



Adjudicator Handbook

Purpose

The Miami Valley High School Theatre Awards (MVHSTAs) and Awards Showcase are designed to **celebrate, support, and advocate** for high school theatre education throughout the Miami Valley region. The program celebrates high school plays, musicals, students, and educators by formally recognizing the extraordinary achievements of our community's productions.

Goals

1. To recognize, honor, and encourage excellence in high school theatre through a constructive review process of nominated productions by qualified Adjudicators;
2. To provide educational workshops and advancement in dance, voice, acting, and stagecraft for high school students locally, regionally, and nationally;
3. To provide professional development and networking opportunities for students, directors, and school programs; and
4. To give students an opportunity to perform on a Victoria Theatre Association stage.

About the Miami Valley High School Theatre Awards

Born from the strong foundation laid by the DayTony High School Theatre Awards, the Miami Valley High School Theatre Awards (MVHSTAs) celebrate the accomplishments of area high school teachers and students by recognizing achievements in productions by participating Miami Valley area high schools. To participate, schools register to have their productions reviewed by a qualified team of Adjudicators, who then provide directors with valuable feedback. During the spring, the Miami Valley High School Theatre Awards will present an Awards Showcase to recognize the outstanding achievements of high school productions and students. Modeled after the Tony Awards®, the showcase features outstanding performances from participating high schools and celebrates their enthusiasm, dedication, and talent while encouraging participating schools to grow and continue improving their programs. To learn more, go to www.mvhsta.org.

Adjudication Overview

The Miami Valley High School Theatre Awards will provide adjudication for participating high schools located in the Miami Valley. Adjudicators are responsible for evaluating high school straight play and musical theatre productions. Evaluations consist of educationally focused feedback and scoring. We know Adjudicators are busy people and we will not ask you to adjudicate when you are unavailable. However, our goal is that each Adjudicator evaluate approximately three (3) high school play and/or musical theatre productions for the 2018-2019 Season. Some Adjudicators may evaluate more or less shows based on scheduling and the number of schools that register for the program.

Meetings & Important Dates

Adjudicators are required to attend one orientation session at Victoria Theatre Association. Multiple orientations are planned, and Adjudicators will be notified of when they are scheduled well in advance. Adjudicators are also strongly encouraged to attend the Awards Showcase the evening of Tuesday, June 11, 2019 at the Schuster Center.

Awards & Awards Showcase

There are two (2) levels of individual awards given: **Awards of Merit & Awards of Excellence**. The awards are assigned for each category to a top percentage of all submitted productions. The cutoff percentages will be determined by a review of the ballot results without show or school details attached. This is a cutoff for scores to receive recognition – not a determination of who or what school is the best.

Overall production awards will be given for the top productions.

All awards are distributed at the Awards Showcase held on Tuesday, June 11, 2019 at 7:30 p.m. at the Schuster Center.

Honorarium for Adjudicators

Adjudicators will be paid an honorarium of **\$35** per show for evaluating schools. Honorarium payments will be issued no later than June 30, 2019. Completed tax documentation will be required for payment to be issued. Adjudicators may also donate their honorarium back to the program and a tax receipt will be issued. Please notify Victoria Theatre Association staff if you wish to donate your honorarium back to the MVHSTAs.

Scheduling

High school theatre productions take place between September 2018 and April 2019. Show selections will be made online. Adjudicators are encouraged to sign up for shows early. *See page 5.*

Production Information Form

Approximately 1-2 weeks before the show opens, Adjudicators will receive a Production Information Form, which will include: cast lists, names of students/characters to be evaluated in lead and supporting roles, preferences for feedback, show run times, driving directions, instructions for parking, and other important information pertaining to the production. Please be sure to read through the school's Production Information Form before attending the performance.

Tickets

Each participating high school reserves two (2) complimentary tickets for the Adjudicators attending the production. High schools will hold ticket(s) under "MVHSTA Adjudicator" for Adjudicators to pick up when they arrive at the performance venue. In most cases, seating will be general admission. Adjudicators should contact VTA staff with any special needs or requests regarding seating.

Attendance Procedures

The day of the performance, Adjudicators should arrive at least 15 minutes before curtain, and must remain throughout the duration of the performance. Adjudicators will make best efforts to maintain anonymity after the performance, and no oral critique should be provided.

If Adjudicators are unable to attend any of the productions they have selected to evaluate, they must contact Gary Minyard immediately at either Gary.Minyard@victoriatheatre.com or 972-365-2462 for emergencies.

Confidentiality

Adjudicators must not discuss their opinions, evaluations, scores, or feedback with anyone in any format. This includes, but is not limited to: students, faculty and staff from participating high schools, colleagues, friends and family, other Adjudicators, reviewers, social media networks, etc. Please contact VTA staff with questions about confidentiality.

