



PARTICIPATING SCHOOL HANDBOOK

PAPER MILL PLAYHOUSE

Dear Theater Educator,

Welcome to the 31st season of the Rising Star Awards program! We are thrilled to have you join us for another year of celebrating the remarkable work happening in high school musical theater across the state of New Jersey. Each season reminds us that producing a musical is an act of courage, creativity, and profound dedication; the impact you have on your students lasts far beyond the final bow.

We know that arts educators are doing extraordinary work in a time when the arts and education sectors face real pressures and uncertainties. Your commitment to bringing high-quality, joyful, and meaningful theater experiences to young people is invaluable. We are deeply grateful for the care, mentorship, and inspiration you provide every day. This program exists because of you, and because of the students whose passion lights up every stage.

As we enter this new season, we want to share that the Rising Star Awards is beginning a long-term evolution—one that lifts up the collaborative spirit of theater and celebrates the ensemble-driven and social-emotional skills students learn through this art form. While the award categories will remain the same this year, we are thoughtfully shaping the future of the program to highlight all facets of student achievement and the collective excellence that defines musical theater. You'll see more of this direction in the coming seasons, and we look forward to including your input to shape future iterations of this beloved program.

This year, the program is proudly led by a dedicated team:

- **Kira Harris**, Rising Star Awards Coordinator, who will be your primary liaison throughout the season;
- **Alexis Slade**, Senior Manager of Outreach Programs, who oversees the Rising Star Awards and ensures the program continues to grow and thrive;
- **Michelle Tempkin**, Education Administrative Manager, who supports the many details that keep the program running smoothly; and
- A caring cohort of **60 adjudicators**, whose expertise in musical theater and arts education help us provide constructive feedback and recognition.

Our team will be in touch regularly as the season unfolds, and we can be reached at risingstarawards@papermill.org

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We are also fortunate to be supported by colleagues across Paper Mill Playhouse—including our artistic, marketing, development, production, and audience experience teams—who help bring the Rising Star Awards celebration to life.

We are deeply grateful to the generous supporters who make the Rising Star Awards possible. The program is presented by the **Investors Foundation** and the **Citizens Philanthropic Foundation**, with additional support from The Blanche and Irving Laurie Foundation.

Rising Star Scholarships are made possible through the generosity of Ruth Bedford in memory of Jane Burgio, Walt Santner in honor of Janet Sovey and in memory of his father and husband, James K. Mosser, and the Douglas Michael Krueger Scholarship Fund Trust. The Theater for Everyone Inclusion & Access Award is supported by the Cultural Access Network. We also thank **Hearst Foundations**, the Education & Outreach Partner of Paper Mill Playhouse, for their steadfast commitment to arts education and to the students and communities we serve.

To support your participation, we've created this handbook to guide you through each step of the process, including a detailed timeline for the season. We hope it provides clarity, reduces stress, and sets you and your students up for a successful experience. The season will culminate in our **Rising Star Awards ceremony on June 9 at 7:30 PM** at Paper Mill Playhouse, where we look forward to gathering as a community to celebrate your students' achievements.

Thank you for the artistry, imagination, and leadership you bring to your students and your school communities. We can't wait to celebrate the magic you create.

Warmly,



Paul B. McGinley
Director of Education
Paper Mill Playhouse

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SEASON TIMELINE

Below is the timeline for the 2026 Rising Star Awards season. You'll find a full list of deadlines in the participation checklist that follows.

DECEMBER 1, 2025	Registration opens
JANUARY 9, 2026	Registration closes at end of day
JANUARY 16	Paper Mill publishes list of participating schools
JANUARY 22	Adjudication phase begins for performances
JANUARY 30	Applications open for Spotlight Awards (formerly Auxiliary Awards), including Outstanding Solo Performance
APRIL 19	Adjudication phase concludes
APRIL 24	Applications for Spotlight Awards close
APRIL 26 – MAY 11	Award nomination period
MAY 11	Final Nominations announced
	Awards Ceremony tickets on sale
	Scholarship recipients notified
MAY 20	Performance response forms distributed* Change for 2026: Forms will be sent on this date rather than on a rolling basis.
JUNE 9	2026 Paper Mill Playhouse Rising Star Awards Ceremony

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PARTICIPANT CHECKLIST

✓	Task	Deadline
	Register for Performance Adjudication <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Complete online form - Receive confirmation & invoice - Pay registration fee 	January 9, 2026
	New for 2026: Submit Production Details*	2 weeks prior to opening night
	Confirm ticket reservations	
	Film video footage of dress rehearsal or performance	Closing night
	Take production photos	
	Submit support materials (video, photo, etc.)	April 24, 5pm
	Submit Auxiliary Award Applications	
	Review nominations when announced	May 11
	Change for 2026: Receive performance adjudication form and review with participants	May 20
	Reserve tickets for the Awards Ceremony	By May 22
	Attend the Awards Ceremony	June 9, 7:30pm

*Submit Production Details: We will provide a Google Doc template to be completed.

