



2019-2020

Rules and Guidelines

Starlight Theatre

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Section I – Participant Eligibility

A. To be eligible for participation in the Blue Star Awards, a school must:

1. be any public or private high school located within a driving distance of 60 miles from Starlight Theatre. Participating schools from the 2018-2019 Blue Star Awards are exempt from the mileage limit.
2. present a musical theatre production to be adjudicated no later than Sunday, March 29, 2020. The production must be in a run that is open to the public. No rehearsals will be eligible for adjudication.
3. complete and submit a Registration Form.
4. within six weeks of being notified of acceptance, submit a \$75 registration fee.

B. Productions entered must fit one of the following categories and be billed accordingly in the program:

1. published musical, operetta or revue (either currently held by a licensing house or having entered public domain) that is a standard or school edition/version (not Broadway Junior, G2K or Young Performers Edition);
2. original piece of musical theatre that features an original script, music and/or lyrics and is covered under a valid copyright; or
3. original compilation of material from other sources that is presented as musical theatre with the approval or permission of the original creators or their representatives.

Section 2 – Participant Benefits

A. Adjudicator Snapshot and Commentary

Starlight Theatre will provide schools with summary reports of adjudicator comments. These reports are intended to give teachers maximum educational feedback to share with their students and to consider for future productions.

B. Fundraising Tickets

Starlight Theatre will donate two tickets to a Starlight Broadway production to each participating school. Schools are to use the tickets for a raffle, auction or other theatre department fundraising effort. (Note: Ticketing restrictions may apply due to contractual agreements with national tours.)

C. Blue Star Teen Ensemble

When Starlight Theatre self-produces a musical requiring a teen ensemble, Blue Star Awards participating students are one of the select pools allowed to audition. Audition notices will be sent to teachers to, in turn, notify students of Starlight audition dates and times.

Section 3 – School Publicity

A. Program Copy

All participating schools are required to include the Blue Star Awards Logo Copy in their show programs. Inclusion of this information serves as an endorsement of the school's production and recognition of participation in the Blue Star Awards. The Blue Star Awards Logo Copy will be provided via email.

Section 4 – Awards

A. Award Categories

Blue Star Awards are presented, based on the adjudication and nomination process, in the following categories:

- Outstanding Artistic Contribution by a Student*
- Outstanding Orchestra
- Outstanding Costume Design and Construction, Tiers I & II
- Outstanding Scenic Design and Construction, Tiers I & II
- Outstanding Hair and Makeup Design
- Outstanding Lighting Design
- Outstanding Technical Crew
- Outstanding Actor in an Ensemble Role
- Outstanding Actress in an Ensemble Role
- Outstanding Ensemble
- Outstanding Actor in a Featured Role
- Outstanding Actress in a Featured Role
- Outstanding Actor in a Supporting Role
- Outstanding Actress in a Supporting Role
- Outstanding Actor in a Lead Role
- Outstanding Actress in a Lead Role
- Outstanding Overall Production

*Outstanding Artistic Contribution by a Student

- a. This award recognizes a student/s who contributed to the direction, music direction and/or choreography of the production.
- b. To qualify, the student/s had to have taken full responsibility for directing one or more scenes, teaching and working with performers/musicians in learning one or more songs, and/or creating and teaching the choreography for one or more songs.
- c. To be considered for the award, the following must be submitted **no later than 10 days (not business days) prior to the first performance** of a school's musical:
 1. the Outstanding Artistic Contribution by a Student Nomination Form;
 2. a one-page essay written by the student/s that details their contributions to the production as well as what they learned from the experience (offering specifics about the applicable scene/s and/or song/s); and
 3. a statement of 500 words or less from the recommending teacher that provides details about the student's/students' contributions and why they feel the student/s should be considered for the award.
- d. Multiple students may be considered together for this award; however, no more than three students who worked equally on the same aspect/s of the production will be considered in tandem.

B. Eligibility Restrictions

1. Although commentary may be provided for youth (8th grade and below) or adult cast members, only high school students are eligible to receive nominations and awards. If adults are used for lead or

supporting roles, the production will not be eligible for Outstanding Overall Production. If youth performers (8th grade or below) are used for three or more lead or supporting roles, the production will not be eligible for Outstanding Overall Production.