Conflicts of Interest

Adjudicators must agree to uphold MVHSTA's conflict of interest policy and should not allow personal preferences or bias to influence evaluations. In accordance with this policy, Adjudicators should not have a personal or professional relationship with participating high schools' theatre production. If an Adjudicator thinks a conflict of interest might exist, the Adjudicator must contact VTA staff immediately. Definitions and examples of potential conflicts of interest include, but are not limited to:

Professional Conflicts of Interest

This includes employment, receiving or providing compensation, gifts, financial support, favors that are substantial in nature, or donations from participating high schools. This also includes board connections, organizational partnerships, volunteer work, business ties, financial investments, or any other professional ties that might positively or negatively influence the evaluation.

Personal Conflicts of Interest

Examples of this type of conflict of interest include alumni status (if evaluating that high school's theatre production), the involvement of immediate family members, spouses, partners, siblings, parents, children in participating high schools' theatre productions, or any other personal ties that might positively or negatively influence the evaluation.

Evaluation Guidelines

Adjudicators will evaluate the overall play and musical theatre production, the ensemble, performers in lead roles, and performers in supporting roles. Adjudicator evaluations consist of written feedback and scores. Adjudicators are prohibited from sharing feedback or scores with schools directly, or provide an oral critique following the performance. Each Adjudicator will be emailed a secure link to an official online ballot form where Adjudicators will enter their written feedback and scoring decisions.

Adjudicator evaluations must be completed within 72 hours of attending the production.

Reference Materials

When entering feedback/scores, please reference the evaluation rubric (*pages 7-11*) which provides detailed criteria for evaluating each category, and is available for download in the Adjudicator section of www.mvhsta.org. The school's Production Information Form features the names of the characters/students being evaluated in lead/supporting roles, notes on any specific feedback the director might want, and other details. The school's program book (or playbill) is also valuable, as well as any notes you might have taken.

Feedback

The purpose of written feedback is to provide each Theatre Director with detailed notes in the hopes of commending the notable achievements of the production and offering solutions to the aspects where the production could improve. ***This is an educational tool, not strictly a review or critique.*** Feedback should include praise and constructive criticism. Please include examples to support comments and be as detailed as possible. Feedback should not mention or allude to scoring decisions and should not focus on areas that are outside of the student’s control, including: design/technical aspects, orchestra, director’s artistic decisions, etc.

Adjudicator feedback will be reviewed by VTA staff before being forwarded to Theatre Directors.

Scores

Scores will be used to determine “Merit” and “Excellence” Awardees in each award category for the 2018-2019 Season. Scores will not be shared with schools and are strictly confidential. On a scale of 1-10 (with 10 being the highest score and 1 being the lowest score), Adjudicators will rank how well the evaluation criteria are executed by students.

Actor / Actress

For the purposes of the MVHSTAs, students are adjudicated in the category corresponding to their gender identification, not the gender of the role that they played. The MVHSTAs will work with Theatre Directors to ensure all performers are listed on the ballots correctly. Please direct questions to VTA staff.



Footloose, Stebbins High School, 2017

How Do I Schedule My Shows?

Adjudicators are required to schedule their productions online. Here are the steps:

1. Adjudicators will receive a link in their email from SignUpGenius. This link provides access to all participating productions.
2. You may need to create a SignUpGenius Account if you do not have one. Please use the same email you have given to the MVHSTAs. This account also allows you to receive reminders via text.
3. Once your account is created, we ask that you select a minimum of three (3) productions to adjudicate. In addition, we ask that you consider adding two (2) "Alternative Adjudicator" slots in case of an emergency cancellation.
4. Shows are on first-come, first-served basis. **We must have a minimum of three (3) official adjudications per production.**
5. You will receive official confirmation from VTA on which shows you selected.

How Do I Fill Out My Online Ballot?

Adjudicators are required to submit their official scores through a secure, online survey within 72 hours of seeing a performance. Here are the steps:

1. You will receive an official email with a secured link to a survey for the production you are adjudicating. This link is connected to you and your email, so please do not share.

This survey will have all the elements for adjudication including Overall Production, Acting Categories, Ensemble, and other Specialty Categories. Please refer to pages 7-11 for guidance.

2. Once you click on the survey, please fill it out in its entirety. *Please note the "How Should I Rate It" on page 7 for guidance.*
3. Once you have completed your "Notes To The Director" section, hit "Done," and the survey will be sent to VTA for tabulation.

Please note, if there is an error on the ballot, or there is some other technical challenge, please contact VTA staff who can assist you.

Also, your feedback matters. Please remember to keep your notes and observations constructive and positive. Adjudicator feedback will be reviewed by VTA staff before being forwarded to Theatre Directors.