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ADJUDICATION PROCESS

Rising Star Awards is comprised of two rounds of competition: production and nomination.

The Production Round

The first round consists of Adjudicators attending school productions. Paper Mill Playhouse sends three Adjudicators to attend each participating school's production. Adjudicators submit Performance Response Forms to assess the production. They score elements of the production using specific [Standards of Excellence](#) in each performance and production category. Adjudicators provide comments on the high points of the production as well as identify areas for improvement. The Standards of Excellence rubrics are included in this handbook for reference. Adjudicator reports will be shared with the participating school's primary contact on May 20, 2026.

A note on adjudicators: PMP works with approximately 60 carefully screened adjudicators across the state of New Jersey. These individuals have been selected by the Education department to build a group with a significant depth and breadth of experience and knowledge, and a diverse collection of perspectives. This includes performers, educators, directors, designers, college and graduate students, and more. Via their Adjudicator Handbook and Pre-Season Information Session, Adjudicators are tasked with assessing the creativity and craftsmanship of productions and performances in a manner that embodies "**Coach, not critic**". This includes, but is not limited to:

- Weighing the merits of each show without comparison to professional, community, or other HS shows
- Providing a productive analysis of *specific* production elements
- Utilizing language that is both constructive and comprehensible for educators and students

In addition to thoroughly screening and training adjudicators prior to the start of the production period, the PMP team also closely monitors and supports the efforts of adjudicators during and after the production period to ensure a positive and equitable experience for all, for this season and seasons to come.

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The Nomination Round

The nomination round begins after all response forms are received from adjudicators. The Nomination Committee identifies nominees based on the [Standards of Excellence](#). Once the nominations are determined, adjudicators review support material provided by the schools and vote for award recipients. A separate independent committee reviews scholarship applications and applications for Spotlight Awards (formerly Auxiliary Awards).

All nominees are invited to attend the Paper Mill Playhouse Rising Star Awards, where the award recipients are announced and nominees in certain categories perform selections from their shows.

All decisions of the Nomination Committee are final.

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CATEGORY GUIDELINES

- **Our “Role Breakdown” document lists eligible characters for each Rising Star performance category.** This will be shared with schools to populate Production Details. For example, “Maria” is the Performer in a Female-Identified Leading Role in WEST SIDE STORY, while the character “Anita” is the Performer in a Female-Identified Supporting Role. Final determination of placement of characters will ultimately be decided by Paper Mill Playhouse. If a character’s part is changed in a way that differs from the script, Paper Mill may disqualify or reassign the role to a different category.
- **A Program Director may appeal a role’s categorization on the breakdown.** If you strongly believe a role more appropriately belongs in a different category, contact us when submitting production details. Paper Mill staff will make a final ruling and adjust the breakdown as well as alert other schools who may be impacted by the change.
- **If your production will have multiple casts, you must choose a “Designated Cast,” to be entered in the Rising Star Awards and provide us with at least two public performances of the Designated Cast’s performance date(s).** Please determine which cast best represents the efforts of your school. Once submitted, the dates of the Designated Cast performances cannot be changed.
- **Adjudicators will score at least two roles in the category of Featured Performer.** You will designate what these two roles will be in the Production Details document. It is highly encouraged that these roles be identified in the program.
- **Featured Ensemble Member is identified by Program Director before full-performance adjudication.** A featured ensemble member is a performer who spends most of their time in the ensemble but has one or more featured moments (a classic example is the Star-To-Be in ANNIE). Submissions for this category will occur when you submit all other Production Details in January. Note: this category formerly required a separate application.
- **Featured Ensemble Groups may be unique to your production.** If you choose to cast a Featured Ensemble Group that is not in the Role Breakdown (e.g. a corps of dancers who appear in every big number) you will have the opportunity to note this on the Production Details Form.
- **Casting adult or child performers could affect eligibility.** We define adults as someone who has graduated from high school or a home-schooled individual age 18+. We define a child performer as someone younger than 9th grade. Consideration in certain categories could be affected by casting, up to and including the Outstanding Overall Production category. Contact us to discuss your circumstance. Paper Mill Playhouse will make determinations on a case-by-case basis as they arise, and all decisions will be final.

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- **Eligibility for Outstanding Achievement by an Orchestra requires 75% student participation.** Student musicians must be currently enrolled in high school. School alumni or college age musicians are not considered student musicians. Determination of eligibility in this category will be made by Paper Mill Playhouse based on information provided in the school's production details and program listings.
- **Eligibility for Orchestra and Music Direction categories requires live accompaniment.** Schools that use exclusively recorded tracks will be ineligible in the Orchestra and Music Direction categories.
- **Participation in other Paper Mill Playhouse programs could affect eligibility to participate in the Rising Star Awards.** In the event a Paper Mill Playhouse residency, workshop, or activity lends assistance or provides guidance affecting a Rising Star Awards category, the work is not eligible for nomination. For example – a school receiving a dance or choreography residency, where the content of the residency specifically addresses the choreography of their musical production, would not be eligible for nomination in the category of Outstanding Achievement in Choreography.
- **Paper Mill Playhouse employees are not eligible to compete in the Rising Star Awards.** This applies to all roles on a school production, including directors, choreographers, musical directors designers, or other positions on the creative or technical staff of a participating production. Contact us with specific questions as needed.

