



SPOTLIGHT AWARDS

Nashville High School Musical Theatre Awards

2024-2025 Spotlight Awards – Nashville High School Musical Theatre Awards

SHOW REVIEW TRACK

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ABOUT THE SPOTLIGHT AWARDS PROGRAM

The Spotlight Awards program is an arts education initiative of the Tennessee Performing Arts Center which celebrates, supports, and grows the artistry and diverse community of high school theatre programs in Tennessee while developing confidence, creativity, empathy, and collaboration among schools. The Spotlight Awards strives to embody a spirit of camaraderie, diversity and inclusion, celebration for the arts, and a growth mindset.

Program Goals

- To grow and develop artists, theatre audiences, and arts advocates in Tennessee by building a diverse high school theatre community
- To strengthen our community by instilling values of diversity and inclusion, artistic excellence, creativity, a growth mindset, and collaboration in our participants
- To provide high quality, diverse educational experiences in dance, theatre, and music for students, directors, and school arts programs
- To celebrate, support, grow, and advocate for high school theatre education by recognizing excellence in area high school theatre productions
- To engage community members, schools, and families in an inclusive celebration of theatre

Thank you to our sponsors Nissan North America – Official Education Partner, Vanderbilt University, Piedmont Natural Gas, and KraftCPAs.

Special thanks to our Founding Sponsor, Lipscomb University's College of Entertainment and the Arts.

The Spotlight Awards program is Nashville's regional awards program affiliated with The National High School Musical Theatre Awards® (the Jimmy Awards®), presented by the Broadway League Foundation. The Jimmy Awards® are a national celebration of outstanding student achievement, recognizing individual artistry in vocal, dance, and acting performance and elevating the importance of theatre arts education in schools. For more information on the Jimmy Awards, visit www.jimmyawards.com.

SPOTLIGHT AWARDS PROGRAM VALUES

Community

The Spotlight Community is a loving and safe place to learn about yourself and the arts industry we all love. We invite you to attend workshops, interact with us digitally, and find ways to engage with our community – it was created for you.

*We know that the lure of competition may be hard to ignore, but the Spotlight Awards is designed to be **celebratory rather than competitive** in nature, and the awards are only a fraction of the program. We are an Awards Ceremony 1 day of the year, **but we are an Education and Community program every day of the year** focused on goals such as encouraging collaboration and creativity, strengthening our community, championing diversity and inclusion, celebrating and supporting arts education and achievements, and developing a growth mindset.*

Growth

*Participating schools challenge themselves to **continually grow and create the best work** in their unique circumstances. **So celebrate your achievements, and the achievements of others, and find ways to continually learn and grow along the way.** Work hard, push yourself, challenge yourself, take a step out of your comfort zone - it's in these moments that growth happens.*

Inclusion

***Our wish for each of our participants is that they see the light in this world, in themselves, and in others.** Everyone is unique and special, and it's those unique qualities in each of us that make the world so beautiful. Be the best possible version of yourself, and choose to find the good in everyone around you and to celebrate with them.*

Creative Excellence

*The Spotlight Awards readily recognizes that artistic excellence provides new insights of the world around us, leading us to question and appreciate what we have never experienced. Excellence in the arts occurs when **an experience affects and changes us in novel ways, providing both fresh and relevant perspectives.** We celebrate the creativity and outstanding work happening in our high school arts programs.*

SPOTLIGHT AWARDS PROGRAM COMPONENTS

Learning Opportunities and Community Building

We feel that bringing participants together for community events will strengthen everything about our program, the community, and the arts in Tennessee.

All participants, regardless of their participation track, receive access to learning and community building opportunities offered throughout the year. Learning opportunities are designed to help students and directors hone their skills and advance their understanding of the craft. One of the goals of the Spotlight Awards program is to strengthen our community by instilling values of diversity and inclusion, artistic excellence, creativity, a growth mindset, and collaboration in our participants.

We separate our events into 2 main categories:

- **Community Events** – These events allow participants to not only learn about the theatre industry, but also to interact with fellow arts-loving people from other schools. Throughout the year, the Spotlight Awards program presents events such as master classes, invited dress rehearsals or other events designed to bring different schools together.
- **In-School Events** – This may include a classroom workshop, rehearsal visit, invited audition panelist, hosting an event in your space or virtual Q&A in your class from TPAC staff. These events allow Spotlight administration to interact directly with teachers and students.

