



COMMUNITY THEATRE COALITION

**Nominating Committee Representatives
Information and Guidelines**

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Before you begin

Being a CTC rep is a big commitment. Please refer to these pages as often as you need to keep the information fresh in your mind, and make sure you don't miss any notes. The season ahead will be easier for you and our member clubs if you are adequately prepared.

Plan ahead:

- Go through the show schedules and your calendar for the next year, and pencil in your preferred dates.
- Book tickets as far in advance as possible. For many clubs, you can do that months beforehand.
- Buy a notepad for note-taking at the theatre, or photocopy the evaluation form at the back of this book.
- Eat before leaving for the theatre if necessary, or plan to arrive early to buy a snack at the concession.

At the theatre; meet or exceed basic theatre etiquette expectations:

- Allow enough time to arrive early, find parking, get your tickets, use the washroom, silence cell phones, etc.
- Have a few dollars with you in case you want to buy something from the concession or support a 50-50 draw.
- Never bring in outside food or drink. Instead, buy something at the concession.
- Most venues don't allow food or drink in the theatre, but a few do. Check with FOH staff or look for signage.
- Don't talk during a performance, no matter how quiet you are.
- Be discreet about note-taking so as not to be a distraction to performers or other patrons.
- If you sit in the front row, hold off taking notes until intermission or after the performance.

CTC Reps – a few important notes

As representatives of the Community Theatre Coalition, we have a responsibility to ourselves, our clubs and the CTC to be mindful of how we are perceived by others in the theatre environment. Even when we are not ‘on duty’ seeing a show, we are seen by some as CTC reps first, and are being observed.

- **Keep your comments and opinions private.** If you must discuss a production with someone else, do it in a way that is for learning purposes only, and ensures that neither of you can be overheard, especially in the theatre. Never comment on a CTC show or performance in the theatre, in public or on social media even if your remarks are favourable. Good, bad or indifferent, keep a ‘poker face’ on.
- **Have an arms-length attitude.** It is critical to maintain a completely unbiased approach when evaluating productions and casting votes. As difficult as that may be, we cannot allow personal feelings for any person or group, whether negative or positive, to interfere with impartiality.
- **Check your loyalty at the door.** Most of us have an affiliation, past or present, with at least one CTC member club, and may also help in a variety of ways with their productions. Friendships are a natural and necessary part of any volunteer base, but as representatives of the CTC we must not do or say anything that could be perceived as showing favouritism. Our online presence is particularly subject to scrutiny – photos on Facebook, comments on Twitter or group emails can put a spotlight on our alliances. Rightly or wrongly, many people believe that others simply cannot be impartial where their friends are involved. Therefore, be very careful how you are presented with theatre colleagues, online or in public. If you wish to congratulate a friend or acquaintance, please do it privately.
- **Going solo?** You’re entitled to two tickets per show. If you only need one, tell the club when you book.
- **Change of plans?** Don’t wait. Contact the club or box office right away if you need to change your reservations.

FAQs

Can I still be involved in a show, even if I’m a rep?

The short answer is yes, as long as your involvement doesn’t interfere with your duties as a CTC rep. For instance, you could help with costumes, graphics or set design, or any other area that is done before the show goes up, because it doesn’t affect your ability to attend other productions or stop you from seeing the show as an audience member. However, you would not be able to take on performing or stage managing, because you couldn’t be in the audience watching the play, and you would not be able to attend other shows that were running at the same time.

NOTE: If your name appears on a CTC ballot in June, you must not vote in that category.

I want to go on holiday. Can I miss a show?

Sorry, no. All reps receive their packages, including show line-ups, well before the season starts, so we have ample time to arrange our personal lives around the CTC schedule.

I was sick and couldn’t go to the theatre. What should I do?

Life happens. Accidents, illness and other circumstances can get in the way. That’s why we usually recommend booking your tickets close to the middle of the run. If the show is still running, go to it. If not, let the nominating chair know. You may have to withdraw from being a rep for the remainder of the season.

I need to take a break from being a rep. Can I come back another year?

Yes. There are many reasons for wanting to step aside. Just let us know when you want to be a rep again, and if we have an opening, you are welcome to return.

Can I get reimbursed for my travel expenses?

Sorry, no. We understand that there are costs involved, but as volunteers, that’s just part of the whole picture.

Can I discuss shows with other people?

Yes, as long as you are appropriately discreet and respectful (see notes above). There is always someone who knows more about a particular subject than you do, so by all means, tap into that knowledge. Just keep your conversations private and for the purpose of learning rather than critiquing.