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TICKETING AND ADJUDICATOR ATTENDANCE

- Three (3) Adjudicators representing Paper Mill Playhouse will attend a public performance of your production. **We will reserve a maximum of six (6) complimentary tickets (2 per Adjudicator) on behalf of each Adjudicator and their guest.** If a guest cancels and will not accompany the Adjudicator to the production, that Adjudicator will inform the box office that one seat may be released upon picking up their reserved ticket.
- **Hold six (6) tickets to each performance until specific reservations are confirmed.** We aim to confirm tickets two weeks prior to performance dates. Tickets will be reserved under a name other than Paper Mill Playhouse that will be known only to the school's ticket coordinator, Adjudicators and Paper Mill Playhouse Education staff. Adjudicators will pick up the reserved tickets immediately prior to their assigned performance. Please do not mail tickets to Paper Mill Playhouse.
- **If an Adjudicator is unable to attend an assigned performance,** we will attempt to re-assign an Adjudicator to another performance. If Adjudicator attendance makes rendering a fair assessment of the live production impossible, the nomination committee will view a recording of the show.
- If you believe an Adjudicator did not attend a scheduled performance, contact the Rising Star Coordinator as soon as possible. We aim to respond within the same day we're contacted during the adjudication period. Adjudicators are also required to notify Paper Mill Playhouse if they are unable to attend a performance so that a replacement Adjudicator can be assigned. We will contact you to coordinate ticket arrangements as needed. Every attempt will be made to re-schedule Adjudicators in the event of inclement weather or cancelled performances. The full inclement weather policy can be found in the appendix of this handbook.
- **Adjudicators attend performances anonymously** so that they can fairly evaluate the production without lobbying from cast members' families and friends. Roping off or placing reserved signs on seats that read "Paper Mill Playhouse Adjudicators" is strongly discouraged. Please note that adjudicators may change their seat locations during the show.
- **We are committed to maintaining objectivity and impartiality among our Adjudicators.** Adjudicators who have any professional or personal relationship with individuals at a given school will not be assigned to evaluate that school's production. Additionally, Paper Mill Playhouse makes every effort to rotate assignments so that the same Adjudicators do not evaluate the same school in consecutive years.
- **Please have a printed copy of the program available for each Adjudicator. Even if the program is digital, Adjudicators will need a printed copy.**

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DIGITAL RECORDING AND SUPPORT MATERIALS

Submitting your digital recording and production photos is a key responsibility for participating in the Rising Star Awards. These materials help the Nomination Committee fully understand your production and support the Adjudicators' observations. Schools that do not submit their materials by April 24 cannot be considered for nominations.

Many successful productions assign a small team to document rehearsals and performances so they can present their work clearly to the Committee. All schools must submit support materials to be eligible for Final Nominations.

You will receive a dedicated folder for uploading all required materials. Please begin adding items as soon as you can and complete your uploads no later than April 24, 2026 at 5:00 PM.

WHAT TO SUBMIT

☐ **Video of the entire performance**

We encourage you to film in a way that helps us clearly see your performers. Position the camera thoughtfully and adjust it as needed throughout the show— even occasional zooming makes a big difference. While video quality does not impact nomination eligibility, clearer footage allows us to better appreciate your students' work.

☐ **High resolution digital image of the show poster/artwork**

☐ **Cast and production staff list**

☐ **10 production photos** for each of the following categories:

- Hair & Makeup: Photos must be taken during the production
- Costumes: Photos must be taken during the production
- Lighting: Photos of the finished lighting looks, taken without performers onstage
- Scenic Elements: Photos of the finished set, taken without performers onstage

☐ **2 photos** from a dress rehearsal, performance, or photo call for each of the following categories:

- Each Performer in a Leading Role
- Each Performer in a Supporting Role
- Each Featured Performer
- Any Ensemble Member nominated by Program Director
- Each Ensemble Group
- Chorus

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SPOTLIGHT AWARDS (FORMERLY “AUXILIARY AWARDS”)

This year, we’re reintroducing our special recognition categories! **Spotlight Awards** (formerly Auxiliary Awards) honor the many ways students, educators, and school communities create exceptional musical theater. These application-based awards celebrate performance, leadership, learning, inclusion, and artistic excellence across your production.

Full guidelines will be released on **January 30, 2026**, but the overview below can help you begin planning.

