



WATCH

Adjudication Training

Introductions – WATCH Mission

- Founded in 1999, adjudication began in 2000.
- The Washington Area Theatre Community Honors (WATCH) is an organization founded for the adjudication and presentation of annual awards recognizing artistic and technical excellence in community theatre throughout the metropolitan Washington, D.C. area. That these honors will:
 - *Foster and encourage the growth of community theater;*
 - *Promote and enhance the image of community theater; and*
 - *Educate and inform the general public about the theatrical opportunities provided by the member theaters.*

Introductions – Adjudication Coordinator

- Adjudication Coordinator - Leta Hall
 - E-Mail: leta.hall@gmail.com
 - Please remember put Leta's e-mail address as accepted in your spam filters
 - You will receive weekly emails from Leta listing all show and assignment information.
- Tabulator – Margaret Binning
 - Margaret receives all ballots and enters the scores into a database. At the end of the year, she provides a report to the WATCH Board, from which the nominations and awards are generated.

Introductions – Charter Groups

WATCH Charter Member Groups (2000)

- The Arlington Players (TAP)
- Castaways Repertory Theatre (CRT)
- Elden Street Players (ESP)*
- Hard Bargain Players (HBP)
- Little Theatre of Alexandria (LTA)
- Montgomery Playhouse (MP)
- Port Tobacco Players (PTP)
- Prince William Little Theatre (PWLT)
- Reston Community Players (RCP)
- Tapestry Theatre Company (TTC)*

* = No longer active in WATCH

Introductions – WATCH History

2001

- Great Falls Players (GFP)*
- Silver Spring Stage (SSS)
- St. Mark's Players (SMP)

2002

- Dominion Stage (DS)
- Rockville Little Theatre (RLT)
- Vienna Theatre Co. (VTC) *

2003

- American Music Stage (AMS) *
- Kensington Arts Theatre (KAT)
- Port City Playhouse (PCP)
- Springfield Comm. Theatre (SCT) *

2004

- Aldersgate Church Comm Theatre (ACCT)
- Chevy Chase Players (CCP) *
- Fauquier Comm. Theatre (FCT)
- Providence Players (PPF)
- Rockville Musical Theatre (RMT)
- Tantallon Comm. Players (TCP) *

2005

- Capital City Players of DC (CCDC), formerly The Foundry Players (FP) *

2006

- Bowie Community Theatre (BCT)

2007

- CCT with 2nd Flight Theatre (CCT) *
- Colonial Players (CPA)
- Laurel Mill Playhouse (LMP)

2008

- Greenbelt Arts Center (GAC)
- Rooftop Productions (RTP)

2009

- McLean Community Players (MCP)

2010

- Damascus Theatre Company (DTC)
- Prince George's Little Theatre (PGLT)

2011

- The Alliance Theatre (TAT) *

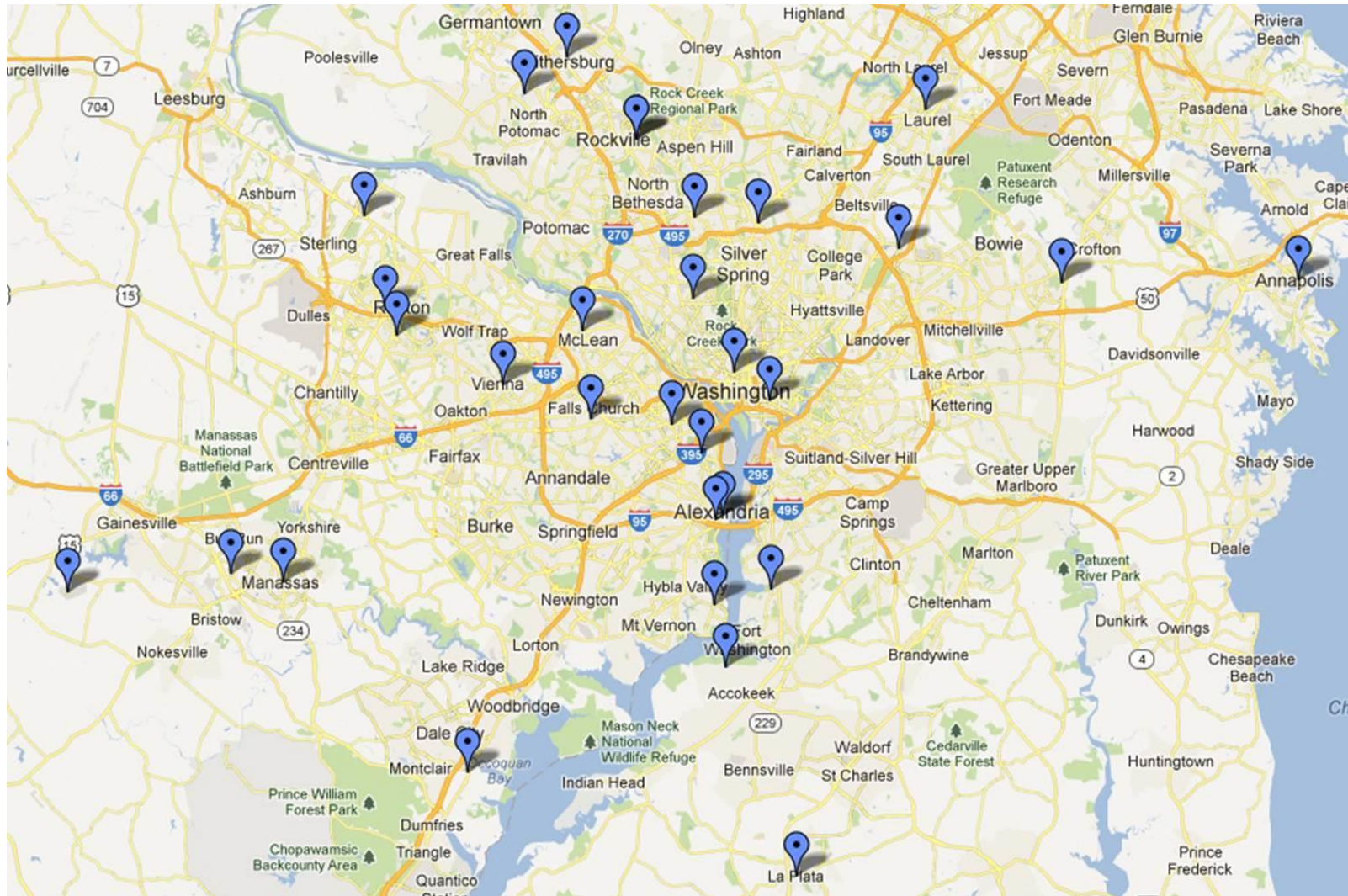
2012

- 2nd Star Productions (SSP)