Are professional theatre people or Equity members eligible for CTC nominations?

Yes. There is nothing in our guidelines that dictate that actors, directors, set designers or any other professionals are ineligible for CTC nominations. Further, we must not allow knowledge of anyone’s professional standing to affect how we vote.

Can I take photos in the theatre to help me remember the set?

Yes, as long as you are discreet and have the permission of the club, theatre staff or FOH manager. Any photos should be taken well before curtain, during intermission or after the show so as not to be disruptive or distracting to the actors or other patrons.

If I have questions, who do I ask?

Depending on the nature of your query, the answer is probably in these pages. If not, contact any member of the CTC executive. Also, the CTC reps will have the opportunity to talk as a group at some point in the season.

Responsibilities and recommendations

You are required to see all the shows that have been submitted for our season, from start to finish, without exception. It is your responsibility to be aware of the schedule and book your tickets well in advance to ensure that you don't miss anything. Any cancellations, sell-outs, show extensions or other changes will be shared with you via email as soon as they are received, so it is advisable to **check your email frequently**.

The following suggestions may help you ensure that your season goes more smoothly and you will be better prepared for voting in June:

- Try to see the play in the middle of the run. At the beginning, the production may still be working out the kinks. If you wait until the end, you risk missing it because of illness or other unforeseen circumstances. Some shows are only on for a short time, so this is not always easy and you have to catch them when you can.
- Bring a notebook and something to write with to each play. If you wish to photograph the set, ask permission of the FOH people first. Only take photos before the curtain, during intermission, or after the show is over.
- Arrive 20 to 30 minutes early if possible. Take the time to use the washroom, find your seat, prepare your notebook and generally clear your mind and get relaxed before the play begins. This is also a good time to draw sketches or make notes about the set design, set decoration and sound effects, if applicable.
- Make notes and/or sketches in your show program or notebook about specific performers, designs or other aspects of the production. These can be as simple or detailed as you like, but they are helpful to remind you why you gave a particular nominee the rating you did. A show you saw in October will be difficult to compare to one you saw in April, without adequate note-taking.
- Apply a ranking to each category right in the program or your notebook before you leave the theatre, or at home while it's still fresh in your mind. You can always change your mind, but once you've recorded your ranking, it's done and you don't have to rely on memory later on.
- It is best to rank all the performers and other aspects of the production, even if they are not among your favourites. Suppose there is a play where you did not like the set and did not rank it as one of your top five. The other CTC reps may have liked the set, and if enough of them voted for it, it could be one of the nominees on which you will have to vote on the second ballot. If you rank everything during the season, from your most favourite to your least favourite, with the reasons why, you will be ready for voting in June.

CTC award categories

Following are the categories CTC reps will be voting on for each production. Musicals (including pantomimes) are evaluated separately from comedies and dramas *for the performing, directing and production categories only*. All other categories are evaluated on the same basis regardless of the nature of the production.

- Best Music Director
- Best Choreographer
- Best Graphic Design (Poster)
- Best Graphic Design (Program)
- Best Set Design
- Best Set Decoration
- Best Costume Design
- Best Lighting Design
- Best Sound Design
- Best Performance by an Actor in a Leading Role
- Best Performance by an Actress in a Leading Role
- Best Performance by an Actor in a Supporting Role
- Best Performance by an Actress in a Supporting Role
- Best Performance by an Actor in a Leading Role in a Musical
- Best Performance by an Actress in a Leading Role in a Musical
- Best Performance by an Actor in a Supporting Role in a Musical
- Best Performance by an Actress in a Supporting Role in a Musical
- Best Director (Musical)
- Best Production (Musical)
- Best Director
- Best Production

DEFINITIONS, GUIDELINES AND NOTES

Musical categories

The CTC season musicals usually include a variety of styles; anything from classical to pop, and operetta to rock. CTC reps must disregard whether a musical style or particular subject matter is their 'cup of tea', and assess the show on its own merits. Ask yourself only whether the styles of music and performances were appropriate for the nature of the production, and how well the directors, designers, crew and performers have done their jobs.

Definition of a pantomime

First and foremost, a pantomime (panto) is a musical.

Traditional pantomime always has certain elements:

- song and dance;
- a story where good triumphs over evil;
- jokes (most of them very old or corny) and slapstick comedy;
- a Dame, played by a man dressed in a ridiculous woman's costume;
- a principal boy, the hero of the pantomime, usually played by a woman;
- a very nasty villain;
- good and bad characters or groups (fairies, witches, demons, etc);
- some local references and/or political humour;
- an animal or group of animals (normally people in costume, rarely real critters); and
- audience participation (e.g. cheering the good guys, booing the bad guys, a sing-along, calling out to the actors).