2. Adults may be used as ensemble members in a production but may only comprise 5% or less of the total ensemble. The ensemble is defined as all cast members that cannot be considered as having lead, supporting or featured roles.
 - a. For the Outstanding Overall Production category, if more than 5% of the ensemble is composed of adults, the school will not be considered.
 - b. For the Outstanding Ensemble category, if any adults perform as ensemble members, the school will not be considered.
3. For the Outstanding Orchestra category, only schools composed of 75% or more student musicians will be eligible.
4. For Outstanding Scenic Design and Construction and Outstanding Costume Design and Construction categories, schools that rent 50% or more of their sets or costumes will be ineligible. Additionally, for both categories, students must contribute at least 50% to the design *and* 50% to the construction to be eligible.
5. For all technical categories, if the majority of work was done by adults, the school will not be eligible for the applicable category.
6. Determination of eligibility will be based on information provided by the school in the Production Information Form.

C. Budget Tiers

The Outstanding Costume Design and Construction and Scenic Design and Construction categories are divided into two tiers based upon the budgets schools have established for the categories. Budget tiers are defined annually as higher or lower than the median of all schools' budgets provided on the Production Information Form.

D. Technical Achievement Award

1. This award recognizes a student or students who has/have given their time and talent in a backstage capacity (i.e. stage manager, deck/set crew, board operator, dresser) or design field (i.e. lighting, scenic, costume) for the current year's Blue Star Awards production. Students at all high school grade levels may be considered for this award; however, no more than three students who worked equally on the same technical aspect/s of the production will be considered in tandem.
2. To be considered for the award, the following must be submitted by **Monday, March 23, 2020**:
 - a. Technical Achievement Award Application;
 - b. a recommending teacher letter of 500 words or less discussing the student's/students' contribution to the current production;
 - c. a one-page essay written by the student/s, which details their contributions to the production, addresses what they learned from the experience, and offers specifics about their applicable backstage and/or design contributions; and
 - d. support materials pertaining to the student's/s' technical areas of expertise.

E. Rising Star Scholarships

1. Two \$2,500 Rising Star Scholarships are awarded to one female and one male high school senior who, during their high school career, made outstanding contributions to their high school's musical theatre program, including the current year's Blue Star Awards participating production.
2. Applicants do not have to intend to study Theatre or Musical Theatre in college to be considered.
3. To be considered for the scholarship, the following must be submitted by **Monday, March 23, 2020**:
 - a. Rising Star Scholarship Application;
 - b. a high school academic transcript (copy acceptable);
 - c. a résumé of work, volunteer and theatrical activities;
 - d. an acceptance letter/proof of admission to an institution of higher education;
 - e. a student essay of 500 words or less that describes his/her musical theatre experiences at his/her high school, including what he/she learned about him/herself because of these experiences, and why he/she chose his/her anticipated major; and
 - f. a recommending teacher letter of 500 words or less describing the student's participation in and contribution to the school's musical theatre program during his/her high school career.

F. Community Impact Award

1. This award recognizes a high school musical theatre program that found a way/s to connect its participating production with its community in a meaningful fashion.
2. To be considered for the award, the following must be submitted by **Monday, March 23, 2020**:
 - a. a one- to two-page summary of your community engagement initiative, including examples of cast/crew participation;
 - b. additional supplemental materials (flyers, letter of support from the community, project outline, etc.); and
 - c. one to four photos from the project.

Section 5 – Adjudication

A. Three adjudicators attend each registered production and complete a comprehensive written response, which includes commentary that is later provided to each participating school.

1. When scheduling adjudicators, Starlight works to ensure adjudicators are not sent to the same school two years in a row. This allows schools to have fresh eyes and opinions from year to year. In some instances, due to sickness, weather or other unforeseen circumstances, a replacement adjudicator who did attend the previous year's production may be added to a school.
2. Adjudicators receive a list of participating schools annually. Starlight asks adjudicators to recuse themselves from a school if they have a personal relationship with the leadership of the school's musical (or other school employee). If they were hired by a school to serve in a creative/supervisory role for the theatre and/or if they have a child who attends a participating school, adjudicators recuse themselves from that entire school district.

