

## 2025-2026 Adjudicator Handbook

### Purpose

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

### Goals

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

### About the Miami Valley High School Theatre Awards

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

### Adjudication Overview

The Miami Valley High School Theatre Awards provides adjudication for participating high schools located in the Miami Valley. Adjudicators are responsible for evaluating high school play and musical theatre productions. Evaluations must consist of educationally focused feedback and scoring. We know Adjudicators are busy people, and we ask you to commit in advance to adjudicate when you are available. **Our requirement is that each Adjudicator evaluate a minimum of three (3) productions for the 2025-2026 Season, which must include one play and one musical.** Adjudicators may evaluate more shows based on scheduling, conflicts of interest, and the number of schools that register for the program.

## **Meetings & Important Dates**

Adjudicators are **required** to attend an in-person training session at Dayton Live. Multiple sessions are planned, and Adjudicators will be notified of scheduled training sessions in advance.

Adjudicators are also strongly encouraged to attend the MVHSTA Showcase the evening of Thursday, June 5, 2025, at the Schuster Center. Each Adjudicator receives a comp ticket to the MVHSTA Showcase.

## **Honorarium for Adjudicators**

Adjudicators will be paid an honorarium of **\$40** per show for the first three (3) shows evaluated. If an Adjudicator can and chooses to evaluate more than the minimum number of shows, each additional evaluation will have an honorarium of **\$50**. Adjudicators who adjudicate individual categories like “Outstanding Student Stage Manager” that do not require travel will be paid an honorarium of **\$25** for each adjudicated student.

**Honorarium payments will be issued in June 2026.** Completed tax documentation will be required for payment to be issued. Full-time exempt Dayton Live staff who adjudicate performances or other nominations will only be reimbursed mileage and not be paid the honorarium. Adjudicators may also donate their honorarium back to the program and a tax receipt will be issued. Please notify Dayton Live if you wish to donate your honorarium back to the MVHSTAs.

## **Confidentiality**

Adjudicators, and any guests attending performances with adjudicators, **must not discuss their opinions, evaluations, scores, or feedback with anyone in any format.** This includes, but is not limited to students, faculty and staff from participating high schools, other audience members, colleagues, friends and family, other adjudicators, reviewers, or any social media networks. For the protection of the adjudicator, the director, and most importantly the students, it is essential that any opinions or feedback come through their MVHSTA paperwork. Please contact the MVHSTA Team with questions about confidentiality.

Please use the **150-Yard Rule**: do not comment on or mention any of your thoughts on a production you are seeing until you are at least 150 yards away from the doors of the theatre or school.

## **Conflicts of Interest**

Adjudicators must agree to uphold MVHSTA’s conflict of interest policy and must not allow personal preferences or bias to influence evaluations. In accordance with this policy, Adjudicators must not adjudicate a performance where there is a personal or professional relationship with a participating high school’s theatre production. If an Adjudicator thinks a conflict of interest might exist, the Adjudicator must contact MVHSTA Team immediately. Definitions and examples of potential conflicts of interest include, but are not limited to:

### ***Professional Conflicts of Interest***

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

### ***Personal Conflicts of Interest***

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

## **Bias and Preference**

Adjudicators must act without bias or an appearance of bias when choosing what productions to sign up to adjudicate, as well as when filling out the evaluation survey. Adjudicators must objectively be considered to have an impartial and unprejudiced view on the production title, the school the production is being performed at, and the cast of the production. Adjudicators should not adjudicate productions where there is a clear bias.

If an Adjudicator has a clear negative bias toward a specific production title, the adjudicator needs to select a different show to adjudicate.

## **Awards & Awards Showcase**

There are two levels of awards given for Individual and Production categories: **Outstanding Awards** and **Awards of Merit**. Recognition is assigned for each award category to a top percentage of all submitted productions. The cutoff percentages will be determined by a review of the ballot results. This is a cutoff for scores to receive recognition – not a determination of who or what school is the best. All awards are distributed at the MVHSTA Showcase held on **Tuesday, June 2, 2026, at 7:30 p.m. at the Schuster Center**.