* = No longer active in WATCH

THE BIG WATCH MAP

Woodbridge to Warrenton to Herndon to Gaithersburg to Rockville
To Laurel to Annapolis to La Plata to Accokeek to Alexandria to Woodbridge



Why you were selected...

For your experience in theater

- On stage and backstage in community theater. We hope you have a background in many areas of theatrical production.
- And as an audience member of community theater.

For your support of all community theater

- Regardless of what company you represent, we expect you to be fair and unbiased when judging.

For your sense of responsibility

- We are counting on you to fulfill the commitment you are making to view and fairly judge the shows assigned to you.

Why you were selected... *(cont'd)*

As a judge

- You will be assigned to see about 10 shows during the calendar year.
- Fill out a ballot, scoring every identifiable element.
- Electronically submit the ballot for tabulation.

Being a WATCH judge is a full-year commitment

- Regardless of problems at your home theater.
- If you need to be relieved of your commitment, please just ask. We would rather help you out of the commitment rather than have missed shows.

Matrix of Judging Assignments

The matrix – assignments of judges to shows

- Randomized by a computer, balanced by a human.
- You will not judge shows produced by your “home” company.
- No regionalization control. You will see a show at about 10 different companies, throughout the wide metro area.

Matrix of Judging Assignments... (cont'd)

- The new judging matrix is developed during the month of December each year, and our goal is to have it published before January 1.
- You can view the current year's matrix online at <http://washingtontheater.org>
- The matrix also provides a breakdown of the judges assigned to see a show, so the box office can be ready for the reservations.

Email and The Web

- All of the judges/alternates/ reps will be added to a list server which only the Coordinator will be able to see or use.
- Contact the adjudication coordinator if your email address changes.
- We are very judicious (and protective) with the use of this list.

Email and The Web . . . *(cont'd)*

As we go through the rest of the adjudication training you will notice how much we ask you to just keep us posted via email.

Why?

- We must have ten judges view a show.
- Keeping us informed helps us to coordinate alternates and emergencies.
- It keeps your rep and the companies you are judging up to date on adjudication status.

Email and The Web . . . *(cont'd)*

- The ballot, the criteria, the matrix, and the guidelines will be on the website *(even these training slides)*.
- If you need information, please check there.
 - <http://washingtontheater.org>
- If you still need more help,
 - start with your company representative,
 - then the adjudication coordinator,
 - then any other member of the WATCH Board.

The unknown autumn...

- The Matrix and Just the Facts (even the email report) often have “show slots” for shows that have not been announced.
- This is just the nature of the WATCH Calendar running on the calendar year and the theater season starting in September.
 - **FAQ: Why does WATCH run on the calendar year?**
 - Clean break for tabulation at the holidays. No productions perform the weekends around Dec 25th and Jan 1st.
- It is not unusual for some shows to get cancelled in the fall, as companies enter a new season and calendar with their facilities.
- **PLEASE READ YOUR WEEKLY REPORTS CAREFULLY**
(Get used to “finding your name” in the report)
 - Look closely at the “Early Fall Shows” and “Late Fall Shows”, they can be confusing for groups that do two or more shows between September and Christmas

Tickets and Reservations

Each company is different

- The “Just the Facts” document, and Leta’s weekly emails, detail how to make reservations at each company.
- ***You must make a reservation.*** Some of the groups have small houses and cannot “squeeze” you in.
- ***Your ticket as a judge is free at all theaters***
 - Some companies, not all, offer a free, restricted or discounted companion ticket (also listed on the “Just the Facts” document).
- ***PLEASE, be kind to the box office staff members.***
 - If you have a problem, contact YOUR representative and it will be addressed.

Tickets and Reservations . . . *(cont'd)*

Please think ahead.

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

Do NOT make reservations for closing night.

- Closing night is reserved as an “emergency alternate night”. If you miss a show, we always want to have closing night to send an alternate in your place
- Every production must have at least 6 performances. That minimum provides judges with enough opportunities to see the show without having to reserve for Closing Night.
 - We have had cancellations of closing nights due to weather!
 - (Did we mention Hard Bargain performs outdoors?)

Tickets and Reservations . . . *(cont'd)*

Consider traffic.

- Crossing the Potomac on a Friday night across the Woodrow Wilson bridge can take an hour.
- I-270 and I-66 are often jammed on a Friday night.

Plan to get there 15-30 minutes early.

- Some groups release reserved tickets at certain time (including any non-refundable tickets you may have paid for a companion).
- Some groups have “festival seating”.

Tickets and Reservations . . . (cont'd)

- ✓ Make sure you leave extra time for finding a theater that is new to you.
- ✓ Always double-check the venue address and directions before you leave, after all this is community theater and some of our groups change venues.
- ✓ **IMPORTANT:** Email your rep and the adjudication coordinator when you make a reservation.
 - It lets us know you are aware and on top of your responsibility.

Using Alternates

- We WANT the primary judges to see the shows, but...
 - If you know you cannot attend a show...
 - If you are in or working on the show ...
 - If you have (or others might feel you have) a conflict of interest (your spouse is the director, lead actor, etc)...
 - If you serve on the board of the theater...
 - If, for any reason, you feel that you cannot make an unbiased adjudication of a show (or element of a show)...
- Ask your company rep to find an alternate to judge the show for you.
- Yes, alternates are for emergencies, but most of the time, it didn't have to be an emergency.