B. High-Definition Filming

1. Starlight Theatre films every production in high definition to ensure that each participating school is fairly and accurately represented. The video component is later used by the Blue Star Awards

Nomination Committee to reach final decisions on nominations and winners. If an adjudicator is unable to attend a production and a replacement cannot be secured, he/she will use the video to adjudicate.

2. Unless it is simply not possible, schools must provide a central/prime location in the house of the theatre from which to film, rather than a sound or lighting booth.

C. Adjudicator Tickets

Schools must reserve six tickets (two per adjudicator) at no cost during their show's run. Once adjudicators are assigned for each show, Starlight's Education and Outreach Department will contact coordinating teachers to request that tickets be set aside at Will Call for adjudicators to pick up at the performance.

D. High-Volume Weekends

The highest volume of productions takes place during November. Over time, the number of schools performing on and around November weekends has increased substantially. This yearly increase has made it highly difficult to accommodate the related adjudicator and videography scheduling. With this in mind, the following November guidelines are in place:

1. In the order that their registration forms are received, the first 10 schools returning to the program from the prior year will automatically be accommodated with adjudicator and videography scheduling for each week of November so long as their registration form was received by the deadline date. Returning schools that do not submit the form by the deadline date forego their priority status.
2. For those schools over and above the first 10 whose productions fall in these weeks, Starlight will make every effort to accommodate their productions depending on the final layout of the full scheduling.
3. Schools over and above the first 10 whose productions fall in these weeks that *cannot be accommodated* after every attempt is made will be contacted by Starlight's Education and Outreach Manager to request one of the following to ensure participation:
 - a. that an additional performance that can be adjudicated and/or filmed be added, or
 - b. that access be granted to adjudicators and/or the videography team to attend another performance that will take place but was not included in the submitted production schedule listing (i.e. an all-school matinee performance, a "friends and family" performance, etc.)
4. Each year, schools returning from the previous season that submit their registration materials by the deadline will receive priority scheduling. New schools, plus returning schools that did not meet the registration deadline but wish to register and whose performances fall in these high-volume weeks, will only be admitted based on Starlight's ability to accommodate them once returning schools that met the deadline for registration have been scheduled. New schools and returning schools that did not meet the registration deadline will be subject to the requests noted in Section 5D, 3a and 3b above.

E. Double Casting

If a school has or plans to double cast one or more roles in their production, the coordinating teacher must notify Starlight's Education and Outreach Department at the time of registration. The school must select one set of cast members to be adjudicated and inform Starlight regarding which dates and times the selected cast will perform. Multiple students may not be adjudicated for the same role.

F. Evaluation Areas

Adjudicators consider a multitude of areas when evaluating each Blue Star Awards category. The following pages contain the areas they are asked to evaluate per category.

Technical Categories

Artistic Contribution by a Student (Direction, Music Direction and/or Choreography)

Direction

- Believability and clarity of story and plot
- Dialogue interpretation
- Dynamics between performers
- Animation and energy of performers
- Performance level consistency
- Character consistency
- Physical pictures
- Effective use of space
- Effective use of performers

Music Direction

- Clarity and diction
- Animation and energy of performers
- Pitch and tonality
- Rhythm
- Vocal balance (i.e. ensemble to principals)
- Overall balance (i.e. orchestra to performers)
- Consistency of musical elements

Choreography

- Appropriate for period and location of the show
- Inventive and creative
- Use of effective patterns
- Use of space
- Variety of movement
- Execution by performers
- Animation and energy of performers
- Level of difficulty
- Visual consistency of choreographic elements

Orchestra

- Balance with stage performers
- Balance between orchestral parts
- Pitch and tonality
- Appropriate tempi
- Rhythm
- Execution
- Elements of professionalism (i.e. dress, deportment, etiquette)

Scenic Design and Construction

- Established and maintained mood
- Established and maintained time period
- Established and maintained location

- Ease of movement
- Appeared sturdy and safe
- Functional
- Complete and finished
- Size appropriate
- Well-executed

Lighting Design

- Established and maintained mood
- Established and maintained time period
- Established and maintained location
- Helped to focus the attention of the audience
- Well-executed

Costume Design and Construction

- Established and maintained mood
- Established and maintained time period
- Established and maintained character
- Established and maintained location
- Gave performers full range of motion
- Well-executed (fit, neatness, attention to detail, etc.)

