



JUNIOR THEATER FESTIVAL® WEST

ADJUDICATION

HANDBOOK

2026

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WHAT IS ADJUDICATION?

Each group presents up to fifteen (15) minutes from an MTI Broadway Junior® show (30-minute or 60-minute) or One-Act Edition for a small panel of professional theatre artists (aka adjudicators) and other festival attendees.

WHEN IS ADJUDICATION?

For **JTF West**, adjudications take place only on Saturday. In the forms you fill out in the fall, there is a place for you to tell us the earliest time your group will be available for adjudications, and your group will be scheduled accordingly.



HOW DOES ADJUDICATION WORK?

Before your assigned performance time, your group is given approximately twenty (20) minutes to warm up in a separate room. You will need to provide your own sound playback for your warm-up (portable speakers work great). There will not be a number line in the warm-up space.

After your warm-up, a volunteer will lead your group into the adjudication room (aka your pod room) where students will perform. Following the adjudication performance, adjudicators talk directly to the student performers, highlighting specific impressive areas of the presentation, and also offering constructive feedback to encourage further growth.

Following your adjudication session, a volunteer will lead you to your discussion room. This is where your cast and creative team will take part in a moderated discussion about what they experienced and how they interpreted the adjudicator comments. This discussion time is a great chance for students to reflect and celebrate their accomplishments.

HOW WILL I KNOW WHERE TO GO?

Your group will follow your own individual group schedule provided on the Junior Theater Festival App. Your group will stay together the entire time **at your designated campus**, meaning students, chaperones, directors, and any additional friends and family will travel from the warm-up room to the pod room and to the discussion room together. There will be seats saved specifically for your families in the pod room when your group performs. Your group is only allowed to watch other pod performances as specifically designated on the JTF App in your group schedule.

SELECTING YOUR 15 MINUTES



Choose Your Musical.

Any MTI Broadway Junior® show (30-minute or 60-minute) or One-Act Edition licensed by your group between 2024 and 2026 is eligible for adjudication at JTF 2026.



Select The Scenes And Songs.

You do not need to select one sequential fifteen-minute section of your show. Choose songs that best feature your cast, and choose scenes to highlight the acting chops of your students.



Review Storytelling In Each Scene And Song.

It is impossible to tell the whole musical's story in fifteen minutes. Your selected scenes and songs do not need to tell one overarching story. However, like all good musical theater, each scene and each song should tell a story with a beginning, middle, and end.



Honor The Author's Intent.

Do not make cuts to the music or change the order of songs. Songs are already adapted and reduced in length for the Broadway Junior® and One-Act versions. For scene work, you may not change the order of lines, rewrite lines, or add new lines.

ADJUDICATION RULES

New

The performance space will be carpeted and approximately 26' x 20'. There will be some offstage space on both stage left and right, but there are no curtains and no back crossover space. We cannot guarantee the amount of offstage space or the ceiling height of your assigned ballroom as they do vary. Keep this in mind when staging lifts or stunts. You may not bring wooden boards or other hard flooring to dance on. You may not perform in the aisles.

There will be a **number line** placed on the front edge of each performance space to assist your students with their spacing throughout their presentation. Each number represents the number of feet from center.

For your 15-minute presentation, do not write dialogue, change the order of songs, add characters, double-cast leading roles, or in any way change the tracks or the intent of the piece.

Performances may not exceed 15 minutes. Plan a fourteen-minute presentation to ensure you don't go over the time limit. Remember, this is a live performance. There will be laughter, and you should plan to hold for applause.

The only set pieces allowed are four (4) chairs that will be set aside for you to use. For safety, no one is allowed to stand on these chairs. You may not bring your own acting boxes nor will there be any acting boxes provided.

No costumes, makeup, or props are allowed. The only exceptions are small hand props that are ESSENTIAL to the choreography. For example, mugs for the tavern dance in Disney's Beauty and the Beast JR. are acceptable. A mask for the Beast or books for Belle are not.

New

Puppets may be used only if they are essential to the storytelling and/or choreography. Adjudicators will consider how the puppet supports the overall storytelling rather than the quality or complexity of the puppet itself.

New

Groups must wear either their festival t-shirts or their own matching show shirts for their presentation. Shirts must remain unaltered (e.g. no cutting, fringing, redesigning). Bottoms must be neutral (e.g. jeans, khakis, black) and matching in color across the group to avoid distraction. Adjudicators may become distracted if what your students wear reads as a costume. Remember, JTF discourages costuming to ensure a level playing field for all groups. When in doubt, simple is always better.

Performers must wear shoes at all times.

Groups must provide their own playback device (phone, tablet, computer, etc.). There will be a sound system for you to plug your device into in order to amplify your sound. Groups must also provide their own music operator and adapter if necessary (1/8th inch input). It is recommended to bring two devices loaded with your tracks so you have one as a backup.