Using Alternates . . . *(cont'd)*

- Work with your rep to ensure that an alternate is assigned and understands the responsibility being passed to them.
- Contact the box office if any changes to reservations need to be made.

Adjudication Criteria

- Now, what are you looking for when you are sitting in the theater watching a show?
- Please remember that you are there to do a job, not just to enjoy a production (we hope you do, but that would be a bonus). It is your job to actively observe all of the details (or missed details), as well as the “picture” as a whole.
- The categories are divided into three types:
 1. Overall Production (7 awards)
 2. Technical Elements (21 awards)
 3. Performances (10 awards)

Adjudication Criteria . . . (cont'd)

Of these 39 categories, all of them should be evaluated with three overriding principles. Each element should:

- Serve the story being told
 - Be appropriate to the piece and the presenting space (in context of director's vision)
 - Be of consistent quality throughout the piece
- Level of Difficulty must be considered
 - Please try to disregard your personal likes/dislikes
 - Base your scores on what is “average at WATCH Community Theatres”

Performance Criteria

In judging performances consider:

Creative:

- Character serves the story and is believable – choices are clear, appropriate, consistent.

Technical (stagecraft):

- Maintains focus throughout; projection, diction, dialect (if applicable) are appropriate; movement, physicality appropriate and consistent for development of character. Plays well with others.
- Additional consideration of musical performances: Vocal/dance abilities consistent and appropriate to the character. Able to maintain focus and character through musical and/or dance numbers as appropriate to the story.

Performance Criteria . . . (cont'd)

In judging performances consider:

Level of Difficulty

- Number of lines, range of songs, amount of dance, lots of costume changes, large range of emotion, physicality of role, transformation to accomplish role, multiple roles (balloting: must be listed together)... and yes, were they “good.” But “Good” is relative when scoring.

Frequently Asked Question (FAQ):

So, are you saying I need to adjust my scoring like an Olympic judge based on level of difficulty?

- In a way, yes. Consider the lead male role in “Love Letters” vs. the title role in “Hamlet”. No matter how good someone is in “Love Letters”, they were still reading their lines off of paper. They didn’t have to memorize them. While the person performing in “Love Letters” may have been absolutely perfect, does the level of difficulty of that role deserve a “10”? Perhaps an “8” should be the highest that role could achieve.
- Admittedly the performance categories are tough to adjust for level of difficulty. It will be clearer in the technical categories. But if you are handing out “10s”, both the performance and the level of difficulty should be superior.

Technical Criteria

When considering technical elements, remember, each element should:

- Serve the story being told
- Be appropriate to the piece and the presenting space (in context of director's vision)
- Be of consistent quality throughout the piece

– Level of Difficulty must be considered

– Base your scores on what is “average at WATCH Community Theatres”

– With the following considerations for each specific element:

Set Design Criteria

1. Serves the story and the space – smooth flow between and within scenes, entrances are appropriate. Appropriate scope to the piece.
 - Is the design too big for the space?
2. Creative solutions to obstacles in the presenting space (or inherent in the piece)
 - e.g. working around pillars or low ceilings. Take into account whether the space is a real theater vs. an auditorium, gym, converted storefront, etc.
3. Period and place appropriate. Aids in defining the mood of the piece
 - reflects concept – standard 4 walls vs. standalone units; realistic vs. abstract.
4. Balances with other technical elements (lights, set dressing, costumes). Visual interest, style.
5. Sight lines considered – masking adequate as appropriate.
6. Level of Difficulty – How great was the “artistic challenge”? Just because they got the 27 scene changes accomplished on a small space doesn’t necessarily mean the set design was artistically challenging. Set Construction may have been very challenging... but Set Design? The most artistic designs are not always incredibly detailed replicas of life. Sometimes artistic and aesthetic excellence can be found in an elegantly simple set design.
 - Is there intricate detail in various elements: trim, stairs, windows, doors, arches, etc. or are they very basic and plain? Was the set designed with multiple areas and levels, or just one level because it was easier to build? Does the set have “depth”, or is it flat?

Set Construction Criteria

1. Serves the set design and the story. Safe for the performers. Facilitates scene changes (quiet, simple).
2. Creative use of materials in creating the illusion of reality.
3. Workmanship
 - Even the most simplistic sets can have shoddy workmanship, which detracts from the overall illusion of reality.
4. Attention to detail
 - e.g., Is the window real (set construction) or painted on the wall (more set painting than construction)?
 - Do things make sense and fit properly?
 - e.g., in a set of a room in modern times, are there light switches and plugs on the walls, are there heating registers, do all windows and doors have proper hardware, etc.
 - e.g., When a door is opened, does the audience see something appropriate on the other side (an exterior or other room vs. a black flat)?

Set Construction Criteria . . . (cont'd)

Level of Difficulty

- A great set design does NOT mean the set construction was hard. The most detailed, perfectly dressed single room set with a couple of doors is not hard to build with a few flats.
- Look past the “wow” and think about what it really took to build it. If it is a single level with three walls and a couple of entrances, adjust your score down accordingly for level of difficulty.
- E.g., A two-level set that revolves is much harder to build than a room made with flats and doors.
- Are there trap doors incorporated into the set that need to be lit from below?
- Does the outside of the house have a realistic look (siding, shingles) or is it just painted flats?
- How difficult was it to work with the materials? E.g., styrofoam, wood/drywall, steel, glass, etc.
- Are doors and windows operable, and do they work well?
- Stairways are difficult to build; fancy railings even more so

Set Painting Criteria

1. Serves the set design and the story. Aids in setting place and time.
2. Balance with other technical elements (lights, costumes).
3. Textures and colors appropriate. Creativity, artistry.
4. Attention to detail
 - Are the borders/lines even?
 - Does the paint bleed through from a previous show?
 - Does the apartment building through the window look real and proportional?
 - Do the colors on the wall clash with other elements?
 - Are there elements left unfinished or sloppy?

Level of Difficulty – large drops, intricate design, painted floor, etc.