## **Scheduling with SignUpGenius**

High school theatre productions take place between September 2025 and May 2026. Scheduled adjudications will be made online through SignUpGenius. Adjudicators are encouraged to sign up for shows early. *See page 7.*

## **Production Detail Form**

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

## **Tickets**

Each participating high school reserves two (2) complimentary tickets for each Adjudicator attending the production. Schools will hold ticket(s) under "MVHSTA Adjudicator" for Adjudicators to pick up when they arrive at the performance venue. In most cases, seating will be general admission. Adjudicators should contact the MVHSTA Team with any special needs or requests regarding seating. These tickets should not be used for "special occasions" – a date, a free trip to the theatre with your young child, etc.

## **Attendance Procedures**

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

**If Adjudicators are unable to attend any of the productions they have selected to evaluate, they must contact Taylor Benjamin immediately at either [taylor.benjamin@daytonlive.org](mailto:taylor.benjamin@daytonlive.org) or 937-637-8103 for week-of emergencies/conflicts.**

## **Health and Safety Procedures and Policies**

School districts may create or change their health & safety policies when it comes to audiences, casts, performances, and rehearsals. Likewise, Adjudicators may have varying comfort levels with health precautions. The MVHSTA Team will do its best to keep track of any changes and alert Adjudicators of updates.

## **Evaluation Guidelines**

Adjudicators will evaluate the overall play and musical theatre production, the ensemble\*, performers in lead

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

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

### **Reference Materials**

When entering feedback/scores, please reference the evaluation rubric (*pages 13-17*) which provides detailed criteria for evaluating each category and is available for download in the Adjudicator section at [mvhsta.org](http://mvhsta.org). The school's Production Detail Form features the names of the characters/students being evaluated in lead/supporting roles, notes on any specific feedback the director might want, and other details. The school's program book (or playbill) is also valuable, as well as any notes you might have taken.

### **Feedback**

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

Adjudicator feedback will be reviewed by MVHSTA Team before being forwarded to Theatre Directors.

**A reminder to avoid any feedback that compares a production or performance to a film, another "famous" actor, another production of the same show, "your production," or any other reference to another adaptation of the material.**

### **Scores**

Scores will be used to determine "Outstanding" and "Merit" Awardees in each award category for the 2025-2026 Season. On a scale of 1-10 (with 10 being the highest score and 1 being the lowest score), Adjudicators will rank how well the evaluation criteria are executed by students.

### **The word Ensemble**

"Ensemble" for the MVHSTAs is defined as the entire company (performers, technicians, crew, etc) working together to tell a story, and NOT a group of individual performers outside of leads, supporting roles, or other identifiable roles.

### **"Actor" / "Actress" Delineation**

For the purposes of the MVHSTAs, students are adjudicated in the category corresponding to their gender identification, not the gender of the role that they played. Students identifying as non-binary or gender-fluid may choose to either select the category in which they wish to be adjudicated (regardless of the gender of the role) OR they may be adjudicated based on the gender of the role they played.

***The MVHSTA Team reserves the right to remove any Adjudicator from the program at any time for failure to abide by the rules laid out in this handbook.***

## How Do I Schedule My Shows?

Adjudicators are required to schedule their productions online through a program called **SignUpGenius**. Here are the steps:

1. Create a SignUpGenius account by going to [www.signupgenius.com](http://www.signupgenius.com). Please use the same email you have given to the MVHSTAs. This program also allows you to receive reminders via text if preferred.
2. Once you have an account, Adjudicators will receive a link in their email from SignUpGenius. This link provides access to all participating productions.
3. Please select a minimum of three (3) productions to adjudicate – this must include at least 1 play and 1 musical.
4. Shows are on first-come, first-served basis. **We must have a minimum of three (3) official adjudications per production.**
5. You will receive official confirmations/reminders from SignUpGenius and MVHSTA on which shows you selected.
6. **ALTERNATES (Optional):** In addition to your required (3) productions, we ask that you add two (2) “Alternative Adjudicator” slots in case of an emergency cancellation. To do so, please email the MVHSTA Team what shows and performance times you would like to be listed as an alternate for.



