



Rules for the Administration of The Helen Hayes Awards

(updated January 1, 2009)

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The following rules and procedures have been devised by the Board of Directors of The Washington Theatre Awards Society to govern The Helen Hayes Awards -- which are to be awarded annually for the purpose of recognizing excellence and celebrating the professional theatre in the Washington, D.C. area. In creating these rules and procedures, the Board aims to achieve fairness for all participants and credibility for the Awards process, and to be responsive to the needs of the Washington area theatre community.

These rules are subject to change at any time by vote of the Board of Directors. The Board shall evaluate these rules on an annual basis.

A. ELIGIBILITY

1. Any legitimate live stage play is eligible for consideration if:
 - a. It is presented within the Washington, D.C. area, which is inclusive of all theatres located in the District of Columbia, the counties of Arlington, Fairfax, Howard, Montgomery, and Prince Georges, the city of Alexandria, and the Route 50 Corridor to and including the city of Annapolis; and
 - b. It is produced by a theatre or producing organization which compensates their artists on a regular basis; and
 - c. It is presented for a period of 16 performances, not including previews, in one location.
 - 1) If the initial scheduled run of a production is too short to be eligible, but the run is extended so that the total number of performances becomes sufficient for eligibility, the production shall only be eligible if it is extended over a period of at least 14 days past the day of notification, with a minimum of eight (8) performances occurring after notification.
 - 2) One-half of all eligible performances must begin by on weekdays between 10:00 a.m. and 9:00 p.m. and on weekends between 10:00 a.m. – 11:00 p.m.
 - d. It provides the requisite number of tickets to accommodate attendance by eight judges.
 - 1) Participating theatres must provide a minimum of five dates during the first half the run during which the eight judges may attend.
 - 2) Once a judge is scheduled - by agreement between the awards and theatre – the theatre may not change the dates.
 - e. The theatre or producing organization must legally acquire the rights to present the production; and
 - f. The theatre or producing organization notifies The Washington Theatre Awards Society of the production at least three weeks prior to opening.
2. The Helen Hayes Awards will not cover college and university theatre, other educational theatre, community theatre, and puppet productions.
3. By participating in the Awards process, each theatre or producer affirms its responsibility to fulfill all legal and contractual obligations involved in the production of plays.
4. A new theatre company must present a minimum of one production each year over a consecutive two-year period in order to be eligible for Awards consideration. During a company's first year,

it may choose to be considered a “candidate” or “emerging” theatre company and request that its productions be seen by Awards personnel as a prelude to its eligibility the following year.

5. If a previously eligible theatre company is inactive for a one-year period before returning to producing status, there will be a one-year probationary period prior to readmission to the body of eligible theatre companies.
6. A currently eligible theatre company must present a minimum of one production each consecutive year in order to maintain its eligibility for consideration.

B. AWARDS YEAR

1. The Awards shall be given on an annual basis, covering a period ("Awards Year") which coincides with the calendar year (January 1 - December 31). Any eligible play whose opening date (previews excluded) falls within the Awards Year shall be considered in that year's cycle.

C. NOTIFICATION BY THEATRES

1. It shall be the responsibility of each eligible theatre to send to the Awards office, by one month prior to the Awards Year, their schedule of plays for the year.
2. It shall also be the responsibility of each theatre to notify the Awards office of any additions to or changes in their schedule as soon as these are known.
3. The theatre must notify the Awards staff at least three (3) weeks prior to an opening in order to provide time for judge assignments. Should the theatre fail to notify the Awards staff within that time frame, the production can still be judged provided that there will be a minimum of 16 performances following a three weeks lapse after notification is received from that theatre.