Hair and Makeup Design

- Established and maintained mood
- Established and maintained time period
- Established and maintained location
- Established and maintained character
- Well-executed (fit, neatness, attention to detail, etc.)

Outstanding Technical Crew (adjudicated from curtain to curtain*)

Lighting Crew

- Helped to maintain the design elements
- Maintained the world of the play
- Executed cues with accuracy
- Completed their tasks with no performance interruptions
- Transitioned smoothly between cues

Sound Crew

- Helped to maintain the design elements
- Maintained the world of the play
- Executed cues with accuracy
- Maintained balance between performers and orchestra
- Maintained balance among performers
- Provided clarity

Deck/Set Crew

- Helped to maintain the design elements
- Maintained the world of the play
- Moved quickly and effectively
- Completed their tasks with no performance interruptions

Flying Effects Crew (re: flying of performers only)

- Helped to maintain the design elements
- Maintained the world of the play
- Moved quickly and effectively
- Completed tasks with no performance interruptions
- Appeared to be safely executed

Costume Crew

- Helped to maintain the design elements
- Maintained the world of the play
- Moved quickly and effectively
- Completed their tasks within a timely manner
- Accuracy and completion of the performer's look

Hair and Makeup Crew

**** Pre-show application as well as curtain-to-curtain maintenance are considered.***

- Helped to maintain the design elements
- Maintained the world of the play
- Moved quickly and effectively
- Completed their tasks within a timely manner
- Accuracy and completion of the performer's look

Overall Technical Review

Technical elements considered for the entire production include:

- Design of lights, set, costumes, hair and makeup served the show
- Smooth transitions between scenes and duty execution by crews

Performance Categories

Adjudicators consider the following for each of the individual performance categories:

Singing

- Pitch and tone
- Rhythm
- Diction
- Phrasing and interpretation
- Expression and artistry

Acting

- Animation and energy
- Believability
- Dialogue interpretation
- Relationship to other performers
- Character consistency
- Elements of poise and ease on stage
- Stage presence

Stage Movement

- Accuracy
- Character consistency
- Fluidity
- Motivation of movement
- Animation and energy
- Spatial awareness

Dancing

- Precision
- Animation and energy
- Execution of choreography
- Expression and artistry
- Spatial awareness

In addition to the previous elements, adjudicators consider the following for the Ensemble:

Singing

- Vocal balance
- Balance of harmonic parts

Acting

- Dynamics between performers

Overall Performance Review

Performance elements considered for the entire production include:

- Story, plot and theme transmitted effectively to the audience
- Musical score executed successfully
- Choreography executed successfully
- Elements of student understanding and involvement in the overall performance

Section 6 – Nominations

A. Blue Star Awards Nomination Committee

1. Starlight Theatre convenes a Nomination Committee of selected adjudicators to review and evaluate adjudicator feedback and high-definition videos of performances. Starlight provides oversight but makes no contribution to decisions made by the committee. Starlight strives to have a blend of new and returning committee members each year.

2. Section 5 above lists the areas adjudicators evaluate. Adjudicator evaluations, which include scoring components, commentary and the option to flag an area/student for nomination consideration, are made available to all Nomination Committee members.
3. Starlight establishes a system of review that requires all Nomination Committee members to view students or elements (depending on the category) in a specific order. They start with students/elements receiving three flags for nomination (one per adjudicator) from top cumulative score down; those with two flags for nomination follow, again starting with the top cumulative score. The process continues until committee members have viewed an established number of entrants in a given category. Following this required review, members then have an opportunity to “elevate” work that may not have made the scoring/flagging threshold but which they feel should be in the mix. This step is in place due to the subjective nature of scoring artistic work. Committee members are always reminded that if they saw a show, their opinions are already present as one of the three commentaries provided to all committee members.
4. Once a category has been reviewed, Nomination Committee members privately complete a top-pick sheet, ranking their personal preferred entries in a given category from 1 to 8 (with 1 being their top choice). Starlight then assigns a numeric component to each place (1st place gets 8 points, 2nd place gets 7 points...). The eight students/elements receiving the highest cumulative totals in a category become the nominees.
5. Once nominees are determined in all categories, Nomination Committee members receive a final ballot of all categories. Nominees are listed in alphabetical order on the ballot *without* the cumulative point totals they previously received. On this final ballot, members privately vote for their top choice in each category; majority vote wins the category. In the case of a tie, the nominee with the highest cumulative point total from the top-pick scoring heading into the final ballot is declared the winner. If the tied nominees also tied in the previous cumulative point total, they will both be declared winners in that category.

