interacting with students from other schools in the context of a social and intellectual activity (acculturation).
- c. Promoting school and community relations through a display of the school's intellectual and artistic work (school-community).
- d. Develop recreational outlets for the future (future).

Rules for One-Act Play



1. Contest Participation Regulations

- 1.1. Submitting registration obligates a school to pay WISDAA dues and contest registration fees whether or not the school actually participates.
- 1.2. All schools are subject to [WISDAA Interscholastic Participation Rules](#), including Eligibility/Participation §2.1, §2.2, and §2.3 pertaining to supervision and youth protection.
- 1.3. Schools/students are expected to attend contests in their assigned region. Contest managers are under no obligation to make special arrangements for schools unable to attend; however, district/section chairs and the State Office may grant permission to attend a different region whose manager has availability. A school may opt-

- in to virtual participation, but should communicate that intention as a courtesy to their district/section chair(s).
- 1.4. Regional contest managers determine registration fees and adjudicator honoraria, as well as order of productions, based on reasonable requests made by directors in the registration process.
 2. **Script approval:** The school's administration must approve the script(s) for performance, such that it meets content appropriateness as that school deems fit. Schools are responsible for securing their own permissions and paying any royalties with the copyright holder of the work they wish to perform, as well as for any music they wish to play or perform. The director/advisor shall keep documentation of rights in the event they are contacted by a copyright holder for verification (see p. 21 for additional guidance).
 3. **Registration:** A school may enter play(s) with at least two student performers:
 - 3.1. Each entry may be a one-act or scene from one full-length play from any source.
 - 3.1.1. A school may not use the same script two successive years in the contest.
 - 3.1.2. The same script may be used by more than one school in any given contest.
 - 3.1.3. Authors of original scripts may send manuscripts to the state office for counsel and advice.
 - 3.1.4. Schools may not change the title of a production after the initial registration window closes.
 - 3.2. The school's Theatre contest advisor of record (see §1.3.1) shall register the play entry(ies) through the statewide, online initial registration process, certifying all participating students are eligible to participate in interscholastic activities/contests per school policies.
 - 3.3. Only one one-act entry per school may be registered for performance at an in-person contest at any level – district, section, state – with any additional entries as prerecorded video files uploaded for scheduled streaming by adjudicators as:
 - 3.3.1. Recording of a videoconference, no post-production editing (recordings may be paused for bandwidth issues or directors may piece together individual video segments);
 - 3.3.2. Captured in-person video capture, single-take, no post-production editing.
 - 3.4. Actors from schools with more than one entry only may participate in one cast; there is no limitation on students in technical/crew positions.
 - 3.5. Any entry may be changed from in-person to virtual at any point during the season, provided:
 - 3.5.1. No more than one entry is performing at an in-person contest at any level as defined in §1.4.
 - 3.5.2. For a play moving from virtual to in-person, that the change is registered at least two weeks prior to the contest for which that change applies (moving from in-person to virtual may be done more suddenly, especially for exigent circumstances, such as a cast member getting ill).
 - 3.6. Participating schools must honor reasonable deadlines set by contest managers. Contest managers should communicate logistics to participating schools at least two weeks prior to the contest.
 4. **Weaponry:** Schools who wish to utilize weaponry on stage must:
 - 4.1. Honor all host venue/institution regulations pertaining to presence of weaponry, whether real or facsimile.
 - 4.2. When registering each entry: list all weapons to be used and certify the school's principal has granted permission to use them all; describe safety and storage protocols; include name(s) of person(s) who have access; a photograph of each weapon; stage directions of how the firearm will be used on stage; timeframes – how far into the show AND for how long – any given weapon will be on stage, and when it will be visible.
 - 4.3. Special policies for firearms:
 - 4.3.1. **No blanks can be used;** all sounds must come from a recorded sound effect.
 - 4.3.2. Any contest host venue **may refuse** a school from using both a prop firearm and/or sound effect of a firearm being discharged.
 - 4.3.3. Theatrical firearms should never be pointed at the audience (can be traumatic and may result in unpredictable reactions), nor should be pointed at someone on stage. Instead, the theatrical firearm should be pointed past the individual into a corridor of safety.
 5. **Parameters:**
 - 5.1. Productions shall be staged in a proscenium configuration.
 - 5.2. Performance time shall be no more than 40 minutes, plus a 30-second grace period, there is no minimum time requirement. Time will commence when the stage manager indicates "go."
 - 5.3. Scenery should be versatile enough to disassemble to fit through a standard door, if necessary. Use of fly systems/rigging is at the discretion of each host venue, and WISDAA contests are not obligated to provide this service to participating schools. Weaponry (see rule 4), open flames, animals, and other safety concerns must be approved at each level by the host venue's technical director.
 - 5.4. At the Sectional level, performances exceeding time limit and grace period will not be eligible to advance to the

State Festival.

- 5.5. At the State level, performances exceeding time limit and grace period will not be eligible to receive an "Outstanding Directing" award, nor the "Critic's Choice" award.
6. **Contest levels and advancement:** The progressive contest levels are District, Sectional and State. The state office will share registration data as schools advance through the series. Adjudicators will rate each entry on 12 to 14 evaluation criteria (directors may opt-in to have lighting and/or sound evaluated), using a score of 1-3 points for each criterion. Scores will be averaged by the tabulation software (SpeechWire).
 - 6.1. **District:** average scores of 1.5 or better by at least two of three adjudicators shall advance an entry to the Sectional level.
 - 6.2. **Sectional:** average scores of 2.3 or better by at least two of three adjudicators shall advance an entry to the State level.
 - 6.3. **State:** four adjudicators will be paneled for each entry, one of whom will observe the production holistically and select rating scores and nominees for acting awards, but will not write comments. See §8 pertaining to awards.
7. **Announcements.** Schools are urged to stay for the entire contest; theatre is best with an audience.
 - 7.1. At the District and Sectional contests, results shall be announced no more than twice a day, to allow adjudicators to change "stop" recommendations to "advance." Contest coordinators are allowed to release results to individual schools who need to leave early.
 - 7.2. At the State Festival, results will be announced to schools following their oral response, as well as posted periodically.
8. **Awards**
 - 8.1. To receive awards, participants must attend an official WISDAA contest, in person or virtually.
 - 8.2. Certificates are awarded to schools at the district contest who advance to sectional, and to schools at sectional who advance to State. Individual medal pins may be purchased for each member of cast/crew for productions participating at the sectional level.
 - 8.3. The following awards shall be given at the State level, with those based on scores including lighting and sound in averaging, *if opted-in by the director*:
 - 8.3.1. Outstanding Acting (small plaque): upon nomination from at least two adjudicators.
 - 8.3.2. School awards: entries earning an average score of at least 2.67 from at least two adjudicators for all criteria in each of the respectively same-named evaluation areas, earn those awards (medium plaques):
 - 8.3.2.1. Ensemble
 - 8.3.2.2. Direction
 - 8.3.2.3. Technical Theatre
 - 8.3.3. Overarching school award: an entry earning an overall average score of 2.67 or better from at least two adjudicators shall earn the Critic's Choice (largest plaque and gold medals for each student participant); those below 2.67 shall earn the All State award (large plaque and silver medals for each student participant).
 - 8.4. Directors may order participation certificates from the State Office (or at the State Festival) for any student who participates in a WISDAA District, Sectional or State Festival.
9. **Disqualifications:** A play cast shall be allowed to finish the presentation and a disqualification shall not be announced until the adjudicator has consulted with the contest director and/or Referee Committee, who shall consult the production's director.
10. **Concerns/Protests:** The district/section chair shall handle any concerns with adjudicators or potential rules violations; appeals must be made to the State Office within five calendar days of the event. Any director may register a concern regarding evaluation(s) by completing an online form identifying concerns, with a copy of evaluation sheet(s), within five calendar days of the event. The State Office will investigate and communicate to the complainant within a week.
11. **Harassment & Discrimination:** The Wisconsin Interscholastic Speech & Dramatic Arts Association is committed to fostering safe and supportive learning environments for all student participants and adults at our interscholastic events. This requires mutual respect on the part of all people present. Accordingly, WISDAA prohibits all forms of harassment and discrimination by and to any person, whether written or oral, based on race, color, religion, sex, gender identity or expression, sexual orientation, marital status, citizenship, national origin, age, disability, genetic information, or any other characteristic protected by any applicable federal, state, or local law. Individuals found to have violated this policy will be subject to a full range of sanctions, up to and including removal from the festival premises.

Initial Online Contest Registration

Visit speechwire.com/wisdAAoneact. Directors who have used the site before may log in to an existing account; otherwise, click **"No, I need to create an account"** and complete steps to do so; if you have done everything correctly, SpeechWire will create your account and, within a few minutes, email your account password. Once you have created your school's account, visit: speechwire.com/login



Take care entering your password – capitalization matters! Click **"Log in."** You will be prompted to confirm information, after which, you will see the home page. You can immediately click the logo/theatre masks button, **"WISDAA One-Act registration."** The **Theatre Registration home page** prompts you in a checklist format, to complete information.

