



Musical Theatre Program

Frequently Asked Questions

What is the *SpotLight Musical Theatre Program*?

The *SpotLight Musical Theatre Program* is operated by Hennepin Theatre Trust, a non-profit organization that owns the historic State, Orpheum and Pantages Theatres and is devoted to enriching the vibrant cultural environment of the Twin Cities. The Trust created *SpotLight* in 2004 with two goals in mind. First, to **honor and recognize high school students** who participate and excel in musical theatre and, second, to emphasize the **importance of including theatre arts education** in high schools. In addition to developing performance related skills, students who participate in musical theatre also learn **collaboration, elocution, critical thinking, problem solving and self-expression**, skills essential to success outside of the classroom. Unlike athletics or academics, there was no established public forum to celebrate the talents and hard work involved in creating high school musicals. *SpotLight* provides the opportunity to acknowledge the efforts of those involved in creating these amazing productions.

How does my school get involved?

Any high school (public, private and parochial) that produces a musical in the seven county Twin Cities metro area and some schools in greater Minnesota may apply. Applications are available online in late August of each year at www.hennepintheatretrust.org. Participation is limited to 35 high schools for the 2009-2010 calendar year. Schools are accepted into the program according to the receipt of the electronic application.

Does it require a big time commitment?

No. You produce your musical and our evaluators come to you. The most critical aspect of this program, however, is communication. As the director and/or teacher you are responsible for acting as the primary liaison and relaying appropriate information from the *SpotLight Program* to your students and their families throughout the year. It is important to designate an additional primary contact if your director is not a full-time employee at the school. At the award ceremony in June, schools and individuals that are recognized for Overall Production of a Musical and Outstanding Performance in a Leading Role will have the opportunity to perform as part of the event. This will require directors to schedule rehearsals with their students on their own time for their specific production numbers prior to the award ceremony in June. **It is the director's responsibility to provide copies of the sheet music (piano, bass and percussion parts) for the award event performances.**

Is it expensive to be a part of the program?

No. There is a one time \$100 registration fee which helps to cover administrative and evaluator fees. The conference workshop held in February is \$25 per student which covers lunch, materials, building rental and teaching artist fees. We will waive fees for any student or school that demonstrates financial need.

How does the *SpotLight Program* work?

Three evaluators from the professional musical theatre world and the field of education attend each participating school's musical production. The evaluators critique the performance in several different categories using a rubric, developed for the "Rising Star Program" at the Paper Mill Playhouse, as their guide. Based on the evaluator's comments and tabulations, productions and individuals that receive high ranking in a specific category are then honored at an awards ceremony held in the spring of each year.

Is it a competition?

No. Each participating musical is evaluated on the merits of the individual production and is not compared or ranked against other musicals. Depending on the results of the evaluations, there can be multiple honorees in each category.

What are the benefits to the schools and students?

The *SpotLight Program* provides an excellent opportunity for high school theatre students from across the metro area to network with other students, receive constructive feedback on their production from professional evaluators, gain valuable knowledge from workshops available to them at the *SpotLight* annual conference, and to be recognized for their involvement and talent. Throughout the year, participating schools will have the opportunity to attend special events, discounted Broadway shows and artist talk backs sponsored by Hennepin Theatre Trust. In addition, a professional theatre artist will be available to lead topic specific musical theatre workshops at your school sometime during the year. Through the *SpotLight Program*, the Trust seeks to underscore the value of high school theatre programs by stressing the opportunity these musicals provide to build individual skills, engage students and enrich communities.

What is involved at the mid-year conference and *SpotLight Awards*?

On Saturday, February 20, students will have the opportunity to attend a day-long conference consisting of musical theatre related workshops facilitated by musical theatre professionals. The conference gives *SpotLight* participants from all the high schools the opportunity learn, share ideas and collaborate. The year culminates with a professionally produced awards event on Monday, June 14 at the historic Orpheum Theatre. Recognition will be given to all the nominees and Outstanding Overall Productions and Outstanding Lead honorees will be featured in performances at the awards. This is a public event so we encourage everyone in the community to attend and support these talented young artists!

How can I help?

Hennepin Theatre Trust depends upon financial support from individuals, foundations and corporations who realize the impact of recognizing and honoring young aspiring artists, and who believe in the importance of including theatre arts education in the schools. We also welcome your volunteer energy to make the June event a great success! For information on how you can contribute please contact Greta Grosch at greta.grosch@hennepintheatretrust.org.