Everything You Wanted to Know about Adjudication*

**but were afraid to ask*

Before Seeing a Show

- Once you have selected the shows to adjudicate online, think about who might go with you. MVHSTA Adjudicators are given two (2) free tickets to performances. Please bring a guest with you to enjoy the performance. ***You are encouraged to bring a sample ballot or notebook to take down notes.***
- Please make sure you have directions to the school in advance. All schools have provided directions from the school's Director. Please arrive at least 15 minutes before the show.
- Report to the ticket booth and introduce yourself by name, and let the attendant know that you are there to adjudicate for the MVHSTAs. They will have your tickets ready for you.

While at the Show

- Before the show starts, take the time to look over the ballot to see who and what you are adjudicating. Make note of the actors you are to look for, the stage aspects you will need to comment on, and if able, discuss this with your guest. Have them help you if needed. Ballots should then be put away.
- ***Enjoy Act 1!*** Make mental notes as you are watching, and do not commit yourself to any final judgment until the conclusion of the performance. You can make some notes during intermission, ***but you should not give any scores until after the show.***
- Immediately after the show, you may have an urge to grab a pen to fill out your ballot- **but WAIT!** Do that at home. Any notes you make should not be shared aloud at the school where others can hear you.

After the Show

- If you do talk to any of the cast or production staff, do not offer advice or critique what was done. Compliment them on things that you feel deserve it, be genuine, but never do it in a manner that makes them think that they made bad choices.
 - **As a requirement for being a MVHSTA Adjudicator, you must submit your official ballot online within 72 hours of seeing the designated performance.**
 - Use the rubric enclosed in this packet to make your score assignments. Remember what a 10 represents, a 9, an 8, etc. Be fair when giving one actor a 7, and another a 5. Do the scores balance out? Consult the rubric in your packet.
 - All shows must be adjudicated on their own merits. Are you being too critical? Remember high school productions are as good as any shows that are out there, but are you considering all aspects of the show fairly and are you judging based on what you saw onstage or what you personally think is good?
 - Every Theatre Director is prepared to receive feedback, and we encourage constructive advice or accolades when completing the online ballot. Nothing is worse than seeing a bunch of numbers without any explanation. VTA staff will read, and possibly edit, comments before forwarding to any participating school.
 - ***Your feedback and ideas matter to many of the participating schools.***
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What Should I Rate It?

This rubric is meant to be a simple guide for MVHSTA Adjudicators to help rate each production on its own merits.

1 2 3

4 5 6

7 8 9



Ratings of 1-3: This means that the performance or aspect of the production were below average or expectations for the rest of the production. If the performer is not in a coma then they should get at least a 2!

** If you give a low rating please explain your reasons for giving such a low rating in the form of constructive criticism.*

Ratings of 4-6: This means that the performance or aspect of the production were average or not exceptional. If you give an average rating then you feel that this performance is not worthy of any special recognition.

Ratings of 7-9: This means that the performance or aspect of the production were higher than normal. Ratings of 9 mean that you feel that performance or aspect of the production might be worthy of special recognition.

Ratings of 10: This means that the performance or aspect of the production was truly exceptional! This rating is not common and should only be used for truly outstanding qualities. Ratings of 10 mean that you feel that the performance or aspect of the production is deserving of the highest recognition.

** Please note that for a school/student to receive a 10 in any evaluation area, the school/student should exhibit the caliber of work that would be considered outstanding if executed by industry professionals.*

An 8-10 in OVERALL:

- developed the major idea of the play or musical
- left a positive overall impression
- is a play or musical that you would highly recommend to your friends

An 8-10 in ACTING:

- portrayed a believable performance as the character
- was spontaneous, yet consistent
- vocally, physically, and clearly communicated what his/her character wanted on stage
- moved and used his/her body to convey the character
- had good stage presence, energy, and poise
- (if called for) used a specific dialect effectively

An 8-10 in ENSEMBLE:

Has a cast that worked well onstage with others by:

- performing a cohesive production with little lapses in character or story
- representing each character completely and accurately leading to a believable performance and interacting with other actors in a fitting/appropriate way according to the story
- honoring the playwright/composer and the work as a whole
- adding specific nuances to heighten the experience for the audience

To earn an 8-10 a DIRECTOR should:

- have a consistent vision, and convey that vision through their interpretation of the play or musical
- compose stage pictures to give additional meaning to the moments
- pace the show in an appropriate and compelling way
- make good use of the entire space
- have variety in the movement of the show
- have a consistent message in association with lighting, sound, set, costumes, props, and actors

An 8-10 in SET DESIGN:

- had an environment that supported the production
- seemed appropriate to the style or time period of the play or musical
- created a reaction to the play or musical in a specific way, or created a focus on something particular in the play or musical
- was successful in creating an environment for the characters
- elicited proper use of color, line, mass, and texture
- provided a logical and suitable setting for the action of the play or musical
- used colors, style, and layout that created an attractive/effective environment
- had scene changes (if any) that were handled efficiently without disrupting the action of the production

An 8-10 in COSTUME DESIGN:

- used costumes that conveyed the essence of the characters
- helped define the time period of the play or musical
- used costumes that were well executed
- elicited proper use of line, texture, and color
- allowed for ease of movement by the character
- used makeup and/or hair/wigs that contributed to the characterization and the overall appeal of the show

An 8-10 in LIGHTING DESIGN:

- was effective in moving the attention of the audience to the action of the play or musical
- allowed for good visibility

- was effective in changing locations and moods
- (when appropriate) used exceptional effects

An 8-10 in SOUND DESIGN:

- (if used) had microphones that helped, rather than hindered the performance
- In a musical, had a balance between vocal singing and the orchestra
- used effective sound effects
- created mood/tone effectively through recorded music/sound
- helped to establish the time and place through recorded music/sound
- established transitions between scenes through recorded music/sound



The Mousetrap, Centerville High School, 2017



@MVHSTA

Helpful questions that should help you evaluate the performance

What was your overall opinion of the entire production?

- a. Was the major idea of the play developed?
- b. What was the style of the production?
- c. Did the elements (production and performance) emphasize/maintain consistency with style?
- d. Would you recommend this show to your friends?

What did you think of the direction?

- a. Did the production seem to have a consistent vision?
- b. Did the director compose the stage pictures to give additional meaning to the moments?
- c. Was the pace of the show appropriate and compelling?
- d. Did the staging make good use of the entire space?
- e. Was there variety in the movement of the show?
- f. Did all the elements (sets, costumes, lights, props, actors) have a consistent message?

What did you think of the scenic (set) design?

- a. Did the environment of the set support the production?
- b. Did it seem appropriate to the style or time period of the play or musical?
- c. Did it either make you react to the play/musical in a specific way, or to focus on something particular in the play/musical?
- d. Was it successful at creating an environment for the characters?
- e. How well were color, line, mass and texture used?
- f. Did the scenery provide a logical and suitable setting for the action of the play or musical?
- g. Did the color, style, and layout create an attractive/effective environment?
- h. Were the scenic changes (if any) handled efficiently without disrupting the action of the production?

What did you think of the lighting design?

- a. Was the lighting effective in moving the attention of the audience to the action?
- b. Was there good visibility?
- c. Was the lighting effective in changing locations and moods?
- d. Were there any exceptional effects?

What did you think of the costume design?

- a. Did the costumes convey the essence of the characters?
- b. Did they help define the time period of the play or musical?
- c. Were the costumes executed well?
- d. Were line, texture, and color used?
- f. Did the makeup and/or hair or wig design contribute to the characterizations and the overall appeal of the show, or was it distracting?

What did you think of the sound design?

- a. If microphones were used, did they help or hinder the performance?
- b. In a musical, was there a balance between the vocal singing and the orchestra?
- c. Were the sound effects well done?
- d. Was recorded music/sound used effectively to help set the mood or tone?
- e. Did recorded music/sound help to establish the time and place?
- f. Did recorded music/sound help to establish transitions between scenes?

What did you think of the properties/set dressing?

- a. Did the props seem appropriate to the style and time period of the play or musical?
- b. Did the props “read well” from the audience?
- c. Did personal props help the actors create their characters?
- d. Were specialty props innovative and well executed?
- e. Did the set props adhere to the color, line, and texture of the scenic design?
- f. Did the set dressing help to create an attractive and effective environment?
- g. Were the props handled effectively without problem, and without disrupting the action of the play or musical?

What did you think of the ensemble?

- a. Did the actors work well on stage with other performers?
- b. Did any actor stand out to the detriment of the other actors?

What did you think of the individual acting?

- a. Is the actor/actress believable as the character?
- b. Was actor/actress spontaneous and consistent?
- c. Was the actor/actress clear vocally, physically and in terms of what their character wanted from others on stage?
- d. Did the actor/actress move and use their body to convey the character?
- e. Did the actor/actress have good stage presence, energy, and poise?
- f. If the production called for a specific period or dialect, did the actor/actress fulfill these demands?
- g. Was the actor/actress loud enough, expressive, and easily understood?

Questions/Comments/Help

If you have any questions, would like to give feedback about the program or need any help at all throughout the adjudication process, please contact the VTA staff directly. We are always happy to help! You can email general inquiries to: mvhsta@victoriatheatre.com or

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