D. JUDGING PROCESS

1. Selection of Judges
 - a. A pool of approximately 60 Judges will be appointed by a Selection Committee which shall be identified by the Executive Director several months in advance of each Awards year. The Selection Committee shall consist of five members: the Executive Director (or her appointee), the Rules Committee Chair, and three Artistic Directors from participating theatres (on a rotating basis, and representing a large, medium, and small-sized theatre each season).
 - b. Service on the Selection Committee is for one year, and is based on the ability to review applications fairly and attend one review meeting.
 - c. The Chair of the Judges shall be appointed by the Executive Director, and chosen from among previous Judges. The Chairperson's term is one year, and is renewable for a total of six years at the discretion of the Executive Director.
 - d. Judges shall serve for three years with staggered terms, so that approximately one-third of the judges are replaced each year. Judges may be reappointed after a one-year hiatus.
 - e. Prospective judges will be recruited by participating theatres and by Helen Hayes staff and Board members, and will submit applications to the Selection Committee. Applications will include relevant background and qualifications, plus a full disclosure of potential conflicts of interest.
 - f. Judges may include theatre journalists and critics, theatre artists and practitioners, theatre teachers and scholars, and highly experienced and knowledgeable theatregoers. They

may include staff members from participating theatres, however, the depth of potential conflicts of interest will be considered for all potential judges.

- g. If it is necessary to replace a judge based on performance, availability, or for any other reason, the Executive Director shall appoint a new Judge, drawing from the prioritized list of replacement judges created by the Selection Committee.

2. Judging Process

- a. The judging pool will consist of approximately 60 judges, each assigned to a specific panel (per Section D Judging Process 3.a)
- b. The Helen Hayes Awards staff will assign eight judges from each panel to evaluate each eligible production.
- c. In each award category, judges will grade each artist (or production) on a scale of 0 – 10.
- d. Judges' scores will be considered in relation to the full breadth of work they have seen in Washington area theatre over multiple years, and not strictly in relation to the work seen in the current year.
- e. The combined point total from the eight judges will determine the final nominees in each category, which shall include the five artists (or productions) receiving the highest point totals. The artist (or production) with the highest point total shall receive the Helen Hayes Award.
- f. In the case of tied votes, for nominees or awardees, the following tie-breaking system will be used. First, the votes will be re-tallied including only the 9 point and 10 point votes. If a tie still remains, the votes will be re-tallied using only the 10 point votes. If a tie still remains, all tied artists will be honored.
- g. An outside firm will be employed to tabulate the ballots for both nominees and awardees, and shall provide the results to the Executive Director. Point totals and rankings shall not be revealed.

3. Assignment of Judges and Balloting

- a. The Judging pool is divided into four panels: one panel to evaluate musicals, one panel to evaluate new plays (world premieres), and two panels to evaluate straight plays that do not fall into either of the two previous categories. If judges are unavailable within a particular panel, judges may be culled from one of the other three panels to meet the quota required to fulfill a judging roster.
- b. At the time the list of judges assigned to a specific production is presented to a theatre, that theatre's artistic leadership may challenge any judge on that list based on real or perceived conflict of interest based on strong personal acquaintances or negative associations. Theatre leadership must provide in writing why they believe that particular judge is incapable of looking at that theatre's work impartially. No participating theatre may categorically eliminate any group of judges.
- c. Judges must attend every production to which they are assigned. Each Judge, once assigned to a show, may receive up to two (2) complimentary tickets by the theatre (based on ticket availability).
 - 1) Tickets will be provided to eight judges for a performance or performances that fall(s) within the first half of the run. (per Section A Eligibility, 1.d.)
 - 2) Judges shall not be assigned to attend preview performances, except in cases of a short run if no other scheduling is possible.
- d. Ballots used by the Judges shall indicate each award category for which the show is eligible, with spaces for the names of potential nominees and for the Judge's grades.

- e. Each production is assigned eight judges to fulfill the quota needed to complete the judging roster
- f. Judges shall complete their ballots and return them to The Washington Theatre Awards Society office within 24 hours after attending each production.
- g. Each Judge shall keep a personal file of program books or cast lists in the event cast changes need to be verified.
- h. If a Judge is scheduled to attend a specific performance at a theatre, and if that performance is cancelled by the theatre for any reason, the ballot shall be filed without nominations. Exceptions shall be made in cases of unavoidable catastrophe or extreme weather conditions, in which case Judges shall be assigned to a later performance.