Pantomime stories are generally well known (often drawn from popular folk tales, children's stories and similar sources). They are populated with stock characters; the principal boy, usually played a young lady with shapely legs; the heroine, also played by a young lady (which gives an added edge to the inevitable romance); and the Dame, played by a man as an exaggeration of a lewd middle-aged woman. Costumes and sets are colourful and over the top. Scripts generally contain four strands of humour: visual, topical, corny and downright rude. In the UK this is considered to be family entertainment.

■ Best Director (Musical)

The director of a musical has the same responsibilities as the director of a comedy or drama (see page 10), with the added elements of music, song and dance. (S)he heads the team that includes the choreographer and music director. They must work together to pull off the extra demands of a musical production.

■ Best Music Director

Music direction refers *only to live music* (instrumental and vocal), *not recorded*. The music director is responsible for overseeing all musical aspects of the production, and working with the choreographer and director to coordinate the music with other aspects of the show. The music director coaches the singers and runs the rehearsals with the orchestra. In addition, he/she is often (but not always) the rehearsal accompanist and keyboard player for the show.

- Timing – Do all the people (musicians and singers) start and stop at the correct time, and is their performance crisp? Is the cast in sync with one another AND with the orchestra? Are they in time and in tune?
- Clarity – Are you able to hear and understand the words of the song?
- Focus – Are the cast members caught up in the songs or just going through the motions?
- Transitions into and out of songs – are they smooth, natural, and in keeping with the pace of the show?
- Volume – Are the musicians playing at a comfortable (accompanying) level, or are they too loud and overpowering the singers? The music director must work with the cast, orchestra and tech crew to ensure a comfortable balance.
- Mood – are the singers and/or musicians performing in a mood that reflects the nature of the scene? (e.g. quiet, sombre and contemplative for a sad occasion versus boisterous and lively for a celebration)
- Is the overall volume of the musicians and singers appropriate (neither too loud nor soft) for the size of venue and proximity to the audience? The audience should be able to hear the singers and orchestra from the back row without the music being so loud they want to plug their ears. It can be a tricky balance to find.
- Does the music director have control of all the people on stage – actors and musicians?
- In a panto, the music director chooses the music, usually in collaboration with the director and choreographer. Are the choices and styles of music well suited to the production, and well executed?



a typical panto Dame

■ Best Choreography

In essence, *choreography is the design of movement*. It most often applies to dance, but *can include any specialized movement* beyond basic blocking, like swordplay or fist fights.

- Dancers – Trained dancers are easier to move than non-dancers. Can you tell the non-dancers from the dancers? A good choreographer can make non-dancers look experienced, and the whole cast work seamlessly together.
- Does the dance suit the music and the mood of the scene?
- Specialized movement (fight scenes, swordplay, etc) – do the actors look realistic, natural and well coordinated, or do their interactions look staged and mechanical?
- Does the choreography fit the style of the show – comedy, revue, international, fantasy, etc.? No matter how well the dancers move, if the style isn't appropriate, the choreography is flawed.
- In the case of different types of dance being performed within one production, does the choreographer have a good handle on these different styles?
- Era – past, present or future; Did certain dances exist during the time period of the play? Or does it matter?
- Flow and timing – Does the show flow from scene to musical/dance number and back into the scene? Is there good energy? How well rehearsed is the cast?
- Are the stage and set used effectively with the movement or dance?
- Costume/dance connection – Can they move in what they are wearing, either by design or practice?

Design categories

Without exception, anything which is designed is a *combination of the aesthetic and the functional/technical*. Some things lean more toward one facet than the other, but *both elements have to be present*. Therefore, in order for any kind of design to be considered good, **both its aesthetic and functional/technical qualities must be well done**.

In all design categories, look for how well the aesthetic (visual or creative) aspects of the design work in conjunction with its functional or technical purposes.

■ Best Lighting Design

This is the way light is used to advance the play. A very well executed subtle lighting scheme in a play that does not call for a lot of special effects may be worthy of more recognition than splashy lights in a play that does call for a lot of special effects. The key is how effectively the lighting complements the mood of the play or the specific effects in any given scene.