## How Do I Fill Out My Online Ballot?

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

1. On the opening day of the production, you will receive an email from Survey Monkey with a secured link to a survey for the production you are adjudicating. This link is connected to you and your email, so please do not share. **Survey Monkey ballots are sent to the same email address you used in SignUpGenius.**

*Some email security settings prevent links from being sent, so please check your junk folder for the link. Contact the MVHSTA Team if you do not receive a link to the survey.*

This survey will have all the elements for adjudication including Overall Production, Acting Categories, Ensemble, and other Specialty Categories. *Please refer to pages 13-19 for guidance.*

2. Once you click on the survey, please fill it out in its entirety. *Please note the “How Should I Rate It” on page 17 for guidance.*
3. Once you have completed your “Director Feedback” section, hit “Done,” and the survey will be sent to MVHSTA for tabulation.

Please note, if there is an error on the ballot, or there is some other technical challenge, contact MVHSTA Team as soon as possible.



## FEEDBACK

***Your written feedback matters.*** Please remember to keep your notes and observations constructive and positive. Adjudicator feedback will be reviewed by MVHSTA Team before being forwarded to Theatre Directors.

# Everything You Wanted to Know about Adjudication\*

*\*but were afraid to ask*

## Before Seeing a Show

- MVHSTA Adjudicators are given two (2) free tickets to performances. ***You are encouraged to bring a notebook, or a clipboard, on which to take notes.*** Please do not bring a guest who may distract you from adjudicating.
- Please make sure you have directions to the school in advance. This information is in SignUpGenius and on the Production Detail Form. All schools have provided directions from the school's Director. Please arrive at least 15 minutes before the show. Late arrivals can skew scoring. Call Taylor Benjamin if an emergency occurs.
- Report to the box office and introduce yourself as a MVHSTA Adjudicator. The attendant will have your tickets ready for you. They will not be under your personal name.

## While at the Show

- Before the show starts, take the time to look over the ballot to see who and what you are adjudicating. Make note of the actors you are to look for, and other aspects of the production you will adjudicate. If you notice any significant name changes or a last-minute substitute for any reason, please make a note of that, and continue to adjudicate the performance.
- ***Enjoy Act 1!*** Make mental notes as you are watching, and do not commit yourself to any final judgment until the conclusion of the performance. You can make some notes during intermission, ***but you should not give any scores until after the show.***
- Immediately after the show, you may have an urge to grab a pen to fill out your Performance Detail Form – **but WAIT!** Do that at home.

## After the Show

- Do not offer advice, or critique what was done, in person or on social media. Your ballot from Survey Monkey is the place to add your constructive feedback and praise. **Remember the 150-yard rule.**
- **As a requirement for being a MVHSTA Adjudicator, you must submit your official ballot online through Survey Monkey within 72 hours of seeing the designated performance.**
- Use the rubric enclosed in this packet (and in Survey Monkey) to make your score assignments. Remember what a 10 represents, a 9, an 8, etc. Be fair when giving one actor a 7, and another a 5. Do the scores balance out? Consult the rubric in your packet.
- **All shows must be adjudicated on their own merits.** Are you being too critical? Remember high school productions are as good as any shows that are out there, but are you considering all aspects of the show fairly and are you judging based on what you saw onstage or what you personally think is good?
- Every Theatre Director is prepared to receive feedback, and we encourage constructive advice or accolades when completing the online ballot. Nothing is worse than seeing a bunch of numbers without any explanation. The MVHSTA Team will read, and possibly edit, comments before forwarding to any participating school.



# What to Expect on the Adjudication Survey Forms

Depending on the needs of the nominated performance, each of the below category headings could be on the Survey Monkey forms. Though the categories will change for each survey, the Ranking Rubric will remain the same. This reference document is meant to shed light on the adjudication process for Theatre Directors.

## **Ranking Rubric on Survey Monkey:**

**10** Truly exceptional work and deserving of the highest recognition; **9** Elevated work and definitely deserves recognition; **8** Very good work and deserves recognition; **7** Above average work and deserves recognition; **6** Slightly above average work and may deserve recognition; **5** Average work for a high school student and not worthy of special recognition; **4** Slightly below average work; **3** Below average work; **2** Poor work; **1** Very poor work

## **Standard Survey Adjudication Categories**

### **Overall Production:**

1. Overall execution of artistic direction (including directing, music directing, choreography, etc.).
2. Overall execution of production design (including sets, lights, costumes, sounds, props, etc.).
3. Flow/pacing of scenes and/or musical numbers.
4. Communication of story and overarching themes to audience.
5. Level of professionalism and teamwork demonstrated by cast and crew.
6. Overall quality of acting.