WISDAA Theatre Registration

The screenshot shows a navigation bar with a 'Create a new play?' button. Below it is a mission statement: 'Your mission: Eliminate the orange boxes! Once you complete an item below, it will turn into a green box. To get started, click on an item below. Some may not become available until you complete the items above them, so start with one that is available to you.' A checklist titled 'Information about your school' includes: 'Add students to your roster' (green), 'School and main advisor contact' (green), and 'Performance time preferences' (orange).

You must have an accurate roster of students. If you're still determining students, *you will have until the end of the registration period to log back in and make changes.* Once students have been added, you will see them listed in the "Current team members" list, and you can click a name to correct spelling.

School and main advisor contact information is self-explanatory. We do ask for contact information for your principal, superintendent (or head of school), and board chair, so we can send letters supporting your school's participation in this contest. If you do not have this information handy, you may return to enter it later, but you must

Please carefully complete your **performance time preferences** for each festival level, to help contest managers plan.

Entering Each Play

At the top of the screen is a blue area that prompts to **create a new play**. Upon clicking that button,

The screenshot shows a blue bar with the text 'WHSFA Theatre Registration' and a 'Create a new play?' button.

the Play Information screen appears to enter key information. Once you have created a show, the blue area at the top of the screen changes to allow you to create additional shows and to switch between them. Upon selection, the checklist links in the "Your play's registration progress" section change to adapt to that particular show. Elementary and middle level students may be watching one-acts; please appraise whether your production would be appropriate for younger children. Click **"Save entry"** before moving on to the next step or if you step away from your computer. Once you complete all the information on this page, including any accessibility requests, and save, click **"Return to theatre home page,"** to return to the checklist.

The screenshot shows a blue bar with 'WHSFA Theatre Registration'. Below it, a message says: 'Your school has more than one play entered. Right now, you are editing the play **Guildenstern Are Dead**'. A dropdown menu shows 'Rosencrantz & Guildenstern Are Dead' selected. There is a 'Select play' button and another 'Create a new play?' button.

The screenshot shows the 'WHSFA Theatre - Play Information' form. It includes a note: 'NOTE! From the moment you load a page on this site, you should have up to about 20 minutes to complete times out for security reasons! If you think you need more than 20 minutes to write a synopsis, or your preferences, or something like that, please type it up in Word or another word processor first and just copy. Then if you time out, you can easily copy/paste it in again.' There are buttons for 'Save entry' and 'Return to theatre home page'. A section titled 'Play information (all fields required to save your entry!)' contains fields for 'Play title', 'Playwright', 'Script publisher', 'Play category', and 'Alternate name for Chorus'. A 'Brief synopsis (required to complete your entry!)' section has a character limit of 500 characters and a text area with the example synopsis for 'Rosencrantz & Guildenstern Are Dead'.

and to switch between them. Upon selection, the checklist links in the "Your play's registration progress" section change to adapt to that particular show. Elementary and middle level students may be watching one-acts; please appraise whether your production would be appropriate for younger children. Click **"Save entry"** before moving on to the next step or if you step away from your computer. Once you complete all the information on this page, including any accessibility requests, and save, click **"Return to theatre home page,"** to return to the checklist.

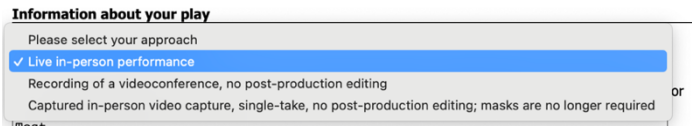
The screenshot shows the 'WISDAA Theatre - Edit cast member' form. It has a green success message: 'SUCCESS! Cast member added. You can assign them to roles below.' Below this, there is a 'Return to cast list' button. A section titled 'Chorus member?' asks 'This student is not a chorus member.' with an 'Add to chorus' button. The 'Add a role' section has fields for 'Role name', 'Type', and 'Role description', with an 'Add role' button.

In the section, "Your play's registration progress," click **Cast list**. Use the drop-down to select a student from your roster (see above) and click **Add student to cast**. You will see a green success message. Next, type the role/character and click the **Add role** button; select *main cast* or *chorus/ensemble* and click the **Add role** button. You will then see a list of roles for that student. To add additional roles, please type separate roles and add those. After you are finished with each student, click the **Return to cast list** button, and add additional students to the cast, with


their respective roles. Once you are finished with the cast, you can click the “Return to theatre home page” button, and continue the entry process. You may re-order your cast list by role on the cast list screen. Please enter a character description for each character, to contextualize for adjudicators. **Adding students to crew positions works the same way.**

The “Adults” page is to note faculty/staff (non-high school student) individuals involved in the production. For **virtual** entries, enter an adjudicator who will asynchronously evaluate three other entries; the same person may be entered for other shows, up to three total (commitment of up to 9 shows to adjudicate). Uncovered virtual entries will be assessed a \$100 uncovered adjudicator fee. NOTE: One-act entries participating at in-person contests do not need to enter an adjudicator, although contest managers may ask for directors to volunteer to adjudicate other schools.

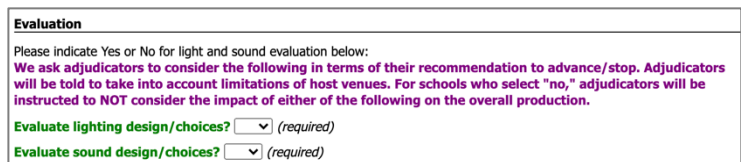
The “Technical Elements” page starts by asking you to **Select your approach** (see drop-down menu image to the right). You must answer this, but may change it later – but **a play moving from virtual to in-person must be selected as in-person at least two weeks prior to the contest, to give the host ample time to prepare.**



Technical information is required, including weaponry, atmospheric, and other safety issues (see rules, p. 3, §4 + §5).

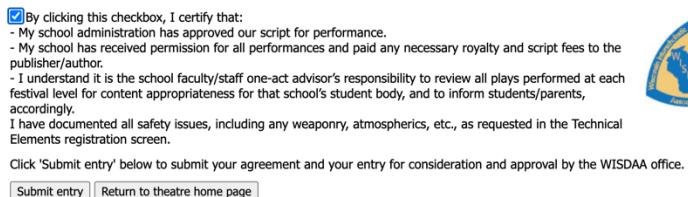
NOTE: The director should upload PDFs/images of weapons, set design/set piece layout, lighting plot, etc. on the  **Upload technical documents (optional)** page.

A school may **opt-in** to having **lighting and/or sound** evaluated as a technical element. Since resources vary among participating schools, answering “no” protects schools who do not have sound/light systems, while answering “yes” gives schools who do an opportunity to be evaluated on how those choices enhance the production.

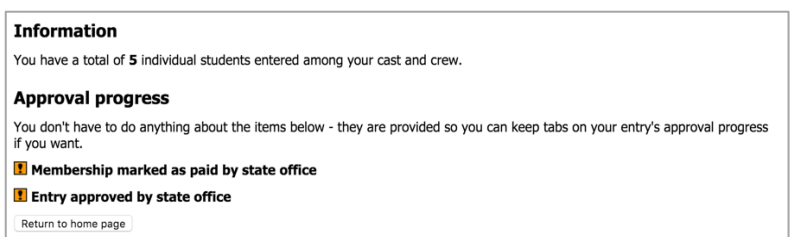


Once you are satisfied that your registration is complete (please double-check each page), you can click the link to “**Agree to terms and submit entry,**” where you will be presented with a checkbox (which you must click). Once you do this, the State Office will be notified of your registration, and it will be shared with the district contest manager.

WISDAA Theatre - Agree and submit entry



Toward the bottom of the *Theatre home page*, you will see information displaying how many students have been entered in the cast and crew, along with “approval progress” from the State Office. Please allow about 3 business days from when you enter for this information to be confirmed. Email questions to: office@wisdaa.org.



Instructions on formal State Festival registration may be found on the WISDAA website.
All schools advancing to State from the sectional level must log into SpeechWire to complete that step.

One-Act Play Adjudicator Guidelines



Running Notes

Optionally use this sheet for generalized notes on the show as it unfolds. However, **the evaluation sheet must be completed**, with comments for each of the general areas to speak to ratings where applicable.

Evaluation Sheet

1. Support **learning** and **development** of *high school students*. The contest nature of the experience is of secondary importance. Please evaluate each production **for its own value** (do **not** compare to other productions).
2. Comments: give actors and director clear feedback, to assist them in developing their expertise.
3. Evaluation areas (these official, detailed questions pertaining to the areas listed on the form):

Performance

- A. Do actors use **voice effectively** (projection, enunciation, consistent dialect, etc.)?
- B. Do actors use **movement** effectively (facial expression, gestures, stage business etc.)?
- C. Do actors create believable, developed, and consistent **characterizations**?

Ensemble

- D. Do actors function as a **cohesive unit**?
- E. Does performance demonstrate **listening, cooperation, and commitment** to each other?
- F. Does the performance **flow** smoothly and at an appropriate **pace**?

Direction

- G. Does the production convey **understanding** and **purpose** of the script and its genre?
- H. Does the production use **dynamic storytelling** techniques?
- I. Does the production use **space** effectively to provide for motivated, functional and artistic movement?