B. Receiving Nominations

1. When the review process is complete, official nominations are made and announced to all schools and the general public in late April/early May.
2. Schools that earned nominations will receive banners listing nominations received and a nomination packet including all necessary Blue Star Awards Ceremony information.
3. For schools receiving one or more nominations, a Nominee Information Questionnaire will be provided. This form is to be completed and returned to Starlight Theatre. As indicated on the form, the school must provide production photos for all nominated performance and technical categories.
4. For all nominees performing songs from their production in the Blue Star Awards Ceremony (Actor/Actress in a Lead Role and Overall Production), their schools will be contacted by Starlight Theatre with music requirements.

Section 7 – Ceremony

- A. The 2020 Blue Star Awards Ceremony will be held at Starlight Theatre on the evening of Thursday, May 21, 2020.** The ceremony date is always dependent upon Starlight’s annual production calendar.
- B. Admission, Seating and Parking**
1. Admission to the Blue Star Awards Ceremony is free and open to the public. Seating is “general admission.” All guests enter on the east side of the Starlight venue.
 2. All vehicles, with the exception of buses, are charged a nominal parking fee.
 3. Schools nominated for Outstanding Overall Production are reserved seating equal to the number of participating students listed on the school’s Production Information Form.
- C. Outstanding Actor/Actress in a Lead Role Nominees**
1. All nominees for Outstanding Actor/Actress in a Lead Role are invited to perform their signature songs during the Blue Star Awards Ceremony in a medley arranged by Starlight’s music director.
 2. Nominees are required to participate in rehearsals for the medley at Starlight prior to the ceremony. Rehearsal schedules are distributed when nominations are announced.
 3. Students should wear a costume from their production when performing in the medley.
- D. Outstanding Overall Production Nominees**
1. All schools nominated for Outstanding Overall Production are asked to perform one musical number from their production during the Blue Star Awards Ceremony.
 2. The selected song should be one of the ensemble numbers from the performing school’s show.
 3. Maximum performance time allowed is five minutes.
 4. Performing schools may not make special lighting or scenic requests.
 5. Performing schools must be blocked to only utilize the stage space, with no students permitted to perform in/from Starlight’s audience seating.
 6. Costuming and a limited number of hand props are encouraged. Dressing rooms will be provided as well as a small area for prop storage backstage.
 7. Performers are required to wear footwear when performing on the Starlight stage.
 8. All performers are required to attend a rehearsal at Starlight prior to the ceremony. Rehearsal schedules are distributed when nominations are announced.
 9. Because the Blue Star Awards exists to recognize the accomplishments of high school students, for Outstanding Overall Production nominee casts that include students younger than high school age, only non-high-school-aged students whose roles are classified as supporting or featured (not ensemble) *and* whose participation is germane to the audience’s understanding of the number may perform. Inclusion of such cast members remains at the discretion of Starlight Theatre’s Education and Outreach Manager.
- E. Blue Star Award Winners**
1. Each individual award (i.e. Outstanding Actor/Actress in a Lead Role) presented at the Blue Star Awards Ceremony should be kept by the winning student.

2. Group awards, such as Outstanding Ensemble or Outstanding Orchestra, presented at the ceremony is intended to go to the school to be displayed as part of its theatre's history.
3. Starlight Theatre plans to participate in the 2020 National High School Musical Theatre Awards (NHSMTA). The Blue Star Award winners for Actor/Actress in a Lead Role will be sent to New York to participate. However, if one or both of the Lead Role winners performed a role that is not included in NHSMTA's Qualifying Shows and Roles list, he/she will remain the Blue Star Award Winner but the corresponding winner of Actor/Actress in a Supporting Role will attend NHSMTA.