### **Lead/Supporting Actor/Actress:**

1. Acting: Strength of physical choices on stage (specific gestures used by actors, use of stage presence/body language).
2. Acting: Emotional believability (depth of character).
3. Acting: Presence of active objectives (character working towards a goal).
4. Acting: Relationship with other characters (listening/reacting to others).
5. VOICE - SPEAKING: articulation and diction; projection and volume; breath support; pitch and tone; rhythm and pace; and variety (speaking with expression).
6. VOICE - SINGING: articulation and diction; projection and volume; breath support; pitch and tone; rhythm and pace; vocal range; and variety (singing with expression). *MUSICALS ONLY*
7. DANCE: technical execution of choreography; anatomical and kinesthetic awareness; artistic expression within the choreography; clarity of intent within given steps; and investment by performer in dancing. *MUSICALS ONLY*

### **Ensemble:**

1. Overall quality of ensemble (including depth of characters, presence of active objectives, and the relationship with other characters).
2. Acting: Strength of vocal and physical choices; relationship with other characters (listening/reacting to others); and commitment to roles.
3. Vocals – Speaking: Articulation and diction; projection and volume; breath support; pitch and tone; rhythm and pace; and variety (speaking with expression).



**Outstanding Student Director:**

1. Student Director: Overall vision and artistic performance of the nominated scene/number/show.
2. Student Director: Effective use of stage pictures.
3. Student Director: Effective use of the space including the stage, set, levels, and performers.
4. Student Director: Overall pacing of the scene/number/play/musical.

**Outstanding Student Music Director:**

1. Student Musical Director: Overall vision and artistic performance of the musical qualities within the nominated scene/number/show.
2. Student Musical Director: Effective use musical expression and vocal dynamics of characters.
3. Student Musical Director: Relationship between characterization and the musical elements within the nominated scene/number/show.
4. Student Musical Director: Incorporation of healthy posture and vocal support within the nominated scene/number/show.

**Outstanding Student Choreographer:**

1. Student Choreographer: Overall performance of the choreography within the nominated scene/number/show.
2. Student Choreographer: Effective use of physical spacing throughout the number.
3. Student Choreographer: Overall effectiveness of the stylization of choreography within the nominated scene/number/show.
4. Student Choreographer: Overall pacing of the scene/number/play/musical.

**Outstanding Student Lighting Design:**

1. Lighting Design: Overall vision and artistic design of the lighting within the nominated scene/number/show.
2. Lighting Design: Overall use of the lighting design, including specials, gobos, spotlights, etc., to help differentiate spaces within nominated scene/number/show.
3. Lighting Design: Effectiveness of using light during transitions, which include the start of the show, between scenes, and curtain call.
4. Lighting Design: Technical execution of the lighting design to see the action on the stage.

**Outstanding Student Costume Design:**

1. Costume Design: Overall vision and artistic design of the costumes within the nominated scene/number/show.
2. Costume Design: Overall use of line, texture, and color within the costume design to distinguish characters on stage.
3. Costume Design: Overall use of makeup and/or hair/wigs to enhance characterization of actors on stage.
4. Costume Design: Overall use of costume design to define the time period within the scene/number/show.

**Outstanding Student Sound Design:**

1. Sound Design: Overall artistic sound design within the nominated scene/number/show.
2. Sound Design: Quality and cohesiveness of the sound design within the world of the play.
3. Sound Design: Effectiveness of the mood/tone in the sound design contributing to the world of the play.
4. Sound Design: Sonic transitions between scenes within the nominated scene/number/show.

**Outstanding Student Set Design:**

1. Set Design: Overall vision and artistic design of the scenic elements within the nominated scene/number/show.
2. Set Design: Overall use of color, style, texture, and layout of the set design to establish the environment/setting of the nominated scene/number/show.
3. Set Design: Functionality of the scenic design to help tell the story of the nominated scene/number/show.
4. Set Design: Practicality of the scenic design fitting naturally within the world of the play/musical.