Spotlight Award Categories

- **Rising Star College Scholarships**
Supports graduating seniors who intend to study theater or technical theater in college and have participated in a Rising Star production.
Prize: Cash scholarship.
- **Outstanding Solo Performance Award**
Recognizes individual students for exceptional solo musical theater work, including from schools not submitting a full production.
Prize: Scholarship consideration for Paper Mill Playhouse’s Summer Musical Theater Conservatory.
- **Featured Ensemble Member Award**
Highlights an individual ensemble member whose performance stands out for storytelling, commitment, and ensemble excellence.
Prize: Recognition at the Rising Star Awards; submitted as part of **Production Details** in January prior to full adjudication.
- **Educational Impact Award**
Honors a school that meaningfully connects its musical to academic learning with clear, documented outcomes.
Prize: Cash prize to support arts-in-education efforts.
- **Student Achievement Award**
Celebrates backstage and offstage student leaders—including stage managers, designers, technicians, directors, choreographers, marketers, and more.
Prize: Up to three recognized nominees per school.
- **Rising Star “Theater for Everyone” Inclusion & Access Award**
Recognizes a school that models inclusive practices for students and adults with disabilities and ensures accessible experiences for audiences.
Prize: Cash prize to support inclusion and access efforts.

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- **Outstanding Educator Award**

Honors an educator who brings the transformative power of theater into their students' learning and lives, nominated by a colleague or supervisor.

Prize: Cash prize recognizing exemplary educational impact.

Complete details, application links, and submission requirements for all **Spotlight Awards** and scholarships will be available on **January 30, 2026**.

Until then, you may begin identifying potential nominees, gathering sample materials, and documenting production processes so you are ready to submit strong applications once the portal opens.

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NOMINATIONS & AWARDS CEREMONY

Final Nominations

- All nominations and honorable mentions will be announced on Paper Mill's website Monday, May 11.
- Nominees in the categories of *Outstanding Performer in a Leading Role* receive a full scholarship to attend our 2026 Summer Musical Theater Conservatory.
- Nominees in the categories of *Outstanding Performer in a Supporting Role* receive a 50% scholarship to attend our 2026 Summer Musical Theater Conservatory.

Paper Mill Conservatory students participate in singing, acting, and dance classes and attend guest artist workshops conducted by actors, directors, designers, and casting agents. Each student also receives a private voice lesson once a week during the program. The final week of the Conservatory is devoted to rehearsals for the annual "New Voices Concert" that showcases the students on the Paper Mill Playhouse stage. The dates of the 2026 program are June 29 to August 1.

Awards Ceremony

- **The Awards Ceremony will be held at Paper Mill Playhouse on June 9th.**
- The ceremony features performances of production numbers from nominated productions and musical selections performed by nominees in the Lead Performer categories.
 - **Schools nominated in the Outstanding Overall Production Category will present one (1) musical number from their production at the Awards Ceremony in June.** Final selection of the number will be made by the nominated school and Paper Mill Playhouse. No scenic elements may be used in the performance. Students may bring costumes and hand props that can be easily transported to Paper Mill Playhouse. Because dressing room space is limited, students should plan to wear their costumes for the duration of the ceremony.
 - **Lead Performer nominees will perform in a medley arranged by Paper Mill Playhouse at the Awards Ceremony.** Rehearsal time is scheduled on the day of the Awards Ceremony. The featured song will be decided by Paper Mill Playhouse; you will provide sheet music as needed.
- **Tickets to the Awards Ceremony will be allocated to schools receiving Final Nominations based on the overall number of nominations received. Full details regarding ticketing procedures will be made available in May 2026.**

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THE SHOW STOCK EXCHANGE

We are pleased to facilitate The Show Stock Exchange, an initiative that helps schools share information about available costumes, props, and set pieces from past productions.

Schools may lend or rent items directly to one another, and all terms must be negotiated between the participating parties. Paper Mill Playhouse does not broker exchanges or set guidelines for transactions; we simply provide the information to help schools connect.

Indicate interest in this initiative during registration. We will follow up with schools that opt-in to the initiative.

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WEATHER & EMERGENCY CANCELLATION POLICY

If your performance is affected by weather or unexpected closures, please follow the guidelines below so we can support you and your Adjudicators effectively.

Communicate about possible weather cancellations

If significant weather is forecast during your performance weekend, the Rising Star Coordinator, Kira Harris, will contact you by phone or email to discuss when you may announce a cancellation and whether you have designated snow dates.

Notify us immediately about all cancellations

If you anticipate a cancellation for any reason—weather, illness, or other issues—contact Kira as early as possible, even if the decision is not yet final.

State of Emergency procedures

If the Governor of New Jersey declares a State of Emergency, all public events must be cancelled. Rising Star Adjudicators will not attend performances during this period.

When weather varies by region

Weather conditions can differ across the state. If an Adjudicator cannot safely reach your school, we will attempt to send a replacement during the same performance or another performance in your run.

Make-up performances and Adjudicator availability

Adjudicators are scheduled every weekend throughout the spring. If your show is rescheduled, we cannot guarantee the same Adjudicators will be available. We will make every effort to ensure your production is seen by three Adjudicators, but confirming coverage may take time.

Contact us

Kira checks messages regularly throughout weekends during the Rising Star season and keeps your contact information on hand. Email is the quickest way to reach her, but she is always happy to take your call.