Professional Review

- Schools participating in the Show Review track will have a panel of arts professionals (adjudicators) attend their performance to provide written feedback. Teachers and students use these insights to make their next show even stronger. Schools participating year over year have seen dramatic transformations in skill, student enthusiasm, and community support.
- Students in all participation tracks may request professional review for video auditions at any time during the year. To do this, students should contact Spotlight Administration at education@tpac.org for instructions on submitting their videos. Reviews will be based on the Audition Rubric found on the Spotlight website.

Recognition opportunities and Scholarships are provided in all participation tracks.

- Rising Star Scholarships will be awarded to students in 9th grade based on video audition submissions.
- Arts Leadership Scholarships will be awarded to graduating seniors who exhibit the highest level of excellence in their craft and embody the leadership skills in their school and community (based on student submissions and teacher recommendation).
- Student Designers' work will be presented at the annual Design Symposium in March 2025.

ANNUAL LEARNING AND COMMUNITY OPPORTUNITIES

Director Peer Review

The Director Peer Review program is a pathway for schools to invite another school's director to attend a rehearsal and give feedback. Visiting directors serve as another set of eyes to affirm what is working, make suggestions for improvement, etc. Requests for a peer review, scheduling and other details will be worked out between the participating directors and not through the Spotlight Awards administration.

School Ticket Exchange

The ticket exchange program encourages students and teachers to see other productions and to lend support to their peers. Directors who indicate interest in the ticket exchange will receive a list of other participating schools' production dates and contact information via email. Reservations will be made between schools and not through the Spotlight Awards administration.

Social Media Account - @SpotlightAwards Instagram page

The Spotlight Awards program encourages all teachers and students to join our community on Instagram (@SpotlightAwards) to get all updates and added events throughout the year. Please like our page, and feel free to send us any ideas for what content you would like to see included.

Spotlight Society (Student Alumni Association)

Spotlight students are invited to join our Alumni Group after they graduate to continue engaging with our program and the arts community. Spotlight Society members will enjoy many of the perks of participating schools, including discounts to performances and invitations to Master Classes. Additionally, special events will be created specifically for our Alumni during the year as well, including a Reunion event every May.

“Road to the Ceremony” - Community Kickoff Celebration – January 25, 2025

Participating Schools will join us for a celebration to kick off the road to the ceremony! Participants will celebrate the new year, participate in fun workshops and games, get free headshots, and interact with other schools. *Schools participating in the Adjudication track are required to participate in this event.*

Spotlight Awards Ceremony

The Spotlight Awards Ceremony is an inclusive community celebration of arts education that acknowledges outstanding achievement, growth, and artistry in high school musical theatre and provides an opportunity for students to share their art with each other. The Spotlight Awards Ceremony will take place May 17, 2025, 7:00-10:00 pm in TPAC's Jackson Hall (505 Deaderick Street, Nashville).

Workshops, Events, and Master Classes (Virtual and/in-person available)

A variety of events are provided every year, including a series of Master Classes, Broadway load-in events, and themed workshops/community events. We provide a mix of in-person and virtual opportunities. A full calendar of events will be provided to participants after registration. Additional events may be added during the year, and will be shared on the @SpotlightAwards Instagram page.

REGISTRATION GUIDELINES – SHOW REVIEW TRACK

Show Review request applications are open September 16 – January 15. Schools registered for the Show Review are automatically included in the Community Track as well. This track does not include participation in the Awards Ceremony nominations or awards.

Show Review – School Participation (\$150 per show) – Two artists attend a performance on request and provide written feedback (no scores or awards presentation) to help schools continue to grow and improve their artistic work. (*Scholarship application - <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/ScholarSpot>*)

Schools participating in the Show Review Track can request a review for any show (play, musical, one-acts) in their season. Multiple show reviews can also be requested, with a discounted option for the 2nd and 3rd shows in a season. *Schools participating in the Adjudication track can request a review as an add-on to their registration for other shows on their season NOT being adjudicated. The fee structure for this option is the same as above.*

Show Review registration includes:

Schools participating in the Show Review Track are automatically added to the Community Track and receive all the same benefits.