Technical (*note: host facilities determine lighting, sound, and stage configuration*). **Please be mindful budgets/resources vary.** How do elements – **if used** – enhance or detract/distract from the production?

- J. Do **scenery, set pieces** and **props** work effectively within the needs and style of the production?
- K. Do **costumes** and **make-up** effectively communicate character, period, and style?
- L. Does the company (cast/crew) function as a **cohesive unit** to facilitate technical elements of the production?
- M. [*if opted-in*]: Do **lighting choices** enhance telling of the story? (Do **not** assess *mechanics*).
- N. [*if opted-in*]: Do **sound choices** enhance telling of the story? (Do **not** assess *mechanics*).

Adjudicators must NOT assess lighting/sound if their master ballot tells them not to.

4. Evaluation Area Ratings: **Please circle the number that indicates proficiency in each area** → **2**
These ratings indicate to directors and students how well you felt they mastered each of the criteria:
1=Minimal: Characterization is barely developed. There is little cohesion among actors, and pacing suffers. Material has been directed in a way that fails to connect and/or communicate to the audience. Production elements, if present, detract more than help with storytelling.
2=Developing: What you would expect to see at the middle of a rehearsal process, before it's ready for public viewing. Characterizations aren't fully believable, but actors convey the play's intent. Material has been directed in a way that does not fully draw the audience into the world of the play. Production elements complement and support the storytelling, but may not fully realized, or need polish.
3=Proficient: Actors, direction, and design elements work in harmony to communicate a clear concept, and creative and purposeful choices bring the play to life. Performers are focused, energized, and authentic. Design elements support and help tell the story.
5. Scoring: Adjudicators will rate each entry on 12 to 14 evaluation criteria (directors may opt-in to have lighting and/or sound evaluated), using a score of 1-3 points for each criterion. Scores will be averaged by the tabulation software (SpeechWire); advancement to the next contest level will require:
 - a. At district, an average of 1.5 or better by at least two adjudicators
 - b. At sectional, an average of 2.3 or better by at least two adjudicators

Virtual/COVID Considerations

- Do **NOT** comment on **presence *nor* absence of face masks** (in person or videos).
- Please **watch videos continuously *without*** pausing, rewinding/rewatching, so you are evaluating the work as if you were watching the play perform live, in person.

Giving the Oral Response

The oral response is an opportunity to foster dialogue about the adjudication process, to give context to criticism and collective recommendation of the adjudicator panel. It also is one of the most crucial aspects of schools' experiences in the contest: a kind, constructive, and instructive oral response can be the difference between a school continuing or discontinuing its participation in the contest. Best practices to keep in mind:

- Introduce yourself, give brief background on your credentials, and express appreciation for the hard work the cast and crew has put into the production.
- Ask **students** how they felt the production went, what questions they have, and what feedback they feel would be most valuable. Empower them to take ownership in the growth process! Urge deeper questions beyond "did you like it?" or "what did we do wrong or right?" Use finesse in answering, and make *objective observations*: speak to what you saw and heard, using "I" language. Discuss what was strong or what was unfinished, encouraging more attention to detail to establish polish. Mention moments you were **brought into** the production, as well as **taken out** by distractions. Even if a show was almost flawless, highlight details that could be fine-tuned or extended. Be kind; encourage continued participation in theatre!

Descriptive Words/Phrases for Adjudicators

Performance/Production Impact

levels in blocking
evoked emotion
thought-provoking
cohesive
nuanced
pacing
dynamic
cutting
range
clever
combination
compilation
unified
convincing
proficient
mastered
insightful
wealth

Effective

drew me in
effective tactic(s)
executed thoughtfully
expressive
articulate
believable
credible performance
committed character
energetic
lively
animated
honest
genuine
realistic
authentic
natural
understated
whimsical
passion
vivacious
vigor
intimate

Developing/Improving

pulled me out
artificial
awkward
broad / vague
distracted from focus
hindered
incoherent
misguided
monotonous
repetitive
scarce
absent
incomplete
lacks
reassess structure
requires
potential
distracted
gimmicky
gratuitous
incongruous
reevaluate motives

Avoid: good • great • weak • needs work • practice more

One-Act Evaluation	Title:	Date:
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Circle a score for each criterion to indicate proficiency: **3**-Proficient, **2**-Developing, **1**-Minimal. Write **kind**, **constructive**, and **instructive** comments from your **outside** perspective to **explain** ratings, and **suggestions for improvement** must be made for any scores less than 3.

Performance	A. Do actors use voice effectively (projection, enunciation, consistent dialect, etc.)?	3 2 1	
	B. Do actors use movement effectively (facial expression, gestures, stage business etc.)?	3 2 1	
	C. Do actors create believable, developed, and consistent characterizations ?	3 2 1	
Ensemble	D. Do actors function as a cohesive unit ?	3 2 1	
	E. Does performance demonstrate listening, cooperation, and commitment to each other?	3 2 1	
	F. Does the performance flow smoothly and at an appropriate pace ?	3 2 1	
Direction	G. Does the production convey understanding and purpose of the script and its genre?	3 2 1	
	H. Does the production use dynamic storytelling techniques?	3 2 1	
	I. Does the production use space effectively to provide for motivated, functional, and artistic movement?	3 2 1	
Technical	J. Do scenery, set pieces and props work effectively within the needs and style of the production?	3 2 1	
	K. Do costumes and make-up effectively communicate character, period, and style?	3 2 1	
	L. Does the company (cast/crew) function as a cohesive unit to facilitate technical elements of the production?	3 2 1	
	M. <u>[If opted in]</u> Do lighting choices enhance telling of the story? (Do <u>not</u> assess <i>mechanics</i>).	3 2 1	
	N. <u>[If opted in]</u> Do sound choices enhance telling of the story? (Do <u>not</u> assess <i>mechanics</i>).	3 2 1	
Adjudicator:		Total Points:	\div # Eval. Areas: = Average Score:

Adjudicator Running Notes

[SAMPLE-Generated from SpeechWire]

Friday, 8:00 AM *Proof* by David Auburn

Play Category: **Selection from full-length play**

Director's Synopsis: In this selection from David Auburn's *PROOF*, Catherine must deal with the death of her father and her relationship with him, their love of mathematics, and their mental health issues. Catherine is confronted with the reunion of her sister, pressuring her to move on from the past, a graduate student of her father who discovers new information about her dad's work, and her own struggles about how brilliant she may or may not be.

Reason for Selecting Show: We are fascinated by mathematical genius, because that zone of intelligence seems all too rare, even as our society moves toward more STEM careers. How does that world intersect with relationships and human psychology? Can it be distilled in an equation? We often shun what we don't understand.

Adjudicators **may** take notes on the production here, and use another sheet of paper if necessary.

Adjudicators must provide comments in the following four areas on the evaluation sheet: **Direction, Performance, Ensemble, and Technical Elements.**

One-Act Theatre Participation Checklist



Script

- Gather/review potential plays
- Order plays from publishing house (see list of publishers online - order enough physical copies for cast and technical crew)
- Apply for performance permissions/pay royalties (as per publisher requirements). Include both contest performances as well as public performances staged at your school/community
- Post mortem (see essay, "Dealing with Criticism")

Budgeting for:

- Royalties/rentals
- Transportation
- Registration fees
- Production costs (set, costumes, etc.)
- Wisconsin Interscholastic Theatre Festival

NOTE: These can be budgeted in general terms.

Paperwork

- School policy on student travel and permission
- Schedule production dates on school calendar as soon as possible
- Determine all weaponry to be used, and follow protocols (p. 3, #4).
- Online registration (www.wisdaa.org)
- Make pre-district evaluation arrangements – workfest or invite adjudicator(s)
- Audition posters - include: dates, place, time, title of show, cast size, roles for males/females
- Audition materials: make a packet (audition form, description of plot, characters, chosen scenes, tentative rehearsal schedule)
- Make phone/carpool lists
- Rehearsal schedule - check school calendar - give students 2 copies - send copy home (mail/email)
- Press releases to school, local/area news media:
 - Cast and crew
 - Results from District, Sectional, State Festivals
- Plan to attend the state festival – **whether or not your school advances, seeing other shows and participating in workshops is of great value to students.**

Auditions/Casting

- Materials - audition forms, copies of scripts, performance contracts. Set audition format – reading from script (improvisations, dancing, singing)

Technical Crew Organization

- Meeting to organize crew (jobs to cover), stage manager, assistant stage manager, crew chief, (properties, costumes, make-up, set, construction/decoration, lighting/sound)

Technical Production

- Setting, ground plan drawing, arrange for technical direction, order supplies/materials
- Build schedule, set up construction time
- Properties - make list of properties, begin search for properties, collect and store props, label items with names of owners
- Costumes - list necessary costumes, check sources (see costume rental companies – pages 35-36), measure cast members, give cast list of items they must provide, order costumes
- Make-up - inventory what you have, list necessary make-up, check sources (see list of make-up sources – pages 35-36), order make-up supplies
- Lighting/sound - determine light plot (keep it simple), write cues, check on availability of follow spots, etc., make sound tape

Transportation

- Schedule dates for bus
- Schedule truck for set, if necessary
- Schedule chaperons, parental volunteers