Microphones are not available, and you may not bring them with you.

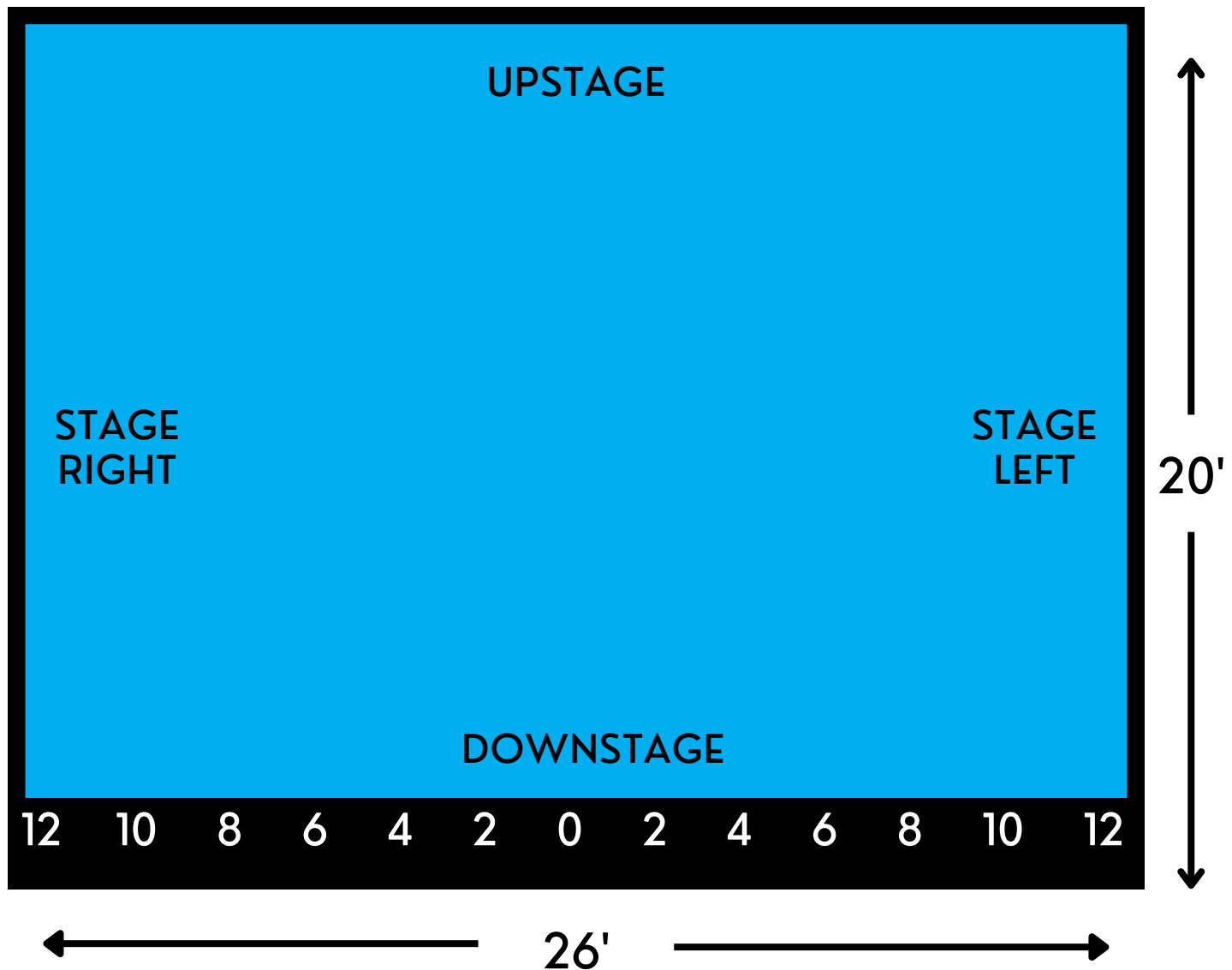
Everyone in the adjudication room must be registered for the festival with a group. Parents and/or guests of performers will not be admitted if they are not pre-registered with a group and wearing festival wristbands. There are no day passes or onsite registrations. Only audience members specifically scheduled to be in the adjudication room will be permitted.

Bring a **flash drive** with your adjudication tracks with you.

If your group is chosen as All-Festival Performance, your adjudication tracks will be reviewed. If any of the tracks have been edited, your group will not perform on the mainstage as part of the Freddie G Awards Ceremony.

THE PERFORMANCE SPACE

Set up your rehearsal space
like the one pictured below.