**Outstanding Student Makeup Design:**

1. Makeup Design: Overall vision and artistic design of the makeup within the nominated scene/number/show.
2. Makeup Design: Technical execution of makeup blending, colors, aging, and/or special effects to enhance characterization of actors within the nominated scene/number/show.
3. Makeup Design: Overall functionality of hair styles, facial hair, and/or wigs to enhance the characterization of actors within the nominated scene/number/show.
4. Makeup Design: Practicality of the makeup design fitting naturally within the world of the play/musical.

**Outstanding Student Prop Design:**

1. Prop Design: Overall artistic design of the props within the nominated scene/number/show.
2. Prop Design: Consistency of the prop design within the nominated scene/number/show.
3. Prop Design: Practicality of the props fitting naturally within the world of the play.
4. Prop Design: Functionality of the props to help tell the story.

**Outstanding Student Stage Management:**

1. Name of student has been nominated for this award and will be adjudicated outside of Survey Monkey. A PDF of the requirements can be found on the MVHSTA website. If you have any additional notes regarding stage management for this production, please type below.

**Outstanding Featured Student Dancer:**

1. Featured Dancer: Overall dance performance by the featured dancer telling the story within the nominated scene/number/show.
2. Featured Dancer: Emotional believability of the featured dancer throughout his/her performance.
3. Featured Dancer: Physical connectivity of the featured dancer's body and movement to the sound accompaniment of the nominated scene/number/show.
4. Featured Dancer: Overall execution of dance technique by the featured dancer to tell the story within the nominated scene/number/show.

**Outstanding Student Orchestra:**

1. Student Orchestra: Overall musical performance of the student orchestra telling the story of the nominated scene/number/show.
2. Student Orchestra: Overall quality of sound (pitch, dynamics, timing, timbre) created by the student orchestra during the nominated scene/number/show.
3. Student Orchestra: Overall connection of the student orchestra to the performers on stage to tell the story within the nominated scene/number/show.
4. Student Orchestra: Overall technical execution of music technique by the student orchestra within the nominated scene/number/show.

# What Should I Rate It?

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

1 2 3

4 5 6

7 8 9

10

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

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

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

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

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

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

## **Resource Questions to Help You Evaluate**

### **What was your overall opinion of the entire production?**

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

### **What did you think of the direction?**

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

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

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

### **What did you think of the lighting design?**

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

### **What did you think of the costume design?**

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

**What did you think of the sound design?**

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

**What did you think of the properties/set dressing?**

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

**What did you think of the ensemble?**

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

**What did you think of the individual acting?**

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

## **The Importance of Feedback in the Miami Valley High School Theatre Awards**

The MVHSTAs are an educational program that offers the opportunity for students to learn and grow from constructive feedback. Feedback, in the form of positive, specific comments, is an important part of the MVHSTA experience.

Research tells us that feedback is a vital component of effective learning that promotes student growth. Therefore, comments are not an optional add-on, they are the heart of the experience for the students.

### **Tips for Offering Effective Comments**

- ❖ Begin with the positive!
  - It is important to begin your comments with what the student did well and include specific examples from their performance to support your feedback.
- ❖ If appropriate, move on to suggestions for improvement.
- ❖ Focus your comments on the student's performance or presentation and avoid commenting on the choice of show, design, or other aspects of the production that are out of the student's control.
- ❖ Be specific!
  - For example, "Clear believable transitions deepened your character's story and arc throughout the performance" is a better comment than "Nice job with your character."
- ❖ Look through the pages of examples to see what the MVHSTAs believe to be effective feedback. (*Pages 16-18*)

### **Pro Tip**

Many adjudicators have found that it works best to write simple comments as you watch a performance, and fill in specific comments at intermission, as well as at the end of the performance.

There is no need to comment on every criterion. Instead, focus on leaving the student with one or two important gems that they can carry with them into their next audition, rehearsal process, or performance. What stood out to you? Where did they shine? Where might they improve?