- Look for technical aspects of the design. Major flaws are things like dark spots on the stage, i.e. actors walking into shadows or an area on the stage that isn't lit properly for the action that happens there; or the set going dark too quickly, while the actors are still talking.
- Look for details such as a fridge having a light when it opens, or the hallway to an exterior door being lit up.
- In some cases, the accurate timing of lighting with action or sound is a consideration; e.g. with lightning and thunder; or when someone enters a room and switches the lamp on, or lights a candle sconce.
- Has the lighting worked in conjunction with the set design or decoration details? Look for flaws, like shadows being cast from window frames against what is supposed to be an outdoor scene.

■ Best Sound Design

The soundscape is an area that is often neglected in theatre. It can create moods and effects that greatly enhance a production. Ask yourself what the goals of the play are, and how well the sound supports these goals. Musicals and pantos have music as part of the production, so the sound design is anything outside of live music (such as special sound effects, radio or TV, traffic, wind, thunder, telephones, doorbells, gunfire, dogs barking, wildlife, etc.).

- Before the show and during intermission, is there sound (music or other effect) that helps set and retain the mood of the play? This may be only possible in some theatres, but check that sound is appropriate for the play (correct time period, suitable theme or mood, etc.)
- In the case of background music, does it begin smoothly and fade away well during scene changes?
- Is the volume of sound effects appropriate for the mood, scene, venue and proximity to the audience?
- Do the sound effects appear to be coming from the appropriate part of the stage or theatre?
- Is the timing of sound effects right for each scene? For example, does the doorbell or phone ring on cue?
- If a sound has to work in sync with lighting (eg. thunder & lightning) are they timed well?
- Are the sounds consistent throughout the play? (or do we hear the sound of a car arriving in the driveway in one scene but don't hear it leaving in the next?)
- If the sound is specific to a particular country, is it correct? For example, telephones and sirens sound different in the UK and European countries than they do in North America.

■ Best Set Design

The set design is the layout of the set (stairs, risers, doors, windows, walls, large furniture, etc.). The set should be evaluated for how well it serves the play (more is not necessarily better), as well as how it serves as sculpture in its own right. The latter point is particularly relevant in abstract or representational sets.

- Does the style of any architecture suit the time period and country or location of the play?
- Is the set structurally sound? Stairs shouldn't echo. Doors opening or closing shouldn't shake the walls.
- A good set design should accommodate the actors moving around, allowing easy entrances and exits and speedy set changes.
- Pay attention to any components that move, rotate, open or close, or transform in some way to be an asset to the production as a whole. Are they both functional and imaginative?

■ Best Set Decoration

Set decoration flavours the set design; it gives the set a personality suited to the play. It can include colour schemes, painting effects, draperies, pictures, plants, knickknacks, and small and large furniture. Like costume design, it should be suited to the time period and appropriately reflect the environment(s) portrayed in the production.

- Are set components (wallpaper, paint, draperies, linens, furnishings etc) right for the play? Are their textures, patterns and colours suited to the time period and the setting? For instance, is it a modern luxury hotel suite or a dingy 1960s bachelor pad? You should know when and where the setting is just from the set decoration.
- Is there attention to real life – dust in an old barn; snow on window sills; ashes or soot in the fireplace; fingerprints on door jambs; is everything realistic and appropriate for the setting?

■ Best Costume Design

Costume design is much more than just clothing for actors. Well designed costumes tell the audience how rich or poor the characters are and maybe their social standing; perhaps what they do for a living, their life situation or their personality, as well as the more obvious time period and country the story is set in. How well do the costumes suit the aims of the play? If they fit the play perfectly the design is good, no matter how elaborate or simple they are. Sometimes excellent costume designs do not jump out at you because the designer has done such a good job of making the clothes suit the characters and the play.

Don't worry about whether costumes are rented, borrowed, owned by the cast, made by the costume team, or a combination of these – concern yourself only with how well they work for that particular production.

Suggestion: If in doubt about period clothing, 'Google' the fashion for the time period in question.