One-Act Theatre Director Considerations

Fundamental Production Decisions/Choices

- A. Genre (comedy, tragedy, musical, children's shows, fantasy, etc.)
- B. Time/Locale
- C. Style (melodrama, comedia, etc.)
- D. Period (historical, contemporary, etc.)
- E. Guidelines for Good Taste, Community Values
- F. Desired Audience Response
- G. Interpretation of Playwright's Intent

Production Aspects - How Do You Plan To Handle:

- A. Visual Impact (What do I need and where do I get it?)
 - 1. Costumes
 - 2. Make-up
 - 3. Set pieces
 - 4. Props
 - 5. Lighting
- B. Special considerations for a traveling show (size, weight of materials, etc.)
 - 1. Sound
 - 2. Logistics and transporting

Acting

- A. Character analysis
- B. Concentration
- C. Believability
- D. Timing
- E. Sustaining character
- F. Motivation (why does the character do and say what she or he does and says?)
- G. Physical Aspects
 - 1. Creative business (special individual movements, postures, gestures which define character)
 - 2. Movement
 - 3. Ensemble playing (working as cooperative group of actors)
 - 4. Action/reaction
 - 5. Staying "in" the scene
- H. Vocal
 - 1. Relationship of voice to character
 - 2. Pronunciation
 - 3. Articulation
 - 4. Volume, projection
 - 5. Dialects and accents
 - 6. Rate

Directing

- A. Blocking, stage pictures
- B. Tempo, pacing, rhythm
- C. Balance (visually, in acting ensemble)
- D. Making the show unique - "your own"
- E. Rising action, climax, falling action

(Sample) Audition Form

Show Title _____
Your Name _____
Address _____
Phone Numbers (Home) _____ (Work) _____
Year in school _____ Age _____ Eye Color _____
Height _____ Weight _____ Hair Color _____
List roles you wish to be considered for: _____
List tech positions you would be willing to accept if not cast: _____
List major performing experience you have had in past four years: _____
Check tentative rehearsal schedule and list all conflicts you have: _____
Would you be available for a first reading on Thursday? Yes / No

DO NOT WRITE BELOW THIS LINE

Projection: _____
Articulation: _____
Movement: _____
Vocal quality: _____
Creativity: _____
Misc: _____
Cast as: _____

(Sample) Rehearsal/Performance Contract

This contract between the High School Theatre Department and the student and parents named below is for the rehearsal and performance period listed under the title of the play below.

This contract is an agreement between the parties that the following conditions will be met:

1. That the student will attend on time, all rehearsals called on the rehearsal schedule attached to this contract (excluding those for which conflicts are noted at the bottom of this contract).
2. That missing a total of three (3) rehearsals for any reason may give the director reason to replace any member of the cast or crew.
3. That the parents will provide transportation to and from rehearsals and performances and see to it that their student is in attendance when necessary.
4. That the student will remain academically eligible during the time of the rehearsals and performances (the director will attempt to keep in contact with the student's teachers during this time period, but students and parents are responsible for course work).
5. That the student will follow all the school's conduct and attendance regulations.
6. That the director shall keep close communication with the parents of each student having difficulty with keeping this commitment.
7. That for violation of any part of this contract, the director may remove the student from the cast or crew of the production named below.

Show Title _____
Rehearsal period _____
Student's signature _____
Parent's signature _____
Director's signature _____
Home Phone _____ Date _____

List all conflicts with the attached rehearsal schedule on the back of this contract. Be specific about the nature of your conflict and the times/dates involved.

(Sample) Cast/Crew Contact List

PLEASE NOTE: *** This list is intended for the use of the cast and crew for purposes of emergency calling and carpooling only. Please keep this list confidential and use only when necessary.

<u>Name</u>	<u>Role</u>	<u>Home Phone</u>	<u>Email Address</u>	<u>Cell Phone</u>
Mike Burnette				
Tim Bauman				
Doug Carr				
Kelley Cox				
Jennifer Duggan				
Carmen Fosdal				
Margie Graber				
Amy S. Hawkins				
Angel Horkey				
Chris Keefe				
Vicki Kowalczyk				
Aaron Moede				
Felicia Square				
Sarah Waldeck				
Director				
Student Director				
Stage Manager				
Asst. Stage Manager				
School Office				

(Sample) Rehearsal Schedule: *Cyrano de Bergerac*

M 9/13	3-5 pm	Entire Cast - read through script and Blocking scene 1
T 9/14	3-5 pm	Blocking scene 2 & 3
R 9/16	3-5 pm	Blocking scene 4 only
F 9/17	All Day	Director attend AWTE Conference
M 9/20	3-5:30 pm	Cyrano, Rox, Duena, Le B, Cavalier, Boor, Christian, Valvert
T 9/21	3-5:30 pm	Entire Cast
R 9/23	3-5:30 pm	Entire Cast
F 9/24	TBA	
M 9/27	3-5:30 pm	4 Sisters, Cyrano, Christian, Duena, Rox
T 9/28	3-5:30 pm	Cyrano, Christian, Rox, Duena
R 9/30	3-5:30 pm	Entire Cast
F 10/1	TBA	
M 10/4	3-5 pm	Rageneau, Le Bret, Cavalier, Rox, Duena, Cyrano
T 10/5	3-5:30 pm	Entire Cast - Run Through
R 10/7	3-6 pm	Entire Cast - Run Through with dry tech.
F 10/8	3-?	Tech
S 10/9	TBA	WORKFEST
M 10/11	3-5 pm	Entire Cast - Debrief from workfest
T 10/12	3-5:30 pm	Entire Cast - Run Through w/changes
W 10/13	3-5 pm	Cyrano/Rox
M 10/18	3-5 pm	All men - Bakery scene run through combat
T 10/19	3-5:30 pm	Entire cast - run through
R 10/21	6:30-10:00	Entire cast/Crew Tech run through
F 10/22	3-6 pm	Entire Cast/Crew Dress Rehearsal for District
S 10/23	All Day	District Performance (Bus call is 7:00 am)
M 10/25	3-5 pm	Entire Cast/Crew - debrief from District
T 10/26	TBA	Teacher Inservice/Workday
M 11/01	3-5:30 pm	Entire Cast - run through
T 11/02	6:30-10 pm	Entire Cast work through
R 11/04	6:30-10 pm	Entire Cast/Crew tech run for Sectional
F 11/05	3-5 pm	Final Dress Rehearsal for Sectional
S 11/06	All Day	Sectional Performance (Call for everyone is 7:00 am)
M 11/08	3-5 pm	Entire Cast/Crew debrief from Sectional
T 11/09	3-5:30 pm	Work rough spots
R 11/11	3-5:30 pm	Work Combat sequences
M 11/15	7-10 pm	Entire Cast work rough spots
T 11/16	7-10 pm	Entire Cast/Crew run through
W 11/17	3-5 pm	Entire Cast - dry tech run
R 11/18	3-11 pm	Participate in Wisconsin Interscholastic Theatre Festival
F 11/19	All Day	" " "
S 11/20	All Day	" " "

"R" = Thursday

"TBA" = TO BE ANNOUNCED

(Sample) Press Release

TO: NEWS EDITORS AND PRODUCERS
FROM: (School Director's Name)
RE: (Name of Play)

The High School's entry in the Theatre contest will be a thirty-five minute cutting from David Mamet's, *The Water Engine*. The play will be presented at a variety of locations around the state as it progresses through the three levels of the festival. The play, set in a 1930's radio studio, was originally written as a radio play. The play attempts to show a 1930's melodrama as it unfolds in the studio and over the air. The plot of the play-within-a-play revolves around an inventor who has created an engine that will run on water. His attempts to have the engine patented are thwarted by the mysterious forces of big business who don't want the engine developed.

The cast of characters and students playing the roles are listed below:

CAST LIST

RADIO ANNOUNCER/COP/GUARD	Mike J. Smith
ROSE, THE STAGE MANAGER.....	Kris Arnold
COP/SOUND CHECK MAN.....	Doug Carr
DAVE MURRAY.....	Ed Kline
NEWSBOY/PAPERBOY/SOUND ASSISTANT.....	Kelly Cox
SECRETARY.....	Kirstin Carlson
MRS. WALLACE.....	Sarah Waldeck
BERNIE WALLACE.....	Chris Keefe
MAILMAN/ELEVATOR OPERATOR/REWRITE.....	Trevor Bernier
SECRETARY.....	Jenny Duggan
CHARLES LANG.....	Mike S. Smith
MARTHA GROSS.....	Liz Stephens
LADY.....	Felica Square
LADY.....	Vicki Kowalczyk
RITA LANG.....	Jacki Sharer
MRS. VAREC.....	Amy S. Hawkins
LAWRENCE OBERMAN.....	Patrick Conley
LECTURER AT THE HALL OF SCIENCE.....	Caroline Caliguri
SOUND EFFECTS OPERATOR.....	Heidi Allen
CHAIN LETTERS.....	Entire Cast

CREW LIST

STAGE MANAGER.....	Valarie Anagnos
TECHNICAL DIRECTOR.....	Kris Arnold
LIGHTING OPERATOR.....	Mike Burnette, Tina Emery
SOUND OPERATOR.....	Martin Keefe
PROPERTIES.....	Jeni Fish, Laurel Swatek
COSTUMES.....	Randi Johnson, Marta Johnson
MAKEUP.....	Carmen Fosdal, Felice Pappas

Please find space to run or announce the cast and crew in your publication. We appreciate your time and energy in supporting the artistic efforts of our students. Additional press releases will be made after each level of the festival series.



