



# 2025-2026 Orpheum High School Musical Theatre Awards Information and Guidelines

## FOR SCHOOLS PARTICIPATING IN ADJUDICATION

**NOTE: For musicals performed in the Fall semester, applications are due by 5:00pm on Monday, October 6<sup>th</sup>, 2025. For Spring semester musicals, applications are due by 5:00pm on Friday, December 5<sup>th</sup>, 2025. Early applications are encouraged.**

### Eligibility

- **Eligible musicals must be performed between October 1<sup>st</sup>, 2025 and April 5<sup>th</sup>, 2026.** If your musical will be out of this date range, please contact Lena Wallace Black at [lblack@orpheum-memphis.com](mailto:lblack@orpheum-memphis.com) to discuss.
- Each school must produce **at least 2 performances** of their show within the adjudication window with the same cast at each performance for judges to be scheduled to see. A show's run may overlap on the front or back end of the adjudication window as long as they have 2 non-understudy performances available for judges to see within the adjudication window.
- Each school must secure the rights to perform the show and may be subject to verification by the Orpheum. If selected to perform at The Orpheum High School Musical Theatre Awards, schools may be required to secure additional rights and pay an additional royalty. **Schools must list/acknowledge the Licensing House in their musical production program.**

- Adjudicated performances must be held in theatres not affiliated with The Orpheum Theatre Group, this includes the historic Orpheum and the Halloran Centre.
- Schools between 45 and 150 miles from The Orpheum must offer a **Saturday or Sunday matinee** performance for judging.
- Productions entered must meet one of the following criteria and be billed accordingly in the program:
  - A published musical, operetta, or revue currently held by a licensing house or having entered public domain.
  - An original piece that features an original script, music and/or lyrics, and is covered under a valid copyright.
- 101 Collection, Broadway Junior, G2K/Getting to Know Series, Young Performers Edition, Young@Part, Concert Versions, or any show NOT listed on the list of eligible shows dictated by the National High School Musical Theatre Awards are still eligible to be adjudicated, but **will not be eligible** for Lead Actor/Actress nominations or an Outstanding Overall Production nomination.
- In order to be considered for a nomination for Outstanding Student Orchestra, schools may have no more than 25% professional musicians in the orchestra. "Professional" musicians are defined as any musicians (including the conductor) that are not students currently enrolled at your school. Professionals may not comprise more than 1/4 of your orchestra.
- Schools must list/acknowledge their eligibility for The High School Musical Awards (including the show date of May 21st, 2026) in the program for their musical production. The logo and copy will be provided to schools no later than September 28th, 2025.
- Schools must submit the following within one week of show closing or no later than April 12<sup>th</sup>, 2026 to the dropbox link that will be provided:
  - 1) **A copy of the show program (if using a digital only format for patrons, we ask that you provide a PDF copy NOT a link to the program online as the link may expire)**
  - 2) **Up to 10 individual production photos (no collages) and 1 posed photo of the entire cast and crew. These photos should be high quality images of the performance that showcase all technical elements as well as the performance of the students. These photos**

should be in either jpeg or pdf format. Please no posed photos that are not from a scene in the show or backstage shots. These photos should accurately depict the world of your show and all of the design and performance elements that it offers. **PLEASE DO NOT SUBMIT MORE THAN 10 PRODUCTION PHOTOS AND 1 POSED CAST AND CREW PHOTO.** If more than 10 production photos are submitted, only the first 10 will be viewed and considered.