- Again, look past the “wow” and think about what it really took to paint the set. Is it the painting that deserves a “10” for making the walls look “lived in” or is it the set dressing on the walls that should be credited?
- Look for texturing, 3-dimensional feel, stenciling, or sponging instead of a flat wall.

Set Decoration/Dressing Criteria

1. Enhance and complement the set design and the story without hindering the flow/movement of actors and scene changes.
2. Helps set place, period, and mood, and also reflects the characters or the piece. Should be appropriate for the space.
3. NOTE: Set Decoration/Dressing are items that are NOT picked up by the actors. If it's picked up by an actor during the performance, it's a PROP.

Level of Difficulty – unusual demands of story or set design, enhances reality.

- This is one of those categories that most judges get right, because the really good ones are fairly obvious. The stuff on the walls and the furniture was meticulously researched and aesthetically displayed.
- How much stuff and how hard it was to acquire is where level of difficulty should be considered. A modern day piece where all the stuff on stage is available in any middle class home is a lot easier to acquire than period or multi-cultural furniture, art and knick-knacks off of eBay.
- Look to the playbill for tips... was the furniture built? Is there a long list of “thank you” for loans of specialty items?

Properties Criteria

DEFINITION: *Props are items that are picked up and used by the actors on stage, such as a lady's fan, a bottle of scotch, a suitcase, etc. Do not confuse this with Set Decoration!*

1. Enhance the storytelling – placement on stage, ease of use as appropriate.
2. Appropriate to time and place (authentic appearance) and character
3. Accuracy
 - Was the whiskey the right color? Did the bar contain the correct glassware for the drinks used in the show? Was it a fencing foil when it should have been a saber?

Level of Difficulty – large numbers of props, unusual items, food (cooked/prepared).

- As easy as good set dressing is to spot, it can sometimes be very hard to separate that from good props. Great set dressing may be hard to acquire, but a few props of stationery, an old phone and a fountain pen are rather trivial. And just because a single prop creates a large impact on a scene doesn't necessarily mean the prop was difficult to acquire. Was it the prop that was great, or was it the actor's use of the prop that should be credited? Or perhaps the director should be credited for using the prop effectively.

Lighting Design Criteria

DEFINITION: Lighting Design should include anything that uses lighting instruments, including working table or floor lamps, gobos, strobes, star drops, moving lights, gobo rotators, and color changers, and should accomplish the following:

1. Enhance the story
 - Establish time
 - Time of day (morning, afternoon, evening, night)
 - Era (1700, candle light, 1900, Gas light, 1960 incandescent)
 - Place (interiors, exteriors, woods, North Pole)
 - Mood (happy, somber, dark)
2. Creative use in defining space
 - Providing emphasis where the action is taking place
 - Aiding the flow of the piece
 - Enhancing emotions in each scene
3. Work in conjunction with other design elements
 - set, costumes, sound
4. Effective illumination of stage, actors (as appropriate)
 - Effective use of shadows, color, and texture.

Lighting Design Criteria . . . *(cont'd)*

Level of Difficulty – area lights, specials, appropriate effects (gobos, strobos, etc) blend into the overall storytelling without drawing attention to themselves.

What were they able to achieve with available resources?

- Some theaters have limited equipment – were the designers able to accomplish the above using what they had to work with?
- Other theaters have higher tech equipment that requires significant effort to employ – were the designers able to use this equipment effectively?

Other things to consider:

- How many different looks did they create?
- Did they use long slow cues to build intensity with the emotion of the scene?
- Did they create passage of time with light?
- Were the lights distracting or overdone?
- Did they use follow spots effectively/unobtrusively?

Sound Design Criteria

1. Enhance the story – creates time, place, mood. Creative use in aiding the flow of the piece.
2. Amplification (if applicable)
 - Do the voices sound natural, or are they overamplified?
 - Are the speakers placed for full coverage of the audience?
 - For musicals: does the orchestra balance with the singers and with actors speaking over underscoring?
 - Microphone placement
 - Does an actor have a giant microphone taped to their cheek in plain view of the audience? (this would normally be considered a ‘negative’, but sometimes it might be appropriate for the piece) Or do the mics blend into the costumes?

Level of Difficulty

- Obstacles inherent in presenting space
 - Room construction – it’s much harder to create intelligible sound in rooms with marble, brick, or glass than rooms with carpet or acoustical tile.
 - It’s much harder to amplify voices in the round than on a proscenium stage.
- Don’t get too “wowed” by the one great effect. One great sound effect may be impressive, but it doesn’t really compare to running 10 live mics and designing in a difficult space to make sure that every word is heard without squelch or cutting out.

Sound Design Criteria . . . (cont.)

Other things to consider:

- Sound Effects
 - Do the sound effects or music create time, place, mood and aid the flow of the piece?
 - Do the sound effects blend into the overall storytelling without drawing attention to themselves (unless called for in the script)?
- Sometimes the best sound design has nothing to do with sound effects and musical underscoring. It is often amplification that allows the audience to hear the show.
- Does the Sound Design work well in conjunction with the Lighting Design?
- Was there Pre-show/Intermission/Post-Show Music? If so, was it appropriate to the time/place of the show, or perhaps to the mood of the show?

Costumes Criteria

1. Serve the story
– consistent
and appropriate
period.
Compliment the
action. Ease of
performance.
2. Color palette
works with set
and lights.

Level of Difficulty – unusual period, large cast, many costume changes.

Authenticity

- This is one of those categories that tend to be a little upside-down. Judges tend to focus on one little detail that was wrong in a “huge” costume show and deduct points for a single oversight. “The costumes were great, but the lead actress’s shoes were wrong”. Or the third guard from the left needed his pants hemmed.
- Again, look to the playbill. If you see a long list of costumers, or special notes about certain costumes created by..., then that is a higher degree of difficulty than the cast bringing in clothes from their closets. Conversely, if you see a ton of complex costumes, and do NOT see a long list of costumers, it’s a good bet that they rented the costumes. Look for clues of that in the special notes. Renting is a lower degree of difficulty.