“Speak the speech, I pray you, as I pronounced it to you, trippingly on the tongue: but if you mouth it, as many of your players do, I had as lief the town-crier spoke my lines. Nor do not saw the air too much with your hand, thus, but use all gently; for in the very torrent, tempest, and, as I may say, the whirlwind of passion, you must acquire and beget a temperance that may give it smoothness.”

- Shakespeare’s *Hamlet*, Act 3, Scene 2

In the world of the free market, strategic selection of a script can make or break a theatre company’s finances, begetting full houses, or shuttering a show early. In the world of educational theatre, determining what is to be learned by students ought to be of primary concern for director-educators. This article is compiled from notes taken during a panel discussion at the 2017 conference of the Alliance for Wisconsin Theatre Education, featuring veteran one-act contest directors Rick Braun (Waunakee) and Chuck Malone (Waukesha).

Expanding Our Repertoire

The more we are consumers of dramatic literature and performances, the more we expand our own repertoires. Consider which plays move us; make us feel something; have a poignant message that reflects issues with which our society struggles. Ask how a play alters what its audience thinks, feels, and believes by its end. Consider alternating genres over time to expose a single group of students to a variety. While comedies may seem superficial on face value, consider the character development in them, and/or what meaningful overarching theme is present. Encourage theatre students to read plays on the side as ongoing homework outside of class, and ask them to make recommendations for future plays for contest and/or full production. Repeating production of a play isn’t a bad thing, particularly if it brings value to students, but wait about eight years, to cycle through other material.

Material

Start by looking for scripts that provide insight into the human experience by exploring motivations, relationships, problems, and empathy, and not depicting hollow sentimentality, violence for its own sake, unmotivated endings, or stereotyped characterizations. This is why cuttings of full-length plays are often advisable, because it forces directors and actors to consider a bigger picture, yet to distill that in an abridged version. Avant garde scripts work well, too, but can be a greater challenge to produce.

“Who Lives, Who Dies, Who Tells Your Story?”

Exposing young people to stories not been traditionally told is important, because it opens their minds and hearts to perspectives they may not have been exposed to. This is an opportunity to foster greater diversity and cultural inclusion, and to break down stereotypes. Or, perhaps it’s a fresh way of looking at a classic story, much like the Broadway musical, *Hamilton* does.

Consider Outcomes and Resources

Does the play speak to issues of importance for your students, their lives, their backgrounds, and their futures? Is a play the right length, or can it be cut to the right length for a contest without sacrificing its core? Does the play have the right number of characters for the size of cast you can assemble? How does the play fit within the greater curricula and culture of the school?

Making the Cut

Work with students to study the entire play. Have them read it aloud to determine what students connect with most deeply, by how their conveying subtext is most authentic. Detect which parts and lines lag, and cut those. This may involve cutting an entire character; be upfront about that expectation, so students understand the cast isn’t finalized until the play is cut. Ask for feedback from students as to what segments/lines are most meaningful to them. By involving students in the cutting process, directors help them cultivate play analysis skills, and engage the students in higher-level thinking. Always cut more than you might think necessary to allow for moments of stage business, as well as setup and strike time. After the initial cutting, invite a guest to listen to a rehearsal; make sure the guest understands the cutting and feels authenticity in motivations. If not, determine which missing pieces need to be reinstated, and what else needs to be cut.

It is the responsibility of each school to obtain permission to use **and cut** copyrighted material, to negotiate royalty payments and to make such payments before performing the work. WISDAA cannot secure royalty waivers for member schools.



Further Reading & Resources

- ❖ [Educational Theatre Association’s Article on Dramatic Literature](#), including:
 - [How to read a play: thirty ways to understand a script](#). By Michael Bigelow Dixon. Analytical tools for directors, actors, and designers. *Dramatics*, March 2010.
 - [Old plays made new](#). By Maureen Brady Johnson. Adapting royalty-free scripts for a new generation. *Teaching Theatre*, v16n2.

- ❖ WISDAA’s own [Directing Resources page](#) online, which has links on the right-hand side, such as *Rights and Royalties* resources, including a “Green light” and “Red light” list for Samuel French plays that are pre-approved (green) or not (red) for contests.

A partial listing of scripts performed at the state festival is available online, and will be updated each year. Titles are merely listed to share with directors what has been performed in the past. If a decision is made to choose any of the listed plays, please contact the publisher for royalty information and production limitations as they can and often do change.

Script Lending Library

WISDAA is working to compile a lending library for directors to review scripts before purchasing a set (or rights to downloadable PDFs) for their cast and crew. If you have old scripts you would like to donate to share for such purposes, please contact the state office.

Resources

This handbook used to contain a listing of supply houses, publishers, and plays previously performed in the state theatre festival. These resources have been moved online, to the [Directing Resources](#) page at wisdaa.org, since many companies have been acquired by other companies, and the landscape is constantly changing.

Free course: Understanding Copyright and Compliance <https://nfhslearn.com/courses/understanding-copyright-and-compliance>



Description

This helpful course explains what copyright means and when there may be exceptions. It discusses Fair Use, when a piece of music might be in the Public Domain, copyright infringement penalties and much more. And this unique course has been designed for your specific needs whether you are a Music Teacher, Spirit Coach, School Administrator, Theatre Director or Speech and Debate Coach.



Course Partners



This Course Includes

- ✓ Approved for 3 Clock Hours
- ✓ Certificate of Completion
- ✓ Additional Resources

Want to produce a play or musical, or use it in competition or the classroom? We know you want to do the right thing, so here's a single sheet to help you sail smoothly through the process.

Why are royalties important?

Playwrights spend many hours on their art. It is, in fact, their job, and like anyone else with a job, they deserve to be paid for it. This happens through performance royalties and script purchases, and these payments help pay for their housing, food, medical care—the same necessities as anyone else's job. Yes, art has value in itself, but the reality is that you are paying for services the playwright has rendered to you in creating the script.

I want to produce a play or musical:

- a. Order performance royalties. License one performance royalty for every time the show is performed in the presence of an audience outside of the cast and crew, including invited dress rehearsals/previews—regardless of whether admission is charged or whether the performance occurs during the school day. *Don't forget to credit the play and author(s) properly in all publicity according to your licensing contract.*
- b. Obtain scripts—either sufficient printed scripts for the cast and crew, or a photocopy license (if available). No portion of a script may be copied (physically or digitally—and that includes retyping it!) without permission.
- c. If the play is in the public domain (e.g., Shakespeare)—be sure it is—you generally don't need to pay royalties, but that doesn't mean that you can purchase a published edition and copy it physically, digitally or by retyping it.

I want to make changes, cuts or additions to the play or musical:

Unless they are pre-authorized in the script (e.g., via a production note), you must get prior written permission to make cuts, changes or additions in the dialogue (even to eliminate profanity), dramatically significant stage directions (i.e., ones that relate to plot/character), music or lyrics (for musicals), or to do things like change a character's gender. Contact the publisher/agent, and give yourself time; they will need to reach out to the author, and authors are not always easily reachable.

Are we allowed to record or stream our production?

When you license a performance, you are licensing live stage rights only—not audio/video recording rights (even for archival purposes) or streaming rights. However,

particularly post-COVID, many publishers may allow for recording or streaming, depending on the title. Check with the publisher (and expect to pay additional fees for these rights).

I want to use a play (or cutting) for speech, forensics or Thespy's competitions:

Many publishers allow for the use of plays/musicals/cuttings of under 10 minutes without royalties (longer performances typically require them, and not every title may allow for this), so long as all participants have legally purchased copies of the full script. Check the publisher and competition organizer's guidelines.

I want to study a script in class:

Purchase enough scripts or a photocopy license (when available). You cannot make copies (physical, digital or by retyping the play or musical) without specific permission to do so. You may typically use a script for scenework or perform it in class without royalties as long as you purchase sufficient copies. However, if anyone from outside the class attends the performance (e.g., parents, other students), you must pay royalties.

What is Fair Use?

In the United States and certain other countries, Fair Use allows for the use of a limited portion of a copyrighted work, typically for commentary, study and criticism—or parody—without obtaining permission or paying the copyright holder. When in doubt, check with your administration, as whether something qualifies as Fair Use depends largely on the specifics of usage (there is a four-pronged test). It's better to be safe than sorry.

OK: Writing a stage parody of a currently popular book (e.g., *Harry Potter*).

Probably OK: Copying short sections of monologues from different plays to compare them in a class lesson.

Not OK: Reading a photocopied first act of a play still under copyright or performing those monologues from the previous example at a school assembly/showcase without permission.

Copyright infringement is serious business and can lead to fines, the shutting down of a production or legal action with six-figure statutory damages, but more important than that, the next generation of theatre artists is learning from what you do, so please set the right example.

Compiled by Jonathan Dorf (www.youthplays.com) for general informational use (updated 8/2022). When in doubt, consult an attorney regarding your specific circumstances.