Kira Harris

Paper Mill Playhouse -- Rising Star Awards Coordinator

Phone: (973) 315-1670, risingstarawards@papermill.org

RISING STAR AWARDS: STANDARDS OF EXCELLENCE

Please review the rubrics below to understand what the Rising Star Adjudicators will evaluate in each award category.

NOTE: For 2026 the rubric scale has been revised so that 1 is lowest and 5 is highest, reversing the previous scoring.

PERFORMANCE CATEGORIES					
CRITERIA	1 Needs Improvement	2 Satisfactory	3 Good	4 Excellent	5 Outstanding
ACTING · Dialogue/Interpretation · Relationships · Objective	-Little to no evidence of understanding of text -Little to no evidence of relationships with other characters -Little to no evidence of character's objective(s)	-Inconsistent understanding of text -Some relationships created with other characters -Some understanding of character's objective(s)	-Clear understanding of text -Clear relationships are created -Clear understanding of character's objective(s) and motivation(s)	-Understands entirety of their text -Understanding of relationships affects tenor of action and dialogue with different characters -Understanding of objective(s) and motivation(s) lead to specific choices	Complete understanding of dialogue and character creates a three-dimensional character with believable relationships
VOCAL PERFORMANCE · Clarity/Diction · Pitch/Tonality · Breath Support	-Lyrics/text are unintelligible -Pitch and tone are consistently inaccurate -No breath support	-Lyrics/text are occasionally intelligible -Pitch and tone are occasionally accurate -Sound is sometimes supported by breath	-Lyrics/text are almost always intelligible -Pitch and tone are almost always accurate -Sound is almost always supported by breath	-Lyrics/text are always intelligible -Pitch and tone are always accurate -Excellent breath support	Actors are fully understood and achieve outstanding pitch and tone fully supported by breath throughout the performance.
PHYSICALIZATION · Choreography · Movement	-Movement is awkward or unmotivated; lacks grounding; gestures are unclear or nonexistent -Stumbles over staging/choreography with no sense of center of gravity	-Moves with ease and is mostly grounded in all physical movement; gestures are motivated by basic emphasis and understanding of the character's objective -Able to execute basic staging and/or choreography with beginning level technique	-Movement is grounded and tension free with uninhibited execution of gestures motivated by an understanding of the character's objective -Demonstrates an introductory understanding of one's own physical vocabulary as well as the ability to utilize the body to more fully inhabit the character. Has a primary sense of center of gravity	-Movement is grounded, free of tension, motivated by an understanding of the character's objective, and infused with energy appropriate to the moment -Executes staging/choreography with strong technique, detail, and character development	-Movement reflects grounded and specific story telling with a strong objective, lack of tension, and gestures that detail the energy of the piece. -Staging/Choreography is flawlessly executed demonstrating advanced technique and mastery of physical vocabulary to develop a character
ARTISTRY · Preparedness · Focus · Energy	-Performer unmotivated and lacks confidence -Does not appear invested in the moment -Appears lethargic or unanimated	-Performer struggles with memorization and appears tentative -Sometimes appears invested in moment -Occasionally shows bursts of energy/animation but doesn't maintain the appropriate level throughout	-Performer is mostly memorized; movement feels stiff or unmotivated -Appears invested in moment most of the time -Demonstrates an appropriate level of energy and animation some of the time	-Performer is fully memorized and movement almost always feels natural -Investment in the scene adds to the story and/or world-building -Maintains appropriate level of animation and energy throughout performance	Outstanding level of animation and energy is maintained throughout the performance and sustains investment in scenes which enhances the overall impact of performance as a result of being well-prepared

DIRECTION

CRITERIA	1 Needs Improvement	2 Satisfactory	3 Good	4 Excellent	5 Outstanding
INTERPRETATION/ARTISTRY · Plot · Themes · Stylization & Specificity	-Does not demonstrate understanding of plot -Does not demonstrate understanding of themes -Does not demonstrate a clear concept	-Demonstrates basic understanding of plot -Demonstrates basic understanding of themes -Demonstrates little creative style or concept	-Plot communicated clearly/effectively -Themes expressed clearly -Concept present but underdeveloped	-Plot communicated clearly with attention to time period and location -Themes expressed thoughtfully with nuance -Concept enhances storytelling	Complete understanding of plot and themes communicated to audience through clear, creative and well-executed concept.
STAGING · Blocking · Transitions · Utilization of space	-Scenes are presented with little to no blocking -Transitions are awkward, long -Spaces available are not used effectively	-Scenes contain some blocking, but it is unmotivated or distracting -Transitions appear orchestrated, but messy -Some spaces are used effectively but not all	-Scenes contain blocking that support the storytelling -Transitions are well-orchestrated and efficient -All available spaces are utilized	-Scenes contain motivated blocking that adds layers to the storytelling -Transitions are smoothly executed and creative -All available spaces are creatively optimized to create compelling stage pictures	Full cohesion of motivated blocking, creative/swift transitions, and dynamic stage pictures contribute to the storytelling and propel the action forward
PERFORMANCE COACHING · Characterization · Dialogue	-Little to no evidence of objectives and motivations -Performers don't demonstrate understanding of text	-Occasional evidence of objectives and motivations -Inconsistent understanding of text within performances and across the cast	-Majority of performers demonstrate clear understanding of motivations and objectives -Most of the performers understand most of their text	-Understanding of motivations/objectives lead to believable relationships -Each performer understands entirety of their text	Consistent character work is evident through full cohesion of characterization and dialogue delivery.
COLLABORATION/COORDINATION · Coordination of tech elements	-1 or more elements (scenic, HMU, lighting, costumes) completely absent	-All elements have been taken into consideration, but there is disconnect between two or more	-All elements have been given uniform consideration and meet the needs of the script	-All elements contribute to the story telling	Full cohesion of all technical elements effectively communicates director's vision and propel story forward