Makeup Design Criteria

1. Serves the story – aids projection of character. Accurate to period; consistent.
2. Incorporates six key elements of character analysis –
HEARTH
 - Heredity;
 - Environment – occupation, geography, etc;
 - Age;
 - Race;
 - Temperament – personality, emotional state; and
 - Health
3. Consistent with costumes and lights.

Level of Difficulty – specialty makeup, large casts, makeup changes (aging characters during the production)

- Take a look at lobby photos during intermission. How good was the makeup in comparison to what the actor looks like normally? Again, “alien” and “fun” makeup really isn’t that hard even though it may take a great deal of creativity. Painting someone green or aging them or changing their health is a much more subtle makeup design. And if done right, shouldn’t even be noticeable. It is your job to notice.

Hair Design Criteria

1. Serves the story – aids projection of character. Style is accurate to period and consistent.
2. Consistent with costumes and make-up.
3. Wigs are appropriate to story and stay secure throughout.

Level of Difficulty – specialty wigs, large casts, style changes (aging characters during the production)

- Similar to costumes, it is amazing how much a single “wrong” hairdo in a large cast affects a judge’s score on a hair design for a large cast or complex hair design show. Weigh the mistakes fairly in the context of level of difficulty.
- Should silly hairdos for aliens really score higher than difficult period hairdos and wigs? Nothing against silly hairdos, but level of difficulty to put gel in your hair to make it stand at an angle really isn’t that hard, especially when the whole hairdo is made up.

Special Effects Criteria

FAQ – Define “Special Effects”- particularly if not listed in program: *Was it an effect that would have required a “special dedicated technician” to design, set up and/or run?*

- **Special Effects include the following:**
 - **Pyrotechnics** (Flash, fire, sparks) but does not include strobes or fire effects when generated using lighting instruments.
 - **Rain or Water** on stage, but does not include rain, clouds, and water effects when generated using lighting instruments.
 - **Smoke and Fog** but does not include the use of haze when used to accent the lighting design.
 - **Video and Projections**, but does not include use of gobos, patterns or lighting texture.
 - **Flying of actors** (Peter Pan) **or props** (Blythe Spirit), but does not include a set that intentionally falls apart. (That’s Set Design/Construction)
- **Creative and appropriate use**
 - Did it serve the story, advancing the plot without distraction?
- **Level of Difficulty**
 - Was it safely employed?
 - Was it a large or unusual effect
 - Were you surprised?
 - Did you wonder how it was accomplished?

Overall Production Criteria

Again, remember, when considering overall production elements, each element should:

- Serve the story being told
 - Be appropriate to the piece and the presenting space (in context of director's vision)
 - Be of consistent quality throughout the piece
- Level of Difficulty must also be evaluated
- With the following considerations for each specific element:

Combat Choreography Criteria

Remember the three overriding principles!

- Safety: You should never feel that the actor is at risk of being injured; it is very good if you feel that their character is or may be. Audience should never feel unsafe.
- Appropriate: Action and weapons serve the story and staging. Fits the tone of the scene and motivation of the characters and does not disrupt the show's momentum/action. Weapons choice is appropriate to the period/setting.
- Believable: Natural transition into and out of the fight. Realistic movements and reactions. Convincing and well acted.
- **Level of Difficulty:** Three or more actors fighting together, intricate movements, variety of styles. Only consider after first three criteria are met.
- Execution: Clean movements, considerate of singing or acting while fighting.

Combat Choreography Criteria . . . *(cont'd)*

Details/Examples

Safe: In terms of audience, never point a gun, or swing a sword, toward the audience. If performing in an intimate space, people in the front row need to be as safe as those in the back. Use common sense; if it doesn't look safe, it probably isn't.

Appropriate: The length of the fight, its level of violence and the type of combat serve the staging, story, and director's vision. Too much is as inappropriate as too little. Think of it like over/underacting.

Believable: Does it fit the character? Does it look like the actors are going through the motions, or really fighting? Is each punch, kick, cut, or thrust cleanly delivered and reacted to, or does it look like a muddy jumble?

Difficulty: The greater the number of actors fighting together, the greater the difficulty. 8 actors fighting in pairs isn't much more difficult than only 2. 8 actors all fighting with each other is difficult. Think of combat like a dance; if it's too difficult for the capability of the actors, then it's not good choreography. Does the fight involve 1-2 simple moves or several intricate ones?

Suggested Weighting: Safety should be a go/no go criteria. (If it seems like it isn't safe, it should perhaps get a score of 0.) Otherwise, perhaps consider: Appropriate and Believable are each 40%, and difficulty is 20%.

Choreography Criteria

1. Does the Dance serves the story and is it appropriate to the music.
2. Composition – appropriate steps, formation work, transitions between formations as well as into and out of dances; style consistent and appropriate to the piece; overall flow within numbers as well as within the piece.
3. Execution – clean, appropriate to level of performers, considerate of singing and acting while dancing.

Level of difficulty:

- large production numbers; many numbers
- intricate styles (ballet, tap)
- creativity of style
- integrity to the score (does the dance style match the music style?)
- ***Was it a very good “copy” of the movie version of this show?***

Music Direction Criteria

1. Music serves the story – seamless from scenes into songs; sensitive to the theatrical aspects of the music; appropriate use of scene change music; tempos appropriate to flow and pace of the production
2. Vocal – balance, intonation, harmonies, diction, phrasing, rhythm, style.
3. Orchestra – balance and blend between sections, balance with singers, scale is appropriate to the piece and the space, intonation within and between sections.

IMPORTANT NOTE:

- Music Directors often have no control over sound balance! A good rule of thumb (but not absolute) is that if you cannot SEE the music director/ orchestra (it is likely they cannot hear the cast very well). *The sound balance is being controlled by the Sound person.*
- In addition, new sound technologies (like the Hearback System that some community theaters are now employing) give the entire responsibility for Sound Balance to the Sound person; the Music Director has no ability to control the balance when using these systems.

Music Direction Criteria . . . *(cont'd)*

Level of Difficulty – please consider:

- the amount of music
- size of the orchestra (lining up a large orchestra and arranging for good substitutes when the primary orchestra members cannot come is VERY time-consuming)
- complexity of the score (e.g. Sondheim vs. Rodgers and Hammerstein)
- vocals – is there a large chorus, difficult harmonies, etc.?