- 2 artists attend a performance (date selected by registrant) and provide written feedback based on the Spotlight Awards rubric. Registrants may request specific areas be targeted in the feedback as well.
- Community participation events - A variety of events are provided every year, including Master Classes, Broadway load-in events, and themed workshops/community events. We provide a mix of in-person and virtual opportunities. A full calendar of events will be provided to participants after registration. Additional events may be added during the year and will be shared on the @SpotlightAwards Instagram page.
- Rising Star Scholarships will be awarded to students in 9th grade based on video audition submissions.
- Arts Leadership Scholarships will be awarded to graduating seniors who exhibit the highest level of excellence in their craft and embody the leadership skills in their school and community (based on student submissions and teacher recommendation).
- Student Designers' work will be presented at the annual Design Symposium in March 2025.
- Selected students for performing at the Awards Ceremony in the Encore Ensemble.

Applications must include the following information:

- 1-2 adult contacts – Show Director (must be full-time faculty member at the school) ; Also needed is an Administrative Contact (in charge of all administrative communication related to Spotlight requirements) - This contact must have access to phone and email and be able to manage all administrative elements of participation. If the Show Director cannot do this, they should assign a second adult contact for this role.
- Show title, run time, and proof of licensing request
- Specific date and time request for the review
- Any specific feedback requests (Are there certain areas you want them to take note of, or a specific area of expertise you would like to request from your artist?)

REQUIREMENTS - SHOW REVIEW TRACK

- Schools participating in Show Review must be within 2 hours drive from TPAC (505 Deaderick Street, Nashville).
- Schools must register at least 4 weeks prior to the show date request with payment of the \$150 fee per show at the time of registration.
- Available review dates may be limited based on performances happening in High-Volume Weekends. If a review cannot be scheduled for the requested date, schools have the option to select a different date or be refunded.
- Performances can be a play, musical, or one-act show. Shows should be no more than 2 hours, 45 minutes in length, including intermission.
- Schools requesting a review are required to submit a Production Detail form with information about their show at least 1 week prior to the review date.
- Schools participating in the Adjudication track cannot submit the same show for review.
- All participants must be a registered high school located in Tennessee and may not participate in another Jimmy Awards regional awards program during the same school year.

Rights and Royalties

The Spotlight Awards program expects all participating schools to acquire the necessary rights and royalties for their musical during the school year. Spotlight Administration will request an extension to your contract from the licensing houses for the purposes of performance at the awards ceremony.

Expectations

All participants are expected to respect the Spotlight Awards program, other Spotlight participants, and the Spotlight Awards goals throughout the year. Schools that do not demonstrate respect for the Spotlight Awards program, participants, and goals will not be accepted into the program the following year.

Additionally, schools are expected to complete all submissions and requirements of the program and to engage with the program throughout the year, whether it is through master class attendance or hosting an event at their school.

Time Commitment

The Spotlight Awards administration knows that many hours of hard work go into preparing a high school musical theatre production. The program hopes to provide educational tools for growth and visibility for the work being produced. However, there will be some additional time commitment required of the directors/teachers in communicating pertinent information and attending required events. Additionally, if your show or students are selected to perform at the Awards Ceremony, it may require additional time committed to brushing-up, re-staging or performance rehearsals.

Publicity

TPAC encourages high schools to announce their participation in the Spotlight Awards in school newspapers, websites, social media sites, newsletters and other materials produced by the school. Please tag @tennesseepac and @spotlightawards when posting rehearsal photos, show photos or updates about your production or program. Media interview or appearance requests regarding the Spotlight Awards Program are required to go through TPAC's Communications Department. Schools should not speak on behalf of the Spotlight Awards without contacting us first.

REQUIRED SUBMISSIONS – SHOW REVIEW TRACK

Media Releases – School and Individual

During the year, Spotlight Awards administrators may photograph/video students, faculty, and others involved with your production or attending events. Please be aware that participation in this program gives full rights and permissions to the Spotlight Awards and Tennessee Performing Arts Center for the use of such video and photos.

- Individual media releases or other waivers may be required for some events. These would be signed digitally through DocuSign by parent/guardians. Teachers may need to submit emails for participants using a provided template.

Participation Statement Graphic for Programs

Schools are required to include the Participation Statement Graphic in their performance program to highlight their participation in the Spotlight Awards program. A copy of the graphic will be provided digitally to directors. Please ensure that you are using the **current year's graphic** when creating your program.

This production is part of the Spotlight Awards presented by Tennessee Performing Arts Center. The Spotlight Awards program is an arts education initiative which celebrates, supports, and grows the artistry and diverse community of high school theatre programs in Tennessee while developing confidence, creativity, empathy, and collaboration among schools. The Spotlight Awards strives to embody a spirit of camaraderie, diversity, and inclusion, celebration for the arts, and growth mindset.



Example graphic only – Please use the digital file provided to you.