CHOREOGRAPHY

CRITERIA	1 Needs Improvement	2 Satisfactory	3 Good	4 Excellent	5 Outstanding
EXECUTION · Difficulty · Technique · Accuracy	-Choreography is below the skill level of the performers -No demonstration of dance technique -Numbers appear unrehearsed	-Choreography is simple and tailored to the abilities of the cast -The company exhibits some demonstration of dance technique as it pertains to body alignment -Performers know steps but lack uniformity, precision, timing, or confidence	-Choreography is a surmountable challenge with student dancers meeting that challenge -The company exhibits adequate demonstration of proper technique with an effort toward correct body alignment and core balance -Accurate and confident performance of steps, mostly uniform with minor errors in uniformity, precision, or timing	-Choreography is challenging and students meet the challenge; stronger dancers have featured moments utilizing a more advanced level of technique. -The company exhibits proper technique with correct alignment and an engaged core. -Full company executes choreography with confidence and accuracy while displaying precision and timing.	Challenging choreography is performed with proper technique, correct physical alignment and core engagement in unison across the entire company; choreography is layered so that every student is working to their fullest potential.
USE OF SPACE · Physical Pictures · Patterns	-Numbers are performed with little to no sense of spacing -No use of patterns or formations	-Some sense of spacing is noticeable but physical pictures are unbalanced and inconsistent -Some effort to create simple patterns and formations is evident	-Physical pictures are balanced, spacing is consistent, and cast is fully visible -Patterns and formations are interesting, and appealing with a nod toward strong spatial awareness	-Physical pictures are balanced and consistent with cast fully visible; Integration of set levels and props to create interesting cohesive visuals -Patterns and formations are interesting and support the story with evidence toward strong spatial awareness	Variety of steps/combinations in conjunction with interesting/creative patterns create a dynamic visual experience. Stage and set levels are fully utilized to create dynamic physical pictures in conjunction with creative patterns which integrate seamlessly into scenes and numbers and allow for a dynamic visual experience.
ARTISTRY · Style · Storytelling · Transitions	-No evidence of dance style as it pertains to era, show themes, or musical genre -Dance phrases are repeated throughout show with no variety, creativity, or sense of furthering the plot -Numbers feel disjointed from scenes with no sense of the two being integrated	-Choreographic effort is made to produce style influenced by era, thematic content, or musical genre -Some effort to vary steps/combinations is present -Some attention paid to transition in and out of numbers and from scene to scene	-Choreography is appropriate for the style of the show and is influenced by era, thematic content, and/or musical genre -A strong effort to add variety in steps/combinations is present to support story/theme -Strong attention paid where transitions flow from scene to song	-Choreography is appropriate for the style of the show, is influenced by era, thematic content, and/or musical genre and shows the choreographer's perspective in the overall telling of the physical story. -An effective effort to utilize variety of steps/combinations is employed to advance the plot and support themes. -Seamless transitions are choreographed and executed in the energy of the show with songs and scenes integrated to further the plot	Authenticity in the choreographic styling is paramount in both the choreographer's perspective and in telling one, cohesive story where scene and songs seamlessly transition from beginning to end.