Thoughts on Script Cutting

By Carol Dietmeyer and Debra Lulloff

Even before ordering a script, read synopses/previews. Most give time lengths and characters (number of males/females, variable cast, etc.). Use these, and knowledge you have of your students (numbers, abilities, etc.), when finally deciding on a script for your production. If you are really taken with a script, and need to cut it due to the time constraints of a contest performance, you need to understand you risk:

1. Destroying the playwright's intent;
2. Destroying intrinsic rhythm of the play; and
3. **Being sued!**

Given the above, and if the script is REALLY what you've been looking for, you may decide to cut because the play is too long, there are too many characters (or you are short on cast), you deem some of the writing weak, or there is objectionable material for your age group, community, school etc. **Before any decision is made to cut a script, it is imperative you have written permission from the publisher. Many playwrights will not allow any alterations to their original script.**

When it comes to actually cutting the script, read the play enough times so that you have a good grasp of the play and how it works before you begin to cut. You **MUST** know the function of each scene, character and speech. Then you need to do the following:

1. Read the play aloud, **INCLUDING** the stage directions in order to get a rough timing.
2. Read it again – see how much script five minutes is so you have an idea of how many lines of dialogue you need to delete. Try **NOT** to have to cut more than ten minutes, if at all possible.
3. Cut **before you cast!**

Each choice has consequences. Before you begin to cut, ask yourself the following questions:

1. What is the final **DRAMATIC** result I am after?
2. What do I want the dramatic impact on the audience to be?

No two people will have the same answers, but you **MUST** answer them before you begin. If you are considering a three-act play, it is usually better to do one act than to combine parts of the play. Second or third acts are

probably more interesting to watch and the timing is probably closer to your limit. It is very hard to do a full three-act play in thirty-five minutes - - consider carefully before you attempt that. One-act plays longer than 45 minutes are going to be difficult to cut. Construction will probably be very tight and characters are seldom expendable.



What do I cut? There are five possibilities in deciding what to cut within a play. They are: (1) a scene; (2) a character; (3) dialogue within a scene; (4) lines within a single speech; and (5) business within a scene.

Ask yourself when looking at possibilities:

1. If you cut a scene, have you tampered with the ending? ...cheated the audience out of a foreshadowing event or plot advance? ...character delineation? Have you destroyed the interior rhythm of the play?
2. If you eliminate a character, have you seriously changed the author's intent? Have you changed the balance of the play? What is lost to the play with the loss of that character?
3. If you cut dialogue in a scene, what happens to the rhythm of the scene? Of the play?
4. If you shorten an individual speech or eliminate it, what have you done to that character and his/her relationship to the rest of the characters?
5. If you delete business in a scene, does that interfere with character interpretation? Have you deleted an important clue in exposition?
6. Once you've accepted consequences of cuts, make them and read the play aloud again to see how it flows. If you are content with it, cast it and block it, but before the cast memorizes it, get a colleague (preferably more than one!) to come into a rehearsal and watch and listen. Ask him/her/them to make notes on any questions regarding story line, character development and anything else that crosses their minds. Often the cast themselves will see any problems with these concerns even when you yourself do not see them. (These are their characters remember!) Do **NOT** hesitate to ask the cast if they see any problems. Then if you do need to make any other changes, you have done so before the cast has memorized lines and/or become too familiar with the blocking. Once the play is memorized, have someone else do the prompting and **YOU** watch and listen to the flow and the visual continuity. Does everything seen and heard on the stage make sense? If not, why not?



About a year ago an elementary teacher in our primarily white, middle class school district called and asked for help with make-up for a drama project she was working on with her students. We began to talk about what she needed and one of the things she wanted to use was black face. After I recovered from my initial shock, we talked about why using black face might not be appropriate and I think she understood. I don't think she realized at first that such a portrayal might be offensive. The portrayal of a character in black face might have gone on without notice or complaint, but it points to one of the many ethical issues in the theatre that have to be addressed and to which we must be sensitive. If one of our missions as theatre educators is to educate our students and our audiences, then one of the things we must educate them about is ethics; and the best way to teach ethics is through example.

In its most obvious form, ethics is about honesty. In the theatre some of the ethical issues may include dealing with racial, ethnic, sexual, or cultural stereotypes, script cutting/alteration, script duplication, and royalty payment. As theatre educators we must address these issues in an open and honest way. We need to be aware of the ethics we are modeling for those we seek to educate.

The issue of stereotyping is a difficult one for many directors to deal with and there aren't any easy answers. Clearly all stereotypes are not bad, but when does a stereotype become harmful? A partial answer might be when such a stereotype perpetuates an unfair, untrue, and inaccurate image of an entire group of people. There are many fine shows out there that are worth producing, but contain such harmful stereotypes and it is up to the director to decide what to do about them. A good example might be the character of Donald in Kaufman and Hart's *You Can't Take It With You*. The character of Donald was apparently written to be played by an African-American. Donald is likeable, but he is also shiftless, lazy, slow moving, and slow talking. This is certainly not the kind of racial stereotype we want to perpetuate. In this case it is relatively easy to recreate Donald as a non-Black. Other characters in other shows are not so simple. Shows like *Showboat* and *Finian's Rainbow* have numerous characters that reflect unfair racial stereotypes that are almost impossible to avoid. The director must decide whether or not to do such shows and what to do about the negative stereotypes.

Script cutting and alteration is another area that involves some important ethical and, in some cases, legal issues. Technically any alteration of a script must be with the

written permission of the playwright or his/her agent. To make alterations without the playwright's permission is not only unethical, but also illegal. Most playwrights retain absolute control over the use of their plays. If a director finds it necessary to alter a script, for whatever reason, the ethical course of action is to write directly to the publisher, who is usually the agent of the playwright, requesting permission to alter the play. It will be necessary to specifically state the alterations to be made and the reasons for making them. Probably the most common reason to alter a play to be used in the Theatre Contest Series is to cut the length so it fits the 40-minute time limit. Permission to alter a show for this reason is often given by the playwright. An added benefit of getting specific written permission to cut a play is that often there is a significant reduction in royalty fees for doing only part of a play. Be sure to ask for a reduction in royalties when requesting permission. Be aware, however, that there are some playwrights who absolutely forbid the alteration of their works for any reason.

Legally it is a violation of copyright laws to make changes without written permission and, ethically, the director is obligated to respect the wishes of the playwright. Realistically it is not likely that a high school director who alters a script without permission will be caught and penalized (although it has been known to happen). It basically comes down to the personal integrity and honesty of the director.

Some directors have been known to pay the royalties for a full length play and then cut it to a shorter length to use without getting permission to do so. If permission to cut the play is not requested, it cannot be denied. The rationalization is that the full royalties have been paid even though only a portion of the play is used and so the playwright has been compensated and no one has been hurt. Clearly this is an unethical and illegal practice. Again we must respect a playwright's right to control his/her own work.

Still another ethical issue directors need to deal with is the duplication of scripts and payment of royalties for the use of a play. In most circumstances the photocopying of scripts is strictly prohibited under the copyright laws. Occasionally limited permission to duplicate scripts is granted by publishers in an emergency. Such an emergency might involve lost or destroyed scripts. In such cases permission to duplicate a script may be granted if new scripts are purchased and if the copies are destroyed when the new scripts are received. This situation has

become almost unnecessary with the advent of overnight mail delivery. On the practical side, the cost of duplicating

Royalties are a fee paid to a playwright through his/her agent for the right to perform a play for a public audience. It usually does not matter whether the audience pays an admission fee. The rule of thumb is that if it is a public performance, a royalty payment is due. Theatre contest performances are considered public performances even though no admission is charged and, hence, royalties are due the playwright. Plays used for classroom use only are usually exempt from royalties. Some play distributors include royalty fees and permission to perform in the cost of purchasing scripts, so that if a script is purchased for each member of the cast, no additional royalties need to be paid. This varies from publisher to publisher so it is a good idea to check the publisher's catalogue regarding how royalties are assessed.

scripts can often exceed the cost of purchasing scripts in the first place.

It should be clear that performing a play without the playwright's permission, or without paying royalties when they are due, is unethical and amounts to theft. It is punishable under the law. Some of the large play publishing houses hire people in different regions of the country to monitor various newspapers and clip articles on play performances in those regions. The titles of the plays being performed are compared to the list of licenses granted to organizations to produce those plays in that region. If a license has not been granted to a producing group serious legal action can result.

There are many other issues which arise in the theatre that involve ethics. It is impossible to discuss all of them. In the final analysis, ethics often comes down to honesty, integrity, and the fair treatment of others. As theatre education professionals we need to be aware of the ethics we are teaching through our example.

Don't Direct *Hedda Gabbler* Without a Hedda!

By Sue Luterbach

Ask any play director what a director is or what a director does and the answer will be as varied as the approaches to directing itself. Directing varies enormously in style, organization or coaching. Frequent discussions of directing will bring such responses as; the director controls all the actions, the director orchestrates or the director keeps all directions to a minimum, allowing actors creative freedom.