Direction Criteria

1. Effective storytelling. Continuity, pace, blocking.
2. Blending of technical elements. Effective use of the presenting space.
3. Vision/concept clear to cast and designers, then presented to audience as a cohesive whole. Commitment to this vision evident.
4. Appropriate casting.
5. For musicals: seamless songs and dances in the piece as the story is being told.
6. Level of Difficulty

Overall Production Criteria

1. Is the STORY told effectively, blending of technical elements and performance elements (continuity, flow, pace appropriate). Impact of the piece overall.

Level of Difficulty

- Production challenges should be considered (think musical revue vs. Les Mis, or Love Letters vs. Noises Off).
 - Beware the Halo Effect - If all of the acting was between 4 and 6, but the tech was 7 to 9 why is the show an 8. Reward the elements that were good individually, do not let great tech work carry a high overall score for a show that was just mediocre. We have actually received ballots where the highest score on the entire ballot was the overall production. Huh?

“Company Challenges”

- Level of difficulty should include the challenges of the space.
- Are you seeing the entire production from your seat? All elements? For instance, is the floor painted?
- Many companies do not have “permanent set status”, and have to remove their entire set for the week between performance weekends.
- Except for playbill, information provided to you by the company is “not official” and is provided for reference only. Please use only the information provided in the playbill to complete your ballot.

Adjudication Criteria

The awards are presented for “outstanding achievement,” not for “best”. If you keep this in mind, it makes your job easier.

- Remain true to your personal WATCH experience in theater.
- What is WATCH Community Theatre average to you?
 - Remain consistent. Stay true to your “5” throughout the season and the system will work to present an award to a deserving nominee for their outstanding work. Don’t adjust your scoring, because you feel you were too easy early or too critical early.
 - It is okay if your highest score is a “5” throughout the year.
 - Judge the production you see based on its own merits, not on expectations, historical reference of a company, or other productions of the show you have seen in the past.
 - Don’t try to rank the ten shows you saw. Judge everything based on its own merits against your own WATCH experience in community theater.

Balloting

E-balloting

- The e-ballot can be found on the website in the “Judges” area. Link provided in weekly WATCH report e-mail.
- After you submit, a print/save version of ballot is provided.
- The Tabulator will send you a e-mail confirmation of receipt (make sure your e-mail address is correct).
- If you have trouble using the e-ballot, please email Leta and she will coordinate support for your problem.
- NOTE: Fields for performers should be added as needed.

Balloting . . . *(cont'd)*

- Please fill out your ballot completely and send it as soon as possible after seeing the show *(within 10 days preferred, 30 day max)*.
- Keep a printed/saved copy of your ballot.
- Email your rep and the adjudication coordinator to let them know you saw the show.

Balloting . . . (cont'd)

- **Your SCORES will not be divulged to anyone in any context.**
 - Some people have asked us to consider providing a “composite score” to each element, but the board has continued to reject this request, believing it would only serve to undermine the WATCH mission.
 - Reps will be provided with breakouts of how their judges score “on average” in comparison to the “average of the shows” they saw. The reports are based on the previous year’s data, since the data for the current year will not be available until after tabulation in January.
- **Please do not talk about your scores with anyone.**
 - You don’t know who is listening. People will know you are a judge and they will be listening.
 - You are not restricted from talking to members of the production about your likes and dislikes, so long as that conversation does not mention scores or influence the scores you would give.
 - For example, if you did not understand the director’s vision while watching the show, but it was explained afterward and it becomes clear you must score it as if it had not been explained to you.

Balloting . . . *(cont'd)*

Audience Participation as a Judge

- Judges are neither discouraged nor encouraged to participate in shows that interact with the audience. If, as an audience member, you wish to participate or not, that is entirely up to you.
- Your role as a judge at that production has no bearing on your participation during interactive elements of the show. As such, your role as a judge should also not be used as an excuse not to participate. If you do not wish to participate, politely decline without mentioning your judge status.
- If you feel you are being singled out for participation because you are a judge, then please exercise your own judgment as to whether or not you participate (again, without identifying your judge status), and then address your concerns with your board rep the next day by phone or email. We will deal with those concerns at the board level.

Balloting . . . (cont'd)

Okay, Now For “The Big Contradiction”

- When Scoring Performances – GO WITH THE PLAYBILL!
 - List the cast the same way, in the same order and give a score to every named character (*...more about this later*)
- When Scoring Technical/Overall Elements – SCORE EVERYTHING, REGARDLESS OF THE PLAYBILL!
 - Just because the playbill editor did not mention a costume designer, doesn't mean you shouldn't score the costumes (chances are good that the actors were clothed) (*...more about this later*)

Balloting . . . (cont'd)

Scoring Performances

- PLEASE list the cast in the same order as provided in the playbill.
- If there is a “character name” please list them on the ballot even if they were “not identifiable” on stage.
- You do not need to list “groups” or “choruses”
 - If the “character” is plural (ie. Nuns, Waiters) DO NOT LIST/SCORE them.
- You do not need to score ANIMALS!
 - We all love them on stage, but unfortunately, we do not have a category for them.

Balloting . . . (cont'd)

Scoring Performances (continued)

How to deal with “one actor” performing “multiple characters”.

- The rule is *“go with the playbill”*
- If all characters performed by an actor are listed together, then list it that way on the ballot and give one score.
- If the actor’s name appears next to several separate characters, then list each character on a separate line and score each.

Balloting Test #1

- If the playbill reads...

Character

Ensemble

Sylvia, the Dog

Mary Anne Sullivan

Jon

Tom Flatt

Tom, Phyllis, Leslie

Chuck Dluhy

Photo of Sylvia, the Dog

Bella Huse (dog)

- How many times do you list Chuck Dluhy? How many scores do you give him?