MUSIC DIRECTION

CRITERIA	1 Needs Improvement	2 Satisfactory	3 Good	4 Excellent	5 Outstanding
MUSICIANSHIP/EXECUTION <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Diction · Breathing · Pitch · Harmonic parts · Tempi 	-Lyrics are unintelligible -Breath support is insufficient across the cast -Pitches are consistently inaccurate -No harmonic parts are executed -Tempo is consistently inaccurate/disjointed	-Lyrics are occasionally intelligible -Breath support is insufficient in some of the cast -Pitches are occasionally accurate -Some attempt at harmonies are made, occasionally successfully executed -Tempo is frequently inaccurate/disjointed	-Lyrics are almost always intelligible -Breath support is generally sufficient across the cast -Pitches are almost always accurate -Harmonic parts are achieved -Tempo is almost always accurate	-Lyrics are always intelligible -Breath support is sufficient across the cast -Pitches are always accurate -Harmonic parts are blended -Tempo is always accurate	The entire company exhibits outstanding musicianship through their diction, breath support, pitch and tempo accuracy, and execution of harmonies
BALANCE <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Vocal balance · Overall balance 	-Consistent imbalance between principal vocalists and chorus throughout the performance -Consistent imbalance between orchestra and performers throughout the performance	-Frequent imbalance between principal vocalists and chorus -Frequent imbalance between orchestra and performers	-Balance between principal vocalists and chorus is achieved for most of the performance -Balance between orchestra and performers achieved for most of the performance	-Balance is always achieved between principal vocalists and chorus -Balance is always achieved between performers and orchestra	The principals, chorus, and orchestra are fully coordinated in their artistic goal and support each other in the musical storytelling
ARTISTRY & STYLE <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Vocal Energy · Dynamics · Character · Musical Style 	-Performers lack vocal energy throughout the performance -No evidence of dynamics throughout performance -Performers do not maintain characterization while singing -Understanding of the musical style is not evident	-Performers occasionally have vocal energy -Some evidence of dynamics throughout the performance -Performers occasionally demonstrate characterization while singing -Understanding of the musical style is sometimes evident	-Performers have good vocal energy for most of the performance -Dynamics are evident throughout the performance -Performers almost always marry characterization with vocal performance -Understanding of the musical style is almost always evident	-Performers have excellent vocal energy throughout the performance -Dynamics are evident and support the storytelling -Character is consistent and fluid from speaking to singing -Understanding of the musical style is always evident	The entire company achieves outstanding vocal energy and animation, utilize dynamics, and maintain character in vocal performance in order to support the storytelling through vocal performance and musical style

ORCHESTRA

CRITERIA	1 Needs Improvement	2 Satisfactory	3 Good	4 Excellent	5 Outstanding
INTONATION · Sound Quality · Pitch	-Good sound quality is never achieved -Musicians are not on pitch	-Sound quality is sometimes achieved -Musicians are sometimes on pitch	-Good sound quality is produced for most of the show -Musicians are almost always on pitch	-Excellent sound quality is always achieved -Sections remain in tune and complement each other	Outstanding pitch and intonation maintained throughout the show and sound quality is outstanding
BALANCE	Imbalance among orchestra and between orchestra and performers detracts from overall production	Imbalance among orchestra and between orchestra and performers sometimes detracts from the overall production	Orchestral sound is mostly balanced and does not detract from production	Orchestral sound is always balanced	Complete balance among orchestra and between orchestra and performers enhances the overall production
ACCURACY/STYLE · Tempi · Musical Style	-Consistent errors made in terms of notes, tempi, rhythm, and dynamics -Understanding of the musical style is not evident	-Some errors made in terms of notes, tempi, rhythm, and dynamics -Musicians occasionally achieve appropriate musical style	-Accuracy was achieved for most of the performance -Musicians sometimes achieve musical style	-Accuracy was achieved for the entirety of the performance -Musical style was understood and achieved	Accuracy and understanding of the musical style achieved and coalesce to create a truly outstanding orchestral performance
FOCUS	Musicians consistently seem distracted or in some way detract from the action on stage.	Musicians are mostly focused when playing but are clearly unfocused or distracting to the audiences during book scenes.	Musicians display focus for most of the performance but some entrances or cutoffs are late or not in unison	Orchestra's constant focus leads to accurate entrances and cutoffs.	The orchestra's focus seamlessly supports the storytelling by "blending into the background" until called upon to underscore or accompany a scene or song.

COSTUMING

CRITERIA	1 Needs Improvement	2 Satisfactory	3 Good	4 Excellent	5 Outstanding
VISUAL PICTURE AND SPECIFICITY	-Cast is inconsistently costumed in terms of style, color palette, etc.	-Most of the cast are dressed appropriately for their role in the production	-Costumes designate characters' status, personality and relationships	-Costumes are visually interesting and unique. -Color palette adds to the overall look of the production	The color palette and thought put into each costume supports the storytelling by creating a specific, and fully complete visual world
FIT AND EASE OF MOVEMENT	-Costumes are not fitted to individual actors -Costumes hinder the movement of the cast	-Costumes are not consistently fitted across the actors -Ease of movement is inconsistent across the cast	-Most costumes fit appropriately -Most costumes allow for ease of movement	-Costumes are tailored to fit the individual actors -All costumes allow for ease of movement	Costumes are fitted appropriately and allow full range of movement and comfort for the entirety of the cast
TIME/PLACE AUTHENTICITY	No effort is made to establish time and place through costuming choices.	An attempt to reflect time and place through costuming is made	Time and place is suggested by costuming choices	Time and place is thoroughly communicated through costuming choices	Time and place is communicated through the costuming and fully completed with appropriate accessories/styling
WORKMANSHIP AND MAINTENANCE	-Costumes have obvious faults (wrinkles, tears, stains, etc.) -Costumes do not maintain their integrity throughout the performance (constantly untucked, unbuttoned, etc.)	-Some costumes have obvious faults -Some costumes do not maintain their integrity through the performance -Clothes are "finished" with no un-sewn hems	-Most costumes are in good condition -Most costumes stay intact throughout the performance -Clothes are neatly finished with details and trim	-All costumes are in excellent condition -All costumes stay intact throughout the performance	Costumes have been maintained in outstanding condition and elevate the overall impact of the performance.