- **Check for details** like appropriate hair styles, footwear, headwear and jewellery – are they all the correct time era (where applicable)? If time periods aren't critical, do they suit the rest of the costume components? Do all parts of each costume match for style, time period or other considerations?
- **Do the costumes fit appropriately?** The fit can tell a story: wealthy people have the resources to buy clothes that are custom-fit, whereas very poor people would be wearing ill-fitting hand-me-downs. A man's suit or tux should look made for him unless it's supposed to be obviously a cheap rental or borrowed outfit. In musicals, can the cast members dance without tripping on their costumes? Do they have freedom of movement or are they confined by tight restrictive garments? Can they move freely without risk of exposing personal areas of their body?
- **Is the condition of the garment(s) appropriate for the play?** High society people would not have clothes with hems or threads hanging down, and very poor people would not have pristine clothes. A mechanic would likely have coveralls full of holes and blackened with grease. A farmer's jeans would be worn and stained. A bank manager would wear a modern, clean well-tailored suit. Someone stranded on a desert island would be wearing dirty sun-bleached rags that are probably loose due to weight loss.
- **Are the clothes appropriate for the occasion?** Someone in a winter cabin or camping in the woods would not be wearing dress shoes. A person in a severe depression would not be concerned about their appearance, so would be dressed for comfort only, and not likely to have jewellery or even clean clothes and hair.
- In the case of time eras, **are the costumes consistent** throughout the entire cast? Or are some people in period costume and others wearing more modern clothes? Unless a change of time periods is part of the play, any irregularities would be considered weaknesses in costume design.
- Does the use of **wigs** look right? In the case of a role that requires a certain hair colour or style, does the wig look natural, or does it look obviously like a wig? With wigs as appropriate parts of the costume (as in English barristers or 17th century courtiers, do they suit the time and place?
- In the case of **pantomimes**, costumes are traditionally **gaudy and outrageous** on the Dame (usually with brightly-coloured ridiculous wigs), and for everyone else, as colourful or fanciful as possible to be in keeping with the nature of the role. Even the villains should be wearing something dark but **melodramatic and over-the-top**.
- While being appropriate for the play, costumes should also draw focus to the actor. Has the designer made the actors stand out from the set (unless there is a logical reason why the actors should blend in)?

■ Best Graphic Design (two separate categories – poster and program)

There is no rush to evaluate the graphic design categories when you see the show because you will keep your program. Take advantage of the luxury of time for evaluating its design properties. Posters and programs will be also available for viewing on voting day.

DO NOT EVALUATE POSTERS AND PROGRAMS TOGETHER – THEY SERVE VERY DIFFERENT PURPOSES AND THEREFORE HAVE DIFFERENT DESIGN CRITERIA OUTSIDE OF THE ‘BASICS’

GRAPHIC DESIGN ‘BASICS’ (THESE APPLY TO ALL THINGS)

Assessing graphic design is *not about whether you like the photos or illustrations used* – it’s about whether the graphics are suited to their purpose, and how well the designer has dealt with all the components (images, type and logos) and made them work together on the page or area in question. See below for creative and technical guidelines.

In graphic design, even more than any other design category, the technical and aesthetic go hand-in-hand and carry equal weight. Graphic design must be both artistically and technically strong. No matter how technically sound it is, if the art isn’t really illustrative of the play the design is weakened. And vice-versa: if the art is well suited for the nature of the production, but any of the components are technically flawed, the design as a whole is compromised.

Graphic design ‘rules’ most commonly broken usually involve typography and readability:

Poor choice of fonts, such as:

- inappropriate style for the nature of the play;
- overly flowery or busy (hard to make out some of the letters); or
- critical type extremely condensed or too thin to read easily, or to carry well in front of the background image.

Hard to read:

- unnecessarily big or small for its purpose;
- poorly spaced, for example crowded or spaced out with gaps running through the text, or lines too closely spaced (example on right);
- overuse of special treatments like outlines, capitals or small caps;
- text crowded against borders, graphics, logos or picture frames;
- a display face used for small text (example on right);
- lack of contrast between the text and its background, for example coloured type on a similarly toned or coloured background;
- big blocks of small reversed type (white on dark background) – it’s too hard on the eyes in large quantities (example on right);
- anything that creates a busy or visually distracting feel; for example, type in front of a patterned background or overuse of script, fancy, outlined or italic typefaces; or
- any of the above in combination – especially bad!

A competent graphic designer pays attention to detail. A design can be greatly strengthened or weakened by something as simple as the spacing of letters in a title or the alignment of a strip of logos.

Aesthetic (or creative) factors

- The main image(s) and typefaces should be appropriate for the mood of the play (i.e. dramatic, tense, playful), and to the time period, if applicable. They should say something visually about the nature of the production, as well as being able to stand on their own technical merits (below).
- Balanced layout – is the overall balance of elements (on the page or poster) even? If bottom-heavy, top-heavy or more weight on one side, is there a logical reason for the imbalance or has the designer goofed?

A good designer resists the temptation to fill every bit of space on the page! Look for good use of ‘white space’ or ‘air’ (areas without critical graphics) that allow you to focus on the important components of the poster or program. Usually, boxes and borders crowd and confine other components – they should be avoided unless a clear need exists.