Balloting Answer #1

- Correct Answer:

Character	Ensemble	M/F	L/F/C	Score
Sylvia, the Dog	Mary Anne Sullivan	F	L	8
Jon	Tom Flatt	M	L	8
Tom, Phyllis, Leslie	Chuck Dluhy	M	F	8.5

- ***Go with the playbill!*** He is listed once and gets one score for his whole performance, perhaps he deserves a higher score, for playing multiple parts (higher level of difficulty). Perhaps he gets a lower score, because he only did one part well. (p.s., Chuck, you did all the parts well!)
- Notice that the character of “Sylvia, the Dog” played by a human was scored, but the character played by a real dog was left off.

Balloting Test #2

- Here is a partial cast list from “Henry V”

Henry V, King of England

Evan Hoffmann

The Archbishop of Canterbury

Jack Seeley

Lord Scroop of Masham

Christopher Holbert

John Bates, a soldier

Christopher Holbert

Michael Williams, a soldier

Michael Sherman

The Earl of Salisbury

Sally Cusenza

English Soldiers

Christopher Holbert, Brian Garrison, Michael Sherman

The Duke of Orleans

Christopher Holbert

- How many times do you list Christopher Holbert? How many scores does he receive?

Balloting Answer #2

You would list and score Chris **three times**

- You would not list or score the “group” of English Soldiers

Henry V, King of England

The Archbishop of Canterbury

Lord Scroop of Masham

John Bates, a soldier (Cameo)

Michael Williams, a soldier

The Earl of Salisbury

English Soldiers

The Duke of Orleans

Evan Hoffmann

Jack Seeley

Christopher Holbert

Christopher Holbert

Michael Sherman

Sally Cusenza

Christopher Holbert, Brian Garrison, Michael Sherman

Christopher Holbert

Balloting Answer #2A . . . (cont'd)

If the playbill had looked like the example below, you would list and score Chris **four times** because the soldiers have “individual names”

- But perhaps his English Soldier #1 role had no lines and no real separate character, you might score him “N/I” – Not Identifiable. Even though you could figure out who he was based on his other roles, scoring his role as a knight is not necessary if it was otherwise unidentifiable.
- If you ever have questions about how to handle these types of situations, please email your board rep or Leta and ask for guidance.

Henry V, King of England
The Archbishop of Canterbury
Lord Scroop of Masham
John Bates, a soldier (Cameo)
Michael Williams, a soldier
The Earl of Salisbury
English Soldier #1
English Soldier #2
English Soldier #3
The Duke of Orleans

Evan Hoffmann
Jack Seeley
Christopher Holbert
Christopher Holbert
Michael Sherman
Sally Cusenza
Christopher Holbert
Brian Garrison
Michael Sherman
Christopher Holbert

Balloting . . . *(cont'd)*

Scoring Performances *(continued)*

How to deal with “multiple actors” performing “one character”.

- We have had circumstances where two actors split performances for various reasons (understudy, emergency etc.)
- Score the performance you saw. The ballots will be tabulated as if only one person performed that character and any “special arrangements” would be made if required during tabulation should the performance get a nomination or award.

Balloting . . . (cont'd)

Scoring Performances (continued)

- READ the words - they really help with the scale.
- What is the scale? 1 to 10, 10 is the highest.

- | | |
|---|--------------------------------|
| • 10 – Excellent/Highest Possible Quality | • 5 – Average |
| • 9.5 | • 4.5 |
| • 9 – Outstanding/Remarkably High Quality | • 4 – Fair |
| • 8.5 | • 3.5 |
| • 8 – Superior/Remarkably Above Average | • 3 – Noticeably below average |
| • 7.5 | • 2.5 |
| • 7 – Noticeably above average | • 2 – Poor |
| • 6.5 | • 1.5 |
| • 6 – Slightly above average | • 1 – Did not meet criteria |
| • 5.5 | • N/I – Not identifiable |

Balloting . . . (cont'd)

Scoring Performances (continued)

- Based on the criteria and level of difficulty
- Based on your WATCH experience
- Score performances in the context of what is “average” to you.
- Don't be afraid to give a 1 or a 10 if you feel the performance and level of difficulty deserve it.
- And if you can't identify someone, select N/I for “not identifiable”. *And only list them on the ballot if they had a character name.*

Balloting . . . *(cont'd)*

Also on the ballot...

- You will be asked to identify the sex of each actor
(regardless of the character they portrayed)
- Select “L” for all actors in Lead Roles:
 - What is a lead role:
 - Who the story is about or whose presence is primary to the piece.
 - NOTE: There may be multiple leads by gender, or none at all – depending on the piece.
 - Seven or more judges must agree on “lead” designation.

Balloting . . . (cont'd)

Select “C” for ALL actors in Cameo Roles:

- ***What is a cameo?***
 - A small but very memorable performances by an performer with limited stage time.
 - For example: in a musical, the incidental character appearing in one scene with a memorable song or production number; in a comedy, the incidental character who appears in, and steals, a single scene; in a drama, the incidental character who delivers a single pivotal monologue.
- The threshold for cameo designation shifts based on tabulation results. Judges have a lot more trouble designating Cameos vs. Leads.
- Designate ALL Cameo performances with a “C”.
 - All Performances not designated as a lead or cameo are considered “Featured Actors.”

Balloting . . . *(cont'd)*

Why do we have a cameo award?

- The size of the featured category made it very difficult for a “very small” role to be recognized for an award given the criteria and “level of difficulty.”
- The “Judi Dench” scenario. We would rather see a role like the Queen in “Shakespeare in Love” take home a cameo award for her performance rather than the “featured actress” award.
- Only two awards will be presented, Cameo in a Musical and Cameo in a Play. There is no division between Actor or Actress.

Special Circumstances

What about productions that are compilations of “one-acts”?

- For example “Plaza Suite” or “Actor’s Nightmare/Sister Mary Ignatius...”
- The rule is *go with the playbill*, if characters are listed separately then give each a score.
- The real quandary is determining “leads.” Does a character that appeared in one-act of a production constitute a leading role in the production? We leave it to you to weigh that in the context of the criteria. If seven of ten judges agree that the character was a “lead” then it would be considered for the lead category.
 - A good rule of thumb – Was the character principal to the story for at least 2/3-3/4 of the “entire production”? If so, then they could be considered a lead.