WHAT ADJUDICATORS ARE LOOKING FOR

Engaging storytelling is the key to a good performance. Standout student performers are connected to the words, know why their characters are singing or dancing, and are appropriately expressive in their presentation. These attributes are as important as technical proficiency. Without costumes or scenery, your students' bodies, faces, and voices become even more essential to the clarity of the storytelling. For more detailed information, check out the JTF Adjudication Rubric on the next page. This rubric will be completed by each adjudicator, and these forms will be sent to the director approximately one month after the festival.

Remember, adjudication is a celebration of musical theatre and a chance for students to share their artistry with other performers from across the country. Adjudicators provide an educational experience to help your students grow as well-rounded musical theatre artists.



ADJUDICATION RUBRIC

Group Name:

Show Title:

Adjudicator:

Run Time:

1. General (25%)

Storytelling:	Clear storytelling throughout the whole piece	5	4	3	2	1
Focus:	Performers give and take focus through listening and response	5	4	3	2	1
Commitment:	Committed in all aspects	5	4	3	2	1
Ensemble:	Performers work together as a team	5	4	3	2	1
Unity:	Music, dance and acting work together as cohesive unit	5	4	3	2	1
Sub-Total:						

2. Music (25%)

Storytelling:	Story and emotion conveyed through singing	5	4	3	2	1
Precision:	Intonation (pitch), diction, rhythms, and cut-offs are accurate	5	4	3	2	1
Expression:	Vocal variety and dynamics used throughout	5	4	3	2	1
Ensemble:	Blending of voices and navigation of vocal volume	5	4	3	2	1
Motivation:	Vocal delivery clearly supports character's motivation	5	4	3	2	1
Sub-Total:						

3. Dance (25%)

Storytelling:	Story and emotion conveyed through movement and choreography	5	4	3	2	1
Style:	Appropriate to the setting and themes	5	4	3	2	1
Execution:	Performed cleanly and precisely	5	4	3	2	1
Ensemble:	Performers work together forming clear, stage compositions	5	4	3	2	1
Motivation:	Choreography clearly supports character's motivation	5	4	3	2	1
Sub-Total:						

4. Acting (25%)

Storytelling:	Story and emotion conveyed through dialogue and actions	5	4	3	2	1
Characterization:	Characters developed are appropriate to the story	5	4	3	2	1
Physicality:	Actor's face and body are connected	5	4	3	2	1
Ensemble:	Awareness and willingness to demonstrate character relationships	5	4	3	2	1
Motivation:	Action and dialogue clearly supports character's motivation	5	4	3	2	1
Sub-Total:						

Bonus:

"Wow Factor":	Performance transcends and inspires (Up to 3 pts.)	
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Total points:

Additional Notes:

- 5 = Perfect throughout the entire performance, no errors
- 4 = Excellent through most of the performance, with a few minor imperfections
- 3 = Good performance, but lacked consistency throughout
- 2 = Fair performance, identifiable moments needing developmental support
- 1 = Needs improvement

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AWARDS

GROUP AWARDS

All-Festival Performance Group (up to 8 groups per festival)

These performances are nominated, discussed, and voted on by adjudicators and team JTF. To celebrate the innovation, storytelling, and heart displayed across adjudications, these groups will perform one number in the Freddie G Awards Ceremony on Sunday!

Excellence in Pod (1 group per pod)

This award will be granted during the Freddie G Awards Ceremony to the groups with the highest scores in their pods based on the adjudication rubric. These groups will receive a trophy!

Excellence in Acting (up to 1 group per pod)

Excellence in Dance (up to 1 group per pod)

Excellence in Music (up to 1 group per pod)

Excellence in Ensemble Work (up to 1 group per pod)

INDIVIDUAL AWARDS

Outstanding Individual Performance (up to 2 students per pod)

Outstanding Student Direction/Choreography

(up to 2 students or teams per pod)

Inspiration Award (up to 2 awards total given to individual or groups)

All-Festival Performance Individual (up to 2 students per festival)

Tech Olympics (8 students – 2 teams of 4 students each)

Performance All-Stars (2 students per group)

Groups that win Excellence in Pod may also win All-Festival Performance, although not guaranteed.

All-Festival Performance groups will only win Excellence in Pod if their adjudication scores are the highest in the pod.

FOR THE AUDIENCE



Here are a few tips to ensure your students, directors, chaperones, and parents are fabulous and supportive audience members.



The audience's response to your performance should be organic. While applauding and cheering is wonderful, it's not appropriate if it overwhelms the performance itself. For example, cheering so loudly the adjudicators can no longer hear the performance.



Stay seated during the performances. Except for standing ovations, of course.



Limit cell phone use to taking photos and videos. However, live performances are best experienced live and not through your viewfinder.



Remember to share your enthusiasm with all the groups in attendance, not just your own.



JAZZ HANDS UP FOR ADJUDICATIONS 2026!