Technical (or functional) factors

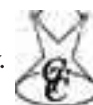
- Graphic elements (images and text) should be sharp – not pixelated, bitmapped, grainy, blurry or fuzzy UNLESS there is a logical reason to make them appear that way. **Logos should always be sharp, clean and clear** (see samples at right).
- Are photos clear and in focus? Is the lighting good, neither dark and muddy or pale and washed out? If not, is this deliberate, and creating a desired and appropriate effect?
- Illustrations – Does their style suit the play? (i.e. You wouldn’t likely use a cartoon style for a tense drama). If illustrations are incorporated into photos, does it work well or look odd?
- Natural proportions and ratios – distortion of photos or logos (as on right) is a major no-no!

*If it's Tacky to Read or
it is Hard to Make out some Letters
there are just too many
words in a display face.*

**OR A PARTICULAR TREATMENT (LIKE ALL CAPITALS)
IS OVERUSED, THE DESIGN IS WEAKENED. GOOD
TYPOGRAPHY IS CRITICAL TO GOOD GRAPHIC DESIGN!**

This block of text is an example of poor typesetting. It is force-justified, meaning that it lines up on both sides. This treatment often results in either text being squished together or having gaps between the words. It can also make vertical ‘rivers’ throughout the block of text. All of these situations create readability issues. This typeface is also sans-serif, which can be hard to read in large quantities, especially when small. Depending on the font chosen, this may or may not be a problem. A final ‘insult’ in this text is its tight line spacing and big x-height – readability is severely compromised.

This text is reversed (white against a dark background). With two or three words (like a person’s name) that is usually OK, but when it’s a lot of words and/or the print is very small this treatment can strain the eyes trying to read it. This particular block of text also uses a fairly intricate font, illustrating why a display face should not be used for body copy – whether it’s used in a single sentence or a full paragraph, it’s usually busy and hard to read.



< The logo to the left is very poor quality; grainy and pixelated. The logo to the right > is sharp and clear



Graphic Design – Poster specifics

First and foremost, a poster should get your attention and pique your curiosity or interest. Its secondary role is to give you information at a glance. Does it reflect the nature of the play? Are there visual indicators that it's set in a particular time era? that it's a comedy, musical or drama? or a combination?

- Even if you don't know what the play is about, the poster should give you a sense of that visually. The image(s) and fonts (typefaces) should be representative of (or at least appropriate for) the theme, mood and setting.
- Do the colours suit the play? A black-and-white image might be better suited to a dark tense drama than a colourful treatment. A panto poster is traditionally very colourful and fun, in keeping with the nature of the show.
- Look for clarity of treatment. Can you see and read the important information quickly and easily, from a short distance? If there is so much text that you have to search for what's important, the design is weakened.
- There should be a clear 'pecking order' in size of elements. The design should put priority on the image and play title – the attention-getters. Secondary information (dates & venue) should be readable from a short distance. Minor components like ticket details should be smaller and less prominent, and sponsor logos the smallest.
- The KISS principle really applies here. A good poster design is not cluttered by too many elements being squished in to it. Anything that doesn't have to be there should be left off or be small.

Graphic Design – Program specifics

DO NOT evaluate a program based on the front cover. This is a multi-page document, so it must be judged on its attributes as a whole. Every page from cover to cover should be equally clean and well laid out in order for the graphic design to be considered good. A well designed program is more challenging to put together than a poster. The audience is already in the theatre when they see the program, so it should be designed with this more intimate use in mind. It's not there to get anyone's attention – the poster should have already done that. The major purpose of the program is to provide information about the play, the production team and the performers; it is a souvenir, an information piece and a guide to "who's who".

- A well designed program should be easy to read, first and foremost. Many people read their programs in the theatre, which may not have a good source of light to read by. Review the readability and typography notes in the 'Graphic Design Basics' section.
- Curtain times, ticket prices and other redundant information on the cover creates unnecessary clutter, and therefore weakens the design.
- Check for good typography, including:
 - appropriate font choices and type treatments;
 - easy to read text, with enough breathing space around photos to avoid looking crowded, but not such big gaps that the photos appear disconnected from their descriptive copy; and
 - attention to detail – no hyphens, typos, orphans or widows (single words left hanging at the end of a paragraph).
- A wide column of type is often hard to read. If the program page is wide, the page layout should be adjusted to make a comfortable line length; for example, by having two or three narrower columns of text instead of one wide one.
- There should be no borders around blocks of type or page margins unless they serve an obvious purpose. Borders and boxes tend to enclose and/or crowd the page components, and can be visually distracting.
- All components on the page should be balanced and aligned, as if they were attached to an invisible grid. Nothing should be floating like a lost element. At the same time, ads and other components should have enough space between them to allow 'air' – they should not be crowded together.
- If it is not clear who played which role, the program has essentially failed in one of its most important 'reasons for being'. Look for clean photos, appropriately sized for the dimensions of the program, and bios or related text in a comfortable and readable size, font and format.
- Since the program is held by the reader, there is no need for large type. In fact, aside from the show title, large type is often out of place and can create an uncomfortable or antagonistic feel.