Balloting . . . *(cont'd)*

Scoring Technical Elements and Overall Production Elements

- Provide a score for every element, whether it is listed in the playbill or not.
- If the play or musical does not have that element, designate N/A for Not Applicable.
 - For instance, plays do not usually have “Musical Directors” or “Choreography”
 - Many productions will not have stage combat or special effects.
- If the element exists, give it a score (even if it is not listed in the playbill).
 - Just because someone was omitted from the program, does not mean we should overlook scoring their work.
 - Not surprisingly, playbill editing gets better with each year a group is in WATCH.

Balloting Test #3

Your playbill comes to you with the following crew list, followed by a blank page

Producer Eileen Mullee

Director David Sher

Stage Manager Hilary Huse

Set Design David Sher, Eileen Mullee, Mike Schlabach, Jeff Boatright

Set Construction

Master Carpenter Mike Schlabach

Assisted by Rich Klare, Marty Sullivan, Eileen Mullee, Cyndi Plourde, Laura Baughman, Skip Gresko, Maura Stadem, Titus Dickens, Gina Gabay, Carter Jaqueth, Eliza Wolfe

Set Painting Cathy Rieder

Assisted by Eileen Mullee, Laura Baughman, Gina Gabay, Cyndi Plourde

- ***Who do you list and score for Set Design, Set Construction, and Set Painting?***
- ***Should you list and score Costumes, Lights, Combat Choreography, Music Direction?***

Balloting Answer #3

First of all, ask for a new playbill, if you think a printing error has been made. But, score EVERYTHING you see, regardless of playbill omissions.

Set Design	David Sher, et.al	7
Set Construction	Mike Schlabach	6.5
Set Painting	Cathy Rieder	6
Costumes	Not Listed	8.5
Makeup	Not Listed	5
Hair	Not Listed	6.5

You would also list and score (lights, props, set dressing, sound, and special effects)

Combat Choreo.	Not Listed	9.5
Music Direction	Not Listed	N/A
Choreography	Not Listed	N/A
Director	David Sher	8

Balloting . . . *(cont'd)*

Scoring Technical and Overall Elements

- Based on the criteria
- Based on your WATCH experience
- Score these elements in the context of what is “average” to you.
- Don’t be afraid to give a 1 or a 10 if you feel the element and the level of difficulty deserves it.
- EVERY ELEMENT should have a score or N/A selected.
- Adjudicate each element separately in accordance with the criteria. Do not fall into the trap of scoring all elements high or low based on the overall production.

Balloting . . . (cont'd)

The Adjudicator's Comments

- Beginning in Jan. 2011, WATCH included a “comment” box on the ballot.
- Judges have the **OPTION** of including **constructive comments** with their ballot.
 - Maximum of 500 characters (not 500 “words”).
 - Any comments that are submitted will be offered to the companies on a quarterly basis.
 - Please consider submitting comments that the company might find useful in the future, such as trouble hearing the actors, or sight line issues with the set. “The dress on the lead actress wasn’t pretty” isn’t information the company can use to improve future performances.

Balloting . . . *(cont'd)*

Most common mistakes... try to avoid them.

- Type your e-mail address correctly on the e-ballot (*hard to send you a confirmation without it*).
- Enter your own company correctly (*hard to send a confirmation to your rep without it*).
- List the cast in the same order as the playbill.
- Please don't enter scores from groups or ensembles.

We Challenge ALL of You...

Be a Tough Judge!

- Just because you enjoyed the whole evening of theater, doesn't mean every element and every performance deserved a 10. No show has a "10-worthy" degree of difficulty on every element/performance.
 - Don't laugh... we have received ballots with ALL 10s.
 - It is what we call the Halo Effect. It affects every award system (Oscars, Tonys, Helen Hayes). The overall quality of the piece carries with it a bunch of nominations and awards for good work but at differing degrees of difficulty.
- *If you are giving a 7 or higher*, you are saying that the performance or element is worthy of a nomination.
- *If you are giving an 8 or 9*, you are saying you believe it to be award-worthy.
- *If you are giving a 10*, you are saying this was the most incredible artistic performance or element you have ever seen/heard for an incredibly difficult piece, and clearly deserving of an award.

Be a Tough Judge!

- This is one of the reasons we only have 4 judges per theater. A smaller corps of tougher judges means their ballots carry more weight in the system as a whole.
- Remember, you are getting a free ticket because you are there to do a job... not just enjoy a play or musical.
- It is okay to give lots of 5s.
 - 5 means it was good, it neither impressed you, nor offended you.
 - 5 is a fine score, and since no one is going to see your scores, don't be afraid to over-use your fives.
 - 6 means it positively caught your attention.
 - And 7 and up, means it was special or the level of difficulty was so high that “good” was now 6 rather than just 5.
 - And if it wasn't good... score it BELOW 5!
- Your 7s and above should be for special performances and technical achievements.

Do's and . . .

DO

- ✓ Do make reservations early.
- ✓ Do stay true to your “5” throughout the season.
- ✓ Do submit ballots promptly.
- ✓ Do keep copies of your ballots.
- ✓ Do give a 1 or a 10, if deserved.
- ✓ Do mark all elements, even if it is “not identifiable” or “not applicable.”
- ✓ Do use the playbill to help determine balloting of performances.
- ✓ Do score all technical elements that you see on stage, regardless if they are listed in the playbill or not.
- ✓ Do arrange for alternate judges with your representative early, if needed.
- ✓ Do keep the Adjudication Coordinator and your company rep informed of your status on fulfilling your commitment.

. . . Don'ts

DON'T

- ✓ Don't get frustrated with box office personnel.
- ✓ Don't be late to a performance.
- ✓ Don't leave a performance early.
- ✓ Don't overlook a technical element simply because it is not in the playbill.
- ✓ Don't base your scores on your feelings about "the script", or allow yourself to be offended by "the content."
- ✓ Don't base your scores on prior association with performers or technicians. Score the production elements you see in THIS production.
- ✓ Don't score productions against each other.