- 3) A copy of the show poster
  - 4) A detailed list of all participants involved in your production via the provided template. This list will include all cast, crew, and orchestra members and will include their name, pronouns, their role on stage behind the scenes, or in the pit, as well as their grade or if they are a hired professional or adult/staff/volunteer. This should remain in a spreadsheet format, not be turned into a PDF.
- Eligibility is at the discretion of The Orpheum Theatre, which reserves the right to amend rules as necessary to maintain a fair process.
  - **Any use of vocal tracks during the submitted musical will result in the disqualification of the school.**

**\*\*\* The named teacher/ director on the application is responsible for communicating any changes from their original application (e.g. understudies, hired professionals, show dates, budget details) to Orpheum staff two weeks prior to their show opening. If your show changes dates, times, or locations, you must let us know as soon as possible so we can make changes to our adjudication schedule. Failure to communicate changes in a timely manner may result in your show being ineligible for adjudication.**

### The Adjudication Process

- Judges will provide an official Orpheum voucher for complimentary admission (with guest if requested) into a performance.
- Schools with double casts must select one cast for adjudication and communicate all applicable performance dates to Lena as soon as they are determined.

- Adjudicator comments will be made available to the coordinating teacher. Adjudication feedback is designed to celebrate achievements and reinforce positive choices in the production process while also offering opportunities for growth and constructive criticism to encourage development and improvement in each school from year to year. This feedback will be sent to teachers after the awards ceremony is complete and can arrive anytime after the completion of the ceremony to the beginning months of the next school year.
- Judges may not receive preferential treatment or gifts of any kind. Schools may be disqualified if preferential treatment is received.
- All those involved in the ticketing/seating process of the adjudicators should be aware of the following information:
  - Judges will hand in a voucher good for 2 FREE tickets to the performance. While they may not choose to bring a guest, please be prepared to seat them together in the event they do. Please alert anyone potentially handling tickets that these vouchers are coming and discuss with them how you wish to handle them upon arrival.
  - Judges will always prefer a paper program to a digital program in order to take notes as necessary, so if you are offering both or running low on paper copies, we ask that you do your best to reserve paper copies for when you know they are attending.
  - Judges tend to prefer being able to choose their own seats. We understand every venue and ticketing system works differently. If you must assign judges a seat, please be aware that they are instructed to leave expeditiously, so aisle seating near an exit is preferred.
  - Please do not reserve seats for judges with signs, create a special escort, or do anything out of the ordinary to draw attention to or create special recognition of a judge being seated. They are to experience your lobby and box office as any other patron would and should not receive any additional special treatment.

### **Individual Role Eligibility**

- **Lead Eligible Roles:** In order to be eligible to compete at the National High School Musical Theatre Awards, Outstanding Lead Actor/Actress nominees must have played a role considered a Qualifying role by American Theatre Wing (Tony Awards) and/or the show's licensing house. A list of all eligible roles may be found at <https://www.jimmyawards.com/participation/qualifying-shows-and-roles/>

- **Featured, Supporting and Lead** nominees must fall into **one of these categories**:
  - They must be enrolled at the participating high school, presenting the musical
  - They are cast in a show at a single-gender school who engages students of different genders to fulfill casting requirements
  - They are a homeschooled student cast in a participating school's show
- Students are only eligible for one nomination per category
- Per the National High School Musical Theatre Awards program, 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. All casting or script change requests for performances in the NHSMTA program must be approved beforehand. The regional awards program should be prepared to submit proof of approval from the show's licensing organization.
- Teachers will not be asked to nominate individual students for performance awards on their applications. These nominations will be entirely decided by the judges that attend the performances. This eliminates any confusion between the school and the judges about not being able to properly identify the students nominated by the school.
- Judges will be allowed to nominate any actor/actress that is listed in the Lead category by the Jimmy Awards in the supporting category instead IF they feel their work could qualify them for a nomination in the supporting category. This is not to eliminate the student's opportunity to be nominated in the leading category, it is to give them more of a chance to be nominated alongside another leading actor/actress in the same show if their work could technically be considered supporting within the show.