The director of a high school one-act play not only is its drama coach, "getting the actors to speak their parts", but is also the play's mastermind with fingertip control of all phases of the production. Learn to pace yourself by delegating duties, however check and recheck progress so everything is prepared in time for the opening.

Directing a play is in many ways similar to coaching an athletic team, leading a choral group or baking a birthday cake. The director gathers the ingredients of the play, (script, cast, backstage crew, business staff, volunteer helpers, etc); combines them in the right order and proportion (with rehearsals and staff meetings; costumes, properties, lights, telephone calls and individual conferences) and adds flavoring (instruction, encouragement and praise). The director bakes the mixture for the given rehearsal time; tops or ices the production with personal artistry (unique interpretation of the tone, mood and theme of the play); and serves the

special cake (a finished performance) to the guests (the audience).

Begin by reading scripts for consideration. Most important, never direct *Hedda Gabbler* unless you have a Hedda. Thus, when reading scripts, keep in mind the possible potential of the group you are to direct. Also consider: size of the group; ages of the students; previous drama experiences of the students; budget allotted for the production; and talent of the actors.

A well-cast play makes the director's job an enjoyable endeavor. Therefore, when casting a play, try to be aware of the sensitivity of the student actors, perception into human behavior and sensing the right students for the roles.

Director's work is divided into two distinct segments: pre-rehearsal preparation and rehearsal. Although many theories of directing exist, one suggests to start preparing by getting the feeling of the mood and tone of the play. Visualize and create the setting in your mind first and then begin working out the particular details of the scenes including the emotional values and how they may be sensed by an audience. A ground plan must evolve out of the director's visualization of the life within the play.

The pre-rehearsal segment must consider type, style, theme, structure, characters, dialogue and plot. The



director needs to read the script over at least five times, each time concentrating on one of these segments and how it should be included into a unified whole. Individual

Rehearsal schedule time table should also be worked out, production staff should be in place and meetings set with direction and focus given. Crews should be chosen, set designs sketched, details could be worked out with the set production crew later. Next, set up a director's prompt script or production book. Once the pre-rehearsal phase is completed, the director may turn to the rehearsal segment of directing. This segment also consists of two parts: the actor and the stage.

In focusing on the actor, the director considers the composition, movement, picturization, rhythm and pantomimic dramatization known as the Five-Note Scale of Play Directing. In focusing on the staging or blocking, the director needs to move the actors around the furniture without them bumping into it or into each other while effectively delivering lines, creating stage visuals the audience can relate to, while culminating in a unified production of the play. Encourage students to create subtext to study their character's mood, actions and

scene blocking of the script may begin after this reading phase.

feelings going on beneath the surface of the spoken text. The director also helps the actors polish their enunciation, the clear, concise and crisp delivery of the lines, while building their projection, the ability to convey the spoken words at a distance.

Finally, at your most frenzied point remember the director is the guiding force, the controlling person unifying all facets of the production of the play. Remember too, you are a multi-functional, multi-talented individual who assumes the responsibility for maintaining the theatre as a cultural medium in our society. On this note, all that can be left to say to any director of any production is "BREAK A LEG"!

P.S. Still unsure if you can do it all? A helpful book, especially for new directors, is [Putting on the School Play, a Complete Handbook](#) by Adrienne Kriebel Holte and Grace A. Mayer, Parker Publishing Company, Inc., P.O. Box 472, West Nyack, NY 10095, 1980.

How to Costume a Show

By Chuck Malone



When I think of costuming a play, a couple of questions come immediately to mind. How much money do I have to spend? How accurate do I need to be in attempting to capture the period? Other questions do come to mind, but those are the two I feel I must deal with first and then the others will naturally be answered.

Budget, for a lot of directors, is the dominating factor in selecting costumes. However, I do not feel that you must sacrifice quality just because of budget. There are some fairly inexpensive ways to costume a show and to have it appear realistic without spending a large sum of money, but you have to be creative. First of all, is there another school in the area that has done the show recently or another show of the same costume period? If the answer is yes, this is where you should begin. Contact the other school and discuss what they have available that might work for your show. Usually it is possible to work out a swap with another school. You probably have something the other school could borrow.

Secondly, if you can get parents involved you will find a wealth of help available. Not only are they usually willing to help by looking through basements, attics and closets, but you will find that they can become so involved that you might even be able to get parents to sew costumes. Also,

parents sometimes have the time to search through St. Vincent/DePaul's, Salvation Army or Goodwill for you. These are excellent sources of costumes, even for period shows. Often you can find women's formal wear that with a few alterations can look very different and fit a multitude of costume periods. Also, you can purchase old drapes, tablecloths, linens and lace that can be cut and used for fabric.

Budget is important, but accuracy is the biggest concern of the high school director. The best place to go to determine the "look" of a costume period is art work and costume books. When looking at these books, you should look for the general lines of the costume first. Detail work comes later. Questions you should ask are: Where is the waist? What type of sleeve are we dealing with? Is the neckline high or low? Are there any outstanding features that capture my eye immediately? When you have answered these questions, you are ready to start browsing through pattern books for patterns that highlight these features. Often you can buy a bridal pattern, and by changing some of the lines, create a period costume. You must also pay attention to the fabric you select for authenticity. Polyester, for example, is a modern creation which does not fit any costume period other than modern.

Secondly, a character's social status dictates what fabric should be worn by the character. A character of lowly birth would not wear silks or satins. Therefore, wools are ideal for showing a character of lower rank. Corduroy, at a distance appears to look very much like velvet. Once you have achieved the basic look of the period, you can go on with other concerns such as unity of line, coordination of color and overall appearance of the show.

In conclusion, it is not easy for us to costume a play today

because we have become so aware of the cost that we think we have to take short cuts when it comes to authenticity. Probably the one thing that will help us the most is to keep a creative eye open to see what we already have in storage that will work and also remember that we can consult our colleagues in other schools, use the parents of our students and rummage through second hand shops. Somewhere out there is the perfect costume . . . if we only take the time to look.

Scenery

By Rick Braun

Most people do not immediately connect Henry David Thoreau with theatre; however, he alone probably has the best advice for set design and building for One Act plays, "Simplify, Simplify." The old adage, "Less is more" is also sound advice. This is not to say that the basic tenets of sound set design (function, balance, unity, safety, mood, time and place) should be thrown out. They just need to be balanced with the constraints of cost, durability, time of construction, weight and whether you can get the set from place to place. I am a techie at heart. I have to admit that I love the process of designing and building the sets. I would love to fill the stage with beautiful things, but I realized early that I need to pare down to the essentials dictated by the script.

The following list of suggestions may help a director create a set that is visually appealing, fits the budget, fits in a vehicle and aids the actors in telling the story.

- Secure a van or truck early to take your set to each event. A van is better in Wisconsin weather but make sure that the set pieces are small enough to fit into the vehicle.
- Create a set of basic building blocks. Build a couple of standard platforms (4' x 8', 3' x 6', 4' x 4', 2' x 4'), some rehearsal blocks (2' x 2' x 2'), some 4' x 8' flats, a few standard step units (16" height and 24" height), and expand from there.
- If you do not need to hide something behind a wall, you can suggest the wall by just showing a fractured portion of it. Fractured window frames and doorways can also be sufficient.
- If you can get by without using functional doors, you will make your set much lighter and easier to move by eliminating the door. If you need the sound of a door, it can be done by your sound operator.
- If you need to connect wall sections or set pieces in a hurry, using loose pin hinges can help. Use a small Allen wrench instead of the pin included to make it quicker to secure and release the hinge.
- Consider making part of your set of furniture pieces to

nest inside other items for storage and transportation. We have a number of sets of nesting rehearsal blocks that can be stored and moved within the space of the largest in the set.

- Even though castors can be expensive, having part of your set on wheels can make it easier to move.
- Self-standing pillars and posts can create wonderful entrances and exits.
- Hinged flats make the creation of a wall or masking unit easy. They can be bulky but if your van is big enough to handle a full sheet of plywood, you can put a lot in quite a little amount of area. I recommend making your flat out of 1/4" plywood rather than muslin for durability purposes.
- Consider making part of your set out of foam insulation. The 4' by 8' sheets cut easily with an inexpensive electric kitchen knife and adhere nicely with foam adhesives. (Advice: these knives last a long time cutting meat in kitchens, they last about a year in our shop.) They do need a little treating to accept paint well, but if you glue muslin or another fabric to them, painting them is easy and the foam becomes much more durable for touring. The overall advantage is that foam is much lighter than wood.
- Putting muslin Dutchman strips on all the corners and edges of your wood set pieces can help hide ugly joints, make the corners and edges less susceptible to damage, and diminish the possibility of getting splinters for the actors and crew members. Covering the entire piece makes that protection complete.
- PVC (plastic pipe) can be used creatively to create props, set pieces and as structures to attach muslin to create wall or masking pieces.
- Fabric hung over pipes or wood frames can also create wonderful walls or masking pieces. Color and texture varieties are endless and can really help to set the mood for the play.
- Spend some time walking through a home products store looking closely at the items available while thinking "how else could that be used?" A Grecian urn



- turned upside down can become the base of a street light pole with a little glue, some rivets and some paint.
- A piece of PVC with some twine and glue can become realistic bamboo.