SCENIC & PROP DESIGN

CRITERIA	1 Needs Improvement	2 Satisfactory	3 Good	4 Excellent	5 Outstanding
TIME/PLACE AUTHENTICITY	Scenery and props are confusing or do not communicate a time and place	Some indication of time and place of the production is evident through scenery and props	Most set and prop elements help define time and place	Scenic and prop design as a whole establishes a clear time and place	Time and place is communicated clearly through scenic design and complemented by accurate and appropriate props and set dressings
PRACTICAL/FUNCTIONAL	Scenic elements and props are a hindrance to performance or do not function as designed	Some scenes have functional scenery/props	Most scenes have functional scenery/props	All scenes have functional scenery/props	Scenic and prop elements are practical/functional while being seamlessly integrated into the overall appearance of the show
SCENE CHANGES	Scenic elements cause transitions to be lengthy or awkward	Transitions between scenes are noticeably long	Smooth transitions are made between most scenes	All scene transitions are made effectively and are achieved with minimum crew	Smooth, organized transitions are made between all scenes without stopping the action of the show
EFFECTIVE USE OF STAGE SPACE	Set leaves limited room for playing space	Set fits in the space	Set does not obstruct the staging of the show	Set is proportional to the stage space and to the actors	Multiple levels employed to provide additional playing spaces and variety in staging
ARTISTRY · Completion of scenic elements · Realization of artistic vision	-Set or props are unpainted or unfinished -No evidence of scenic design supporting theme or director's vision	-Set and props are painted or completed -Some indication of theme or director's vision	-Set is painted with colors and textures that are appropriate and achieves a finished look -Most of the design and its elements set mood and support the theme/vision	-There is attention to detail in the painting (trims, patterns, decorative painting etc.) as well as the composition of props -Colors and textures selected add to the stage picture and helps define theme	Attention to detail in every aspect of scenic design creates a fully realized world that supports/elevates the theme and vision

HAIR & MAKE-UP

CRITERIA	1 Needs Improvement	2 Satisfactory	3 Good	4 Excellent	5 Outstanding
VISUAL PICTURE/WORKMANSHIP	Little or no attempt is made to style hair and make-up	Full cast is in hair and make-up	Full cast is in appropriate hair and make-up for their role in the production	Hair and make-up designs are finished with appropriate detail	Hair and make-up is impeccably styled and executed and elevates the overall impact of the performance
ORIGINALITY/CREATIVITY	No thought appears to have gone into hair and make-up styling	An overall hair and make-up design is evident	Characters' hair and make-up are individually designed	Hair and make-up designs for the entire cast are coordinated	Hair and make-up design is fully realized and supports director's concept and interpretation of the script
TIME/PLACE AUTHENTICITY	Hair and make-up do not attempt to reflect time and place	Hair and make-up attempt to reflect time and place	Overall look of time and place achieved through hair and make-up	Details of hair and make-up contribute to audience's knowledge of the time and place of the show	Time and place is fully communicated through a hair and make-up design that elevates the overall impact of the performance
MAINTENANCE	Hair and make-up or wigs/prosthetics do not maintain their integrity throughout the performance or hinder performance	Some hair and make-up styles or wigs/prosthetics do not maintain their integrity throughout the performance	Some attempt to fix and maintain hair and make-up styles or wigs and prosthetics is made throughout the performance	Hair and make-up styles or wigs/prosthetics stay in excellent condition throughout the performance	Hair and make-up styles or wigs/prosthetics are in outstanding condition throughout and elevate the overall impact of the performance

LIGHTING

CRITERIA	1 Needs Improvement	2 Satisfactory	3 Good	4 Excellent	5 Outstanding
ILLUMINATION	Large portions of stage are in darkness	Majority of set and performers are visible	Entire set is illuminated throughout entire performance	-Lights are focused on the action -Minimal spill onto non-essential elements (i.e. Proscenium, curtains, floor, etc.)	-Lights are completely focused on the playing area -No spill into non-essential areas
ARTISTIC EXPRESSION	No attempt is made at a lighting design; lights simply come up and down for each scene	Different areas are lit for different scenes	Some use of color, patterns, gobos and texture	Lights contribute to the telling of the story	Color, patterns, gobos and texture are used to enhance the scenes
TECHNICAL EXECUTION	Lighting cues are called incorrectly or at the wrong time and spots are inconsistent	No major mishaps with lighting cues or spots	Minimal delay in cues for blackouts and/or spots	Cues built with some degree of time sensitivity	No delay in execution of cues and they are executed with finesse and are not abrupt or jarring
TIME/PLACE AUTHENTICITY	Lighting obviously does not reflect the time and location of each scene	Some attempt is made to convey time and place	Lights successfully convey basic time of day (i.e. Daylight vs. Moonlight)	Intensity of light appropriate to indoor or outdoor settings	Intensity of light appropriate to geographic location (i.e. Tahiti vs. NYC)