E. MISCELLANEOUS

1. Only cast members as of Opening Night of a production shall be eligible for actor or actress awards.
2. Effective January 1, 1987, the two types of categories will be "Resident" and "Non-Resident". In general, if the original intention, as of opening night, is that the production is developed, produced and contracted for Washington, D.C. and is intended to be presented only in the Washington area, it is then considered a resident production. All other productions will be considered non-resident.
3. Criteria regarding co-productions
If a production of two or more theatres is defined as a co-production, then the whole of those presentations is considered one production. Thereby, if a Helen Hayes Awards constituent theatre partners with a theatre beyond the geographic boundaries (per Section A Eligibility 1.a) it is considered one production regardless in what venue the first performance is given.
4. Criteria for Outstanding New Play are as follows:
 - a. In general, a new play is one which is being presented for the first time anywhere in any language and for which the theatre and playwright have a contractual arrangement which is customary for the presentation of a new play.
 - b. If a play has been presented previously, it may still be regarded as a new play if the previous productions were essentially "workshop productions," were part of a festival of "plays-in-progress," or were presented for a very limited audience with little or no compensation to the performers or other artists.
 - c. (Additional Clarification — 11/15/89) If the title of the play refers to another play that the production is based on, then the current production will not be considered for New Play recognition.
5. Designation of nominees in leading, supporting, or ensemble categories will be as follows:
 - a. A theatre's artistic leadership or the director of a specific production will determine whether an actor should be considered as a leading or supporting performer.
 - b. Judges may score all acting companies as ensembles in addition to scoring individual artists.
6. Criteria for evaluating play collections are as follows:
 - a. In general, a collection of short plays presented in a single evening and sold to the public as a single admission, shall be judged as a single production.

- b. In general, a collection of related full length plays, presented on separate evenings, shall be judged as separate plays unless they are sold to the public only as a single admission.
7. Criteria regarding the evaluation of revivals are as follows:
Remounts of same productions (i.e. same director, cast, production elements, 50% of original cast) will not be eligible for The Helen Hayes Awards if it opens less than ten years from the closing of the previous production of the same work at the same theatre or by the same company. However, the same text of a play or musical with different production elements will be eligible.
8. Criteria regarding new and emerging theatres
In order to be eligible for Awards consideration, a new theatre company must present a minimum of one production (of at least 9 performances) during each of two consecutive years of operation. At the end of this period, (a) the company will be fully eligible for Awards consideration and (b) for one year, the company will be eligible for the John Aniello Award, (per Section F Awards Categories) a discretionary award determined by the Rules Committee of the Board of Directors.
9. Criteria regarding Theatre for Young Audiences
A production may be defined as “Theatre for Young Audiences” if it is intended for audiences age 12 and under. If the theatre identifies any production as such, that production may be eligible for consideration in the category of Outstanding Production, Theatre for Young Audiences. However, if the theatre elects to define the production as such, that production will not be eligible for consideration in the categories of either Outstanding Resident Play or Musical at the same time.

F. AWARDS CATEGORIES

The awards categories have been devised to recognize the range of professional theatre in Washington and to avoid competition between resident and non-resident productions. Regular Awards Categories may include:

Resident Theatre Productions

- Outstanding Musical
- Outstanding Play
- Outstanding Production, Theatre for Young Audiences.
- Outstanding Director of a Musical
- Outstanding Director of a Play
- Outstanding Costume Design, Musical or Play
- Outstanding Lighting Design, Musical or Play
- Outstanding Set Design, Musical or Play
- Outstanding Sound Design, Musical or Play
- Outstanding Musical Direction, Musical or Play
- Outstanding Choreography, Musical or Play
- Outstanding Actor in a Musical
- Outstanding Actor in a Play
- Outstanding Actress in a Musical
- Outstanding Actress in a Play
- Outstanding Supporting Actor in a Musical
- Outstanding Supporting Actor in a Play

Outstanding Supporting Actress in a Musical
Outstanding Supporting Actress in a Play
The Canadian Embassy Award for Outstanding Ensemble, Musical or Play (Acting Category)

Non-Resident Theatre Productions

Outstanding Non-Resident Production
Outstanding Actor
Outstanding Actress
Outstanding Supporting Performer

World Premieres of Resident or Non-Resident Productions

The Charles MacArthur Award for Outstanding New Play or Musical

The John Aniello Award

a discretionary award determined by the Rules Committee of the Board of Directors recognizing excellence in new and promising theatre companies following their first year of operation and before they become eligible to participate in The Helen Hayes Awards process