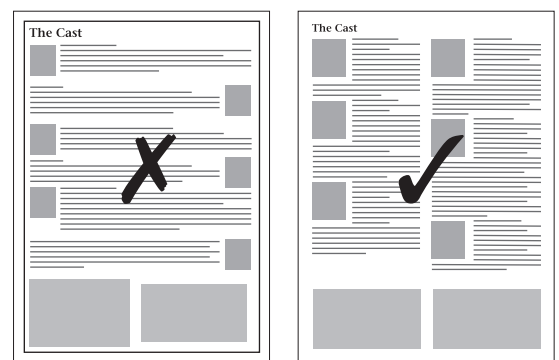
For over 20 years, she has worn many hats with the society, including costuming, props and as a performer. Susan was first introduced to theatre in high school where she caught the acting

bug.

Jane Doe is thrilled to be chosen for this role and has enjoyed working with such a talented production team and the amazing cast.

Joe Bloe is very greatful for the (support) of his family and friends, but especially you who came to enjoy this really great show.

Some common typography flaws



The only time a program design should stray from a clean, orderly layout is if the play is extremely chaotic in nature and the designer is trying to match the feel of the program to the show. However, the basic principles of graphic design, typography and readability still stand, and such a diversion would be very difficult to pull off effectively!

■ Best Performance (actors and actresses)

Much of this is opinion, but there are several areas that can be assessed on technical merit:

- If an accent is used, does it sound right for the country or region being represented? Does the actor keep the accent consistently throughout the play, or is it on-again, off-again?
- Does the actor stay in character throughout the entire play?
- Is (s)he over-acting or flat in one scene, and then more natural in another? Look for a consistent approach.
- Does (s)he recover well from mistakes, and handle ad-libs well?
- Does the actor effectively use anything other than their voice in their performance (e.g. facial expression, body language, hand gestures)?
- In a comedy, does the actor just depend on their lines to get the laughs, or do they inject something extra into their performance to add to the humour (tone of voice, physical gestures, facial expression, timing)?
- When the actor is not the focus of a given scene, is (s)he still engaged in what's happening? Does their facial expression change in response to the other characters? Are they 'busy' with something in the background, without distracting the audience, while the focus of the action is somewhere else?
- Is the actor believable in the role? Does (s)he act, speak and move in a way that is logical for the character and the situation? Does their behaviour change appropriately as the plot develops?

Best Performance in a Musical

Assess the performers in a musical as you would with those in a comedy or drama, *in addition to their ability to live up to the extra demands of a musical*:

- Their acting and singing should both be good for a performance to be considered strong.
- Sometimes, the performer is singing and acting while dancing too. How well does (s)he pull off the 'triple threat'?

Lead versus Supporting Actors

Don't worry about who has lead and supporting roles. They will be separated on the ballots at voting time. Usually, the leads have the bulk of the lines and carry most of the play, though this is not always the case. Deciding who is a lead and who is supporting is up to the show's producer and director. You need only keep track of all notable performances, without consideration of whether they are leads or supports.

■ Best Director

This can be among the hardest categories to evaluate. It is often particularly difficult to separate acting from direction. It is the director's job to provide the vision and style for the play, and work with key designers (graphics, set design, choreography, set decoration, costumes, light and sound) to create a cohesive visual and auditory experience. The director has the final say on all design elements.

The director is *not* an acting coach. (S)he chooses the cast and works with the actors to arrive at a successful final blocking of the play and the actors' true characterizations. The director dictates who stands where, who goes where and when, how the props are used, etc. Look for harmony and logic in the movement of the actors over the stage, and in the use of things like set pieces and props. The characters' relationships should be believable.

The director is responsible for keeping the story moving forward and keeping the audience engaged throughout the play. If the play has a sense of wholeness, it is probably a result of coordination by the director. The more seamlessly the production moves along, the better the direction. Alternately, performers can be up on stage acting their hearts out and doing a really good job with their lines and yet something may seem a little out of place – this can be the sign of a lack of vision on the part of the director. When this happens, you may find you are more aware that you are watching actors in a play.

Timing is also controlled by the director. Gaps in the action or dialogue should be deliberate, logical and purposeful.