### **How to Apply/Application Information**

- Schools that intend to participate should submit the "Intent to Apply" form before submitting their official application. **The Intent to Apply form is to let us know you intend to submit a musical, so that we may have an idea of how many schools will be participating. It is NOT the formal application.**

**Please fill out the intent to apply form first, even if you are ready to fill out the full application. The intent to apply form can be found here:**

**<https://forms.gle/GqMBE7GTH3MJW3xJ6>**

- If the Intent to Apply deadline has passed but your school is still interested in participating, please contact Lena Wallace Black at [lblack@orpheum-memphis.com](mailto:lblack@orpheum-memphis.com).
- Applications should be submitted online. **For musicals performed in the Fall semester, applications are due by 5:00pm on October 6<sup>th</sup>, 2025. For spring semester musicals, applications are due by 5:00pm on December 5<sup>th</sup>, 2025.** Early applications are encouraged.
- Schools may submit an application for only one production per school year.
- To apply to participate for adjudication, please fill out the application found here: <https://forms.gle/9qoh1u4E98AcZPBG9>

### **Nominations and HSMTA Ceremony**

**The Orpheum HSMTA Nominations will be announced April 20, 2026**

- All participating schools will be asked to choose **up to two** students to participate in opening and closing numbers at the May 21<sup>st</sup>, 2026 ceremony. These students are expected to attend all required rehearsals May 16-21 and to conduct themselves professionally while at The Orpheum.
- Students nominated in the Outstanding Lead Actor/Actress categories will perform part of one of their songs at the May 21<sup>st</sup>, 2026 ceremony. These students are expected to attend all required rehearsals May 9<sup>th</sup> -10<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> -21<sup>st</sup> and to conduct themselves professionally while at The Orpheum. **A mandatory meeting for all Lead nominees will be held on Wednesday, April 29<sup>th</sup>, 2026.** Students must attend this meeting to be eligible to perform and compete for Outstanding Lead Actor/Actress.
- Students nominated in the Outstanding Featured and Supporting Actor/Actress/Dancer categories will perform a number with all other

nominees in these categories at the May 21<sup>st</sup>, 2026 ceremony. These students are expected to attend all required rehearsals May 16<sup>th</sup>- 21<sup>st</sup> and to conduct themselves professionally while at The Orpheum. **A mandatory meeting for all Featured and Supporting nominees will be held on Thursday, April 30<sup>th</sup>, 2026.** Students must attend this meeting to be eligible to perform and compete for Outstanding Featured and Supporting awards.

- Students nominated for Student Technical, Creative, and Stage Management Achievement awards will be required to make a presentation in front of a panel of technical theatre adjudicators the weekend of May 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup>, 2026. **A mandatory meeting for all technical nominees will be held on Thursday, April 30<sup>th</sup>, 2026.** Students must attend this meeting to be able to receive their interview time slot and be eligible for these awards.
- Schools nominated in the Outstanding Overall Production category will be invited to perform one number from their show at the May 21<sup>st</sup>, 2026 ceremony. **The Orpheum reserves the right to choose which number will be performed.** Students and coordinating teachers are expected to attend all required rehearsals May 18<sup>th</sup> -21<sup>st</sup> and to conduct themselves professionally while at The Orpheum.
- Outstanding Overall Production nominee performances **must be under five minutes in length and must consist of a single production number from the nominated musical.** The time limit will be enforced. Schools will be asked to cut the number to the appropriate time limit if necessary.
- Outstanding Overall Production numbers may have a maximum of 26 students in their production number. Each school will have access to a maximum of six lavalier microphones for soloists.
- On-stage props for Outstanding Overall Production and Outstanding Lead Actor/Actress nominees are limited to pieces that can be easily carried on and off stage. Props are subject to approval by Orpheum staff.
- Lighting and sound decisions are at the discretion of Orpheum staff. To maintain fairness, special lighting and sound requests cannot be accommodated.

- Performances at the May 21<sup>st</sup>, 2026 ceremony should be appropriate for all ages. The Orpheum reserves the right to cut any material that is determined by producers to be inappropriate.
- The Orpheum reserves the right to use the voice or likeness of any participating student or adult in its marketing and public relations efforts.
- Acceptance of an award indicates agreement with the terms of the publicity waiver.