## **Examples of Acceptable Feedback for a Range of Scores**

### **Above Average Scores:**

- Overall
  - “This production was very well done! I was impressed with how well the ensemble interacted with each other and the lead cast. The scene changes and lighting cues ran very smoothly and the costumes were appropriate for the time period portrayed in the show. Thank you for taking the time to pay attention to the small details!”
- Lead/Supporting Category
  - “[Student] delivered a stellar performance in the role of [removed], maintaining consistency and physical presence throughout the entire production. Their stamina from start to finish was impressive, allowing them to effectively convey their character's intentions on stage. Moreover, their stage presence, energy, and poise added depth and authenticity to the performance.”
  - “You have a great understanding of physical movement in theater. Your actions are meaningful, and you can see the reactions you have to other characters. You have the confidence and abilities to lead an ensemble to greatness if they are willing to follow. Keep up the great work.”
  - “[Student] was a delight on stage! Great use of dialect and many funny moments including some fantastic slapstick comedy moments. Some of your expressions stole the scene. You projected well to hear every line from near the back of the auditorium.”
  - “Extremely well done! Lines, emotion, volume, articulation were all excellent. Fourth wall breaks were very engaging, and pace and speed of line delivery worked to show more about the character. Believable the entire show.”

### **Average Scores:**

- Overall
  - “Overall average at best production. The singing could have used some work to blend, some voices stood out, or sounded pitchy, while others seemed to struggle. Dancing seemed to be all over the place, the cast either knew the moves and felt confident, or were struggling to do more than just remember the choreography. Lighting also seemed to miss the mark. You have some tall actors that either didn't know where their light was, or the lights were too tightly focused, cutting off their heads. Bright lively scenes with actors singing down stage right were dark blue, making it difficult to see them. Costumes seemed to give a mixed signal on time frame.”
- Lead/Supporting Category
  - “The character's voice projected well and built dramatic tension with other characters. The singing voice was harder to connect to emotionally. The body



language through the first act was strong and suggested the underlying character's menace, but often using same body language and comedic timing for the sake of the laugh, vs. telling the story with other characters sharing the scene."

- "[Student's] overall performance was solid and proficient. However, there were moments when their dance moves and facial expressions didn't quite align, and their delivery appeared somewhat monotone."
- "Student didn't seem solid in the role yet, like they were still exploring the character's story, and was unsure where the journey was taking them. Some of the songs had an arch and felt like they helped tell the story, but other songs, it felt as though the student wasn't sure why they were singing it, or how it moved their story along."
- "While you certainly looked the part, I felt that you had not fully developed your character. Continue to work on variety in physical movements, vocal delivery, and emotional projection for your characters. While you worked well with your fellow casemates, there were times when you seemed unsure of yourself."

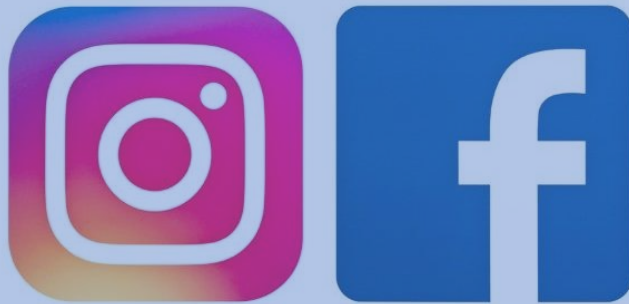
#### **Below Average Scores:**

- Overall
  - "Overall, character development and comic timing needed work. The jokes weren't landing, as evidenced by the audience's lack of laughter. The pacing was slow. The speed of line delivery was good, but there was consistently a lag getting to the next line or action."
- Lead/Supporting Category
  - "This student's portrayal unfortunately lacked attack, distinction and dynamics. I would've liked to have seen more complexity, more layers, within their portrayal, to help further the character's story."
  - "I thought that they had okay stage presence, but sometimes fell into young actors habit (like leg slapping). I think that they knew the characters' intentions but didn't always know what objective to use to convey the intentions and thoughts to the audience. They sometimes struggled with staying in the center of the pitch."
  - "This actor began with a good character voice and clear intent, but as the play progressed, the student did not maintain a consistent connection with their character. Lines and pacing were rushed. The actor needed stronger direction on blocking and making clear physical choices while interacting with the other characters. Ultimately, the actor's performance would have improved with stronger character development."
  - "Lost the majority of their lines through the entire production due to diction and cadence. The actor also had a flickering accent that was dabbled in and out of lines, but it did not help create the character or further the plot. It made them harder to understand and pulled me out of scenes."