If a play has been directed very well you are more likely to get caught up in the world of the play, and find that you forget you are watching actors on stage. With excellent direction, the director's hand cannot be seen because the actors all appear comfortable and natural in both their movements and their speech.

■ Best Production

If all of the above elements have come together to produce a whole that seems like it was meant to be as you see it, then you have seen a good production. If parts seem out of place, or some elements were not as well executed as they could have been, the production is weakened. A show that you find sad or depressing may still be an overall tighter production than the comedy that you enjoyed so much. At the same time, a show that is heavy is not necessarily a better production than a light-hearted comedy.

Perhaps it can best be summed up by saying that a good production is when the whole team has pulled together to produce a show that goes beyond the script, and has elevated the production to something the individual elements could never have accomplished on their own. Ask yourself to what extent the production seems to have been more than the sum of its parts.

EVALUATING, RATING AND VOTING

Evaluating

A great deal of the evaluation process is personal opinion, in some cases flavoured by personal experience. A design or performance may be considered wonderful by one person and mediocre or dreadful by another. It may be helpful to **review these guidelines regularly** to keep them fresh in your mind, and check that your rankings reflect all pertinent aspects of each category. For instance, it's easy to focus on a particularly amusing performance while forgetting that the actor didn't stay in character or flubbed his lines. Base your rankings on your immediate impulses/opinions and technical merit in all areas.

Ranking

- Look for details, both good and bad. Often those fine points will be the deciding factors in deciding between close contenders.
- Use a large ranking scale, such as 1 to 100. If you use 1 to 10, at the end of the season, you may be trying to figure out which was the best out of a half dozen "sevens."
- **Be ruthless.** If you are generous, you will find all the scores bunch up at the top of the scale, which makes it difficult at voting time. Remember – your rankings and the ballots are all secret. Only you know how you evaluated the plays, so you can be as tough as you like.
- If you know how to use a spreadsheet, you can use one to keep track of everything, including your scores. Then, at the end of the year you can let the computer sort things for you according to your scores. This is especially useful in the acting categories where there could be many people to rank.
- On the reverse of this page is a PRODUCTION EVALUATION FORM which can be photocopied for your personal use if you wish.

Below is a ranking scale that has been used in the past. Of course, you are free to use whatever method works best for you.

| | |
|----------|--|
| 90 - 100 | A once in a decade performance or design |
| 80 - 89 | A once in a year performance or design |
| 70 - 79 | An excellent performance or design (no major criticisms) |
| 60 - 69 | A very good performance or design (some minor criticisms) |
| 50 - 59 | A good performance or design (a few criticisms, but generally good) |
| 40 - 49 | A satisfactory performance or design (obvious criticisms but still enjoyable) |
| 30 - 39 | Nice try (enough criticisms to seriously compromise the performance or design) |
| 0 - 29 | Oh well! |

The voting process – how it works

About a month or two before the end of the season, reps are consulted about the date and time of the first round of voting, which is normally held mid-June.

The Nominating Committee Chair sends out advance ballots approximately a week before the voting night. These advance ballots indicate who is nominated in each of the categories, giving reps time to review their notes and decide in advance how they will vote.

On voting night, all the reps cast their (secret) ballots for their top choices, in order of preference, in each category. The nomination ballots are given directly to the accountant, who will tabulate the results.

The top candidates in each category are announced publicly, one week after the voting. Each finalist receives a certificate of nomination.

The Nominating Committee Chair then prepares a second ballot with only the finalists on it, and sends it to the reps, usually within a few days of the nomination announcements, well before the end of June. Reps mark their top three choices in each category, again in order of preference, and mail their completed ballots directly to the accountant by the end of July.

The award recipients are announced at the gala in September.

Important Note

Sometimes the final show of the season runs into the first week June, and there are limited opportunities to see it before the first round of voting. There is ample advance notice of both the show schedules and the voting night, so all reps are expected to bear this in mind and plan accordingly.

There is no allowance for anyone to vote later than the others, because the accountants need the full week to complete the tabulating process and prepare the certificates. However, if absolutely necessary, arrangements may be made with the Nominating Chair for an individual rep to vote early as long as (s)he has seen all the shows.

CTC PRODUCTION EVALUATION FORM

Production name

Theatre club: Date viewed:

Direction:

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Music Direction:

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Choreography:

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Notable performances by actors:

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.....

Notable performances by actresses:

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Set Design:

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Set Decoration:

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Costume Design:

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Lighting Design:

.....

Sound Design:

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Graphic Design (Poster):

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Graphic Design (Program):

.....

Production summary:

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