Once you have your set, I also suggest that you actually rehearse your load in and load out. This simple step can help assure the cast, crew and director that they know what they are doing, can do it correctly and safely, and can set it up and take it down within the ten minute limit. It is almost as if the director needs to block or choreograph the set with as much detail as a dance or other actor stage movement.

The last bit of advice that I would leave for directors and designers of a touring One Act is that flexibility is crucial. Directors must be ready (and have the cast and crew ready) for the unexpected. In some situations, directors, crew and actors need to be ready to jettison some set pieces and adjust blocking at a moments notice. We have had to go

from having 12 small platforms on a stage to 9 in order to make our set fit. We then had to reblock and rearrange the 24 actors who were to stand on those 12 platforms on the day of a Sectional performance due to space limitations. It was good that we had talked about potential problems ahead of time so that the cast and crew were more prepared.

There is certainly much more to set design and construction than is included in this short article, and no two plays have the same set needs, nor would two directors look at the same play and see the same set. It is important to remember that theatre is a creative and collaborative art; if you need creative help beyond this article, there are many other directors and designers in neighboring schools and theatres who are probably willing to help collaborate. Don't be afraid to reach out for the help - you may learn something.

The Magic of Make-Up

By Trudianne Thom



"Make-up, it is such a mess!" I have heard that sentence and I have felt the frustration of that sentence. The actors leave the caps off everything! They leave tissues all over the place! They leave curling irons plugged in next to the foundation and it all melts!! All true. What we have to remember is that make-up is an important part of the creative process of producing a work of art. Theatre is an all-encompassing art form. Since art is what defines man and society we must just learn to put up with a little mess. (I remind myself of this often.)

Make-up for the actor is a crucial key to jumping into their character and telling the audience who they are. An actor can work for weeks and months discovering their character only to have all their work dissolve as they walk onto the stage because they do not look the part. As an example a seventeen-year-old boy simply cannot portray Martin Vanderhof (Grandpa) in *You Can't Take It With You* without the use of old age make-up.

Make-up in the high school venue can be difficult but not impossible. First think about the size of your theatre. The requirements for an 1100-seat auditorium are going to be different than a 200-seat gymnasium. The closer the audience is to the actor the less foundation or the lighter the color that may be needed. The correct foundation is important as it provides the actor with a canvas in which facial features are shaped. Invest in good quality theatrical foundation from Ben Nye, Mehron, Graftobian, etc. I prefer liquid foundation to cake, as it seems easier to blend highlights and shadows.

The size of your cast is the next factor to consider. When doing a large cast show it is wise to use a make-up crew. A make-up crew is easy to find in a high school by recruiting those students in school who everyday come to school wearing perfect makeup. Often these students love to show off their talents and do fantastic work once you give them guidelines of expectations. As often as you can and in a smaller cast show require the actors to do their own make-up. Set aside a rehearsal time to teach them how to approach their make-up. At this same time you can then make arrangements to check their finished make-up under the stage lights. This becomes a valuable part of the total rehearsal process and eliminates problems at dress rehearsal and performance time.

Here are things and hints I have learned over the years that may help you:

1. Learn from your students about current make-up trends and products.
2. I use the textbook *The Stage and the School* that has a very simple clear-cut chapter on makeup that I use with great success. You can purchase a used copy from Amazon for less than \$5.00.
3. Accept the make-up from the retiring Mary Kay dealer with which to practice and play.
4. I make everyone **and I mean everyone**, boys and girls, purchase their own black mascara and put their name on their own tube. Do not let them share!
5. They should have their own hairbrushes and combs with their names on them. Again sharing these items

- can cause unwanted health problems.
- 6. A little make-up can go a long way so I do not hesitate to use the small individual kits different companies have available. They will generally get you through a three-performance show.
- 7. Baby wipes are good for make-up removal.
- 8. Have old towels and washcloths available. Provide

- gentle skin soap.
- 9. I also would recommend attending the Midwest Fantasy Convention in Columbus, Ohio. It is held in conjunction with the Haunters Convention and it is an unbelievable experience. These people are truly masters of make-up and creating characters.
- 10. Remember this is art and defines us.

Dealing with Criticism

By Ted Moskonas



The words "Stop, Stop, Stop!!" at the top of critique sheets are the ultimate in negative criticism a group can receive in fall Theatre contests. As directors, we have to prepare ourselves and our students for negative criticism and the possibility of being eliminated. The question is "How?"

One way to prepare for criticism is to tell the students in advance that the evaluation of plays is highly subjective. Although the adjudicators are trained and qualified, they each have their own point of view -- which may not agree with yours. The best evidence of this occurs when there are three written critiques and each one points out something different. In some cases they may make completely contradictory comments. In a sense, adjudicators are like referees or umpires, based upon their knowledge and their experience - "they call 'em like they see 'em."

It's also important to remember that, although you have been working on a show for several weeks, this is the first time the adjudicator has seen your performance (even if he or she has seen other performances of the same play). At times, a cast and director get too close to a show and miss some fundamental problems that are obvious to a trained first-time viewer.

Another way to prepare to receive criticism is to review and discuss the criteria for evaluation of each level of the contest. At each level, the criteria is different. Cast members need to be aware of and understand what the adjudicators will be looking for. (This information can be found in the [WISDAA Theatre Handbook](#).)

Still another way to prepare to receive criticism is to go over written evaluation sheets from previous contest performances (if any) in a line by line fashion. This way the director and the students can evaluate and discuss specific comments and suggestions. Hopefully, after such a

discussion, the students will be able to understand where the adjudicators were coming from -- even if they don't agree. Obviously, comments that appear more than once need to be evaluated more closely. In the final analysis, the director has to decide which criticism should be acted upon.

In the event that you receive negative criticism or get stopped at a particular contest level, it is important to avoid fault-finding. Usually fault-finding causes more harm than good. In this situation, the adjudicators are a prime target but it takes at least two adjudicators to stop a show from advancing and frequently the decisions are unanimous.

In other cases, a particular performer may be singled out by other members of the group as being responsible for not advancing because the actor messed up a line or made some other mistake. The result is usually a clash of personalities and the destruction of cast unity. Because these are students who are likely to be involved in other shows during the year, this is something that may prove harmful to the entire theatre program.

The point to remember is that, rarely, one person or event is responsible for a negative criticism or being stopped at a particular contest level. It is much more likely that there are a series of problems or some fundamental flaw that results in a negative critique.

Finally, it is important to perform a "post mortem" after it is all over (preferably after a day or two break) to help students come to terms with both the good and bad things that happened during the contest series. Keep in mind, we are trying to teach our students about theatre through participation. Whether the results are good or disappointing, the final question to be answered must be - what have we learned from this experience?



The Wisconsin Interscholastic Speech & Dramatic Arts Association (WISDAA) Fall One-Act Play contest series is a theatre experience with a wonderful history. It allows students a chance to showcase talents and to view skills of students from schools throughout the state. It is also rigorous, featuring polished productions advancing to the State Festival. Production company members advancing to State are undeniably elated, while those who do not advance are undeniably disappointed. Whether a production advances, involvement should be a learning experience for both students and directors. The key player for success and improvement in a program is the faculty director, who has a responsibility to provide their students with not only a positive learning experience, but also for the best chance for success.

When Does Preparation Begin?

As a high school director for 30+ years, I consistently began thinking about the upcoming theatre season immediately after the previous year's State Festival. I would make a list of seniors I would lose to graduation, undergrads who would return, and any incoming freshmen who would likely be involved in the theatre program. A word of advice to high school directors: maintain good relations with the middle school director, who can encourage their students to continue participating in high school. After I compiled a list of students that might be involved the upcoming year, then came the most difficult and most crucial decision of all: play selection. Once I knew my casting and technical pool, it was time to select a suitable and "doable" play. Selecting a play that is beyond the capabilities of your casting pool is a recipe for disaster and not fair to students, which brings us to the purpose of this article. What can you do when you can't find a suitable play for the students you have available? The answer: write one yourself!

In the early 1990s, I had trouble finding a contest play for

my students. At the time, I wanted to do something challenging that had social significance, that was relatable to high school students at that time. I complained to my wife about not being able to find the right play when she turned to me and said; "you've been doing this your whole life, why don't you just write your own?" So, I did... and for the next 20+ years, I wrote each play my students performed in the festival. This not only started a whole new career, but it allowed me to provide for my students plays that fit their talents and addressed topics they were interested in. It also challenged them with previously unproduced material, allowing them to develop the new characters and make them their own.

I know what you're thinking; why should I, as a director, write a one-act play for my theatre students to perform in the WISDAA One-Act Play Festival? After all, it's a lot of work writing a play, it takes a lot of time and I'm not getting paid for that. Not only that, adjudicators might not like the play and criticize me as the author. The reward of providing a richly relevant educational experience for your students and their capabilities is perhaps more important. It also frees you to change things as you go through the rehearsal process to strengthen the production without the need to seek permission to cut or change dialogue, character gender parameters, etc. Because: you can adjust the length of the play to meet any time restraints. Because: you can make your students part of the whole character development process. Because: you don't have to pay royalties, which always makes the school financial officer happy. Because: it is very satisfying and finally just because... *you can*.

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