**Follow the MVHSTAs and Dayton Live on Instagram and Facebook!**

**@MVHSTA**

**@DAYTONLIVE365**





**The Jimmy Awards®/The National High School Musical Theatre Awards® (NHSMTA®)**

The Jimmy Awards®/The National High School Musical Theatre Awards® (NHSMTA®) program impacts more than 100,000 students who participate in high school musical theatre competitions sponsored by presenters of Touring Broadway productions throughout the United States. Presented by the Broadway League Foundation, the program sends a Best Actress and Best Actor winner from each of these competitions to New York for a week-long theatre intensive of coaching and rehearsals with industry professionals in preparation for a one-night-only talent showcase on Broadway. Named for Broadway impresario James M. Nederlander, the program has been the catalyst for more than \$6,000,000 in educational scholarships. For more information, please visit [www.JimmyAwards.com](http://www.JimmyAwards.com).

The Miami Valley High School Theatre Awards is participating in the 2026 National High School Musical Theatre Awards® in New York City as a Regional Awards Program (RAP). **Although the purpose of the MVHSTAs is to celebrate, support and advocate for high school theatre in our area, the process of selecting two (2) students to send to New York city is competitive and includes an additional selection process.** Rules and regulations for the program may be found at <https://www.jimmyawards.com/participation/rules-and-regulations/>.

**You will be adjudicating students who are performing in Jimmys®-eligible roles, and your scores will directly impact their prospects of being invited to the Jimmys® Workshop.**

*Please note that students will be selected from both the MVHSTA “Lead Actor / Actress In A Musical” or “Supporting Actor / Actress In A Musical” categories, even though the NHSMTA language now uses “Qualifying Role” to denote the category. Some “Qualifying Roles” may fall in our “Supporting Actor / Actress” category.*

To be eligible for the NHSMTA® program, student performers must qualify by:

1. Performing a Qualifying Role in an Approved Musical. This list is available at <https://www.jimmyawards.com/participation/qualifying-shows-and-roles/>.
2. Being one of the top scoring performers who receive “Outstanding” scores in either “Actor” or “Actress” in a “Qualifying Role” in their MVHSTA-nominated performance.

3. Attend a MANDATORY workshop with theatre professionals on May 9, 2026.

*The MVHSTA Team reserves the right to determine performance readiness of all qualifying students. After the workshop in May 2026, the MVHSTA Team and panel of theatre professionals will use all available information including scores, experience, behavior, investment, and skill to determine who will be selected to attend The Jimmy Awards®.*

*Adjudicator scores are an essential factor in determining selection.*

***A student may be selected as a MVHSTA Jimmys® nominee up to (2) times in their high school career.***

#### **Previous MVHSTA Jimmy Award Nominees**

2021-2022 Season

Zach Ahrens (Versailles High School) and Isabel Rawlins (Versailles High School)

2022-2023 Season

Patrick Comunale (Centerville High School) and Maggie Weckesser (Chaminade Julianne High School)

2023-2024 Season

Connor Egloff (Stivers School for the Arts) and Sydney Korpusik (Centerville High School)

2024-2025 Season

Griffin Greear (Oakwood High School) and Lynn Dauterman (Kettering Fairmont High School)

#### **Questions/Comments/Help**

If you have any questions or need any help at all throughout the adjudication process, please contact the Dayton Live Staff directly. We are always happy to help!

You can email general inquiries to: [mvhsta@daytonlive.org](mailto:mvhsta@daytonlive.org) or

**Taylor Benjamin**  
**Manager – MVHSTA**

**937-637-8103 (call/text)**  
[taylor.benjamin@daytonlive.org](mailto:taylor.benjamin@daytonlive.org)

**Gary Minyard**  
**Chief Creative Officer**

**937-637-8303 (call/text)**  
[gary.minyard@daytonlive.org](mailto:gary.minyard@daytonlive.org)