Production Detail Form

2 weeks prior to their show opening, schools submit this form to be shared with adjudicators attending their show. This form provides detailed show information such as eligibility for awards, show title, etc., as well as supplementary information on your production such as resources available, director's notes, and rationale of artistic choices. Submit form online here – <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/ProdDetail25>

Show Program Submission

Each school must submit their show program by the opening night of their performance. It is strongly encouraged that show programs **include headshots of actors to assist in nominations.**

How to submit:

1. Submit a digital copy to Spotlight Administration in a PDF format and include any notes on pronunciation or spelling that the Spotlight Awards administrators may need. ****A link to a digital playbill does not meet this requirement. Please print a PDF version of the pages to submit digitally.**
2. For adjudicators, please ensure that a printed hard copy is available with their tickets when they attend the performance. ****If you use a digital playbill, directors should print a hard copy of program pages for each adjudicator to pick up with each set of tickets.**

OVERVIEW FOR SHOW REVIEW TRACK

Show Reviewers/Adjudicators will evaluate each school independently based on how well a school is meeting or exceeding their own potential with their unique resources and challenges, regardless of budget or size of the production. Adjudicators are asked to provide valuable feedback, celebrating the achievements of each production and offering insights for strengthening future shows.

About our Adjudicators

Spotlight Administration conducts an open application period, pre-screening, demo adjudication review, and holds a Spotlight-specific training every year for all adjudicators. Our adjudicators have substantial education, experience, and passion for the performing arts.

Spotlight Awards Adjudicators will have:

- Demonstrated experience in or knowledge of musical theatre;
- And/or a degree in a relevant field (music, theatre, dance, etc.);
- And/or extensive work experience in one of those disciplines on a professional or academic basis;
- And/or are professional artists or educators with knowledge of the American musical theatre canon.

Conflict of Interest

Adjudicators and/or School Directors are required to alert the Spotlight Awards administrators immediately if there is a conflict of interest with a participating school.

Performance Tickets

Up to 6 complimentary tickets should be placed at will call for a determined date of your performance. These tickets will be used by adjudicators, Spotlight Awards administrators, and their guests. Please remember to respect the anonymity of the adjudicators. Do not provide preferential treatment (*i.e., if your seating is General Admission, do not save seats*). Seating on aisles or towards the rear of the theatre is preferred.

Tickets should be listed under the name Jimmy Ward and separated into groupings of 2. Each set of 2 tickets should have at least 1 printed program included with it for adjudicators to pick up.

Written Feedback

Each adjudicator is asked to focus their feedback in a positive way, with the goal of encouraging and growing the arts in our community in mind. Adjudicator feedback is meant to serve as an educational tool, for teachers and students to use these insights to make their next show even stronger.

Show Review participation includes written feedback from 2-3 artist adjudicators. It is up to the discretion of the director to share any or all feedback with their students. Feedback is at the discretion of the Spotlight Awards administration, which reserves the right to amend rules as necessary to maintain a fair process.

Adjudicators have up to 1 week to submit feedback to the Spotlight administrators. Every effort will be made for schools to receive their feedback within 2 weeks of their performance close.

Confidentiality

Feedback is submitted through a secure online form. Adjudicators are not allowed to discuss the feedback with anyone other than Spotlight Awards administrators in any format. This includes, but is not limited to: faculty, staff and students from a participating high school, other adjudicators, colleagues, social media networks, etc.

All questions or comments about adjudication should be directed to Spotlight Awards administration – not to adjudicators.

SHOW REVIEW - RUBRIC OVERVIEW

In the theater, we tell stories.

The Spotlight Awards adjudicators review the storytelling abilities put to work in each production. We are looking for an authentic tale well told, by your production team, ensemble, and individual performers.

We want to see how well you use the elements of theatre to tell the story you have chosen:

- ✓ How well does your company understand the story they are telling? How clearly do they relate that story and its themes to the audience?
- ✓ How passionately do your actors embody their characters and express their journey through this story?
- ✓ How do your actors use the performance skills of musical theatre (singing, dancing, and acting) to enhance the story?
- ✓ How collaborative was your company in presenting a unified concept for the audience to engage with?
- ✓ How did you showcase the unique talents and resources of your school and cast to advance the story and concept you created?
- ✓ How creatively did your company transfer the story from page to the stage?
- ✓ How does your storytelling create a memorable experience, emotion and change in your audience?

Adjudicator Rubric Scoring

Each award category available for adjudication has a rubric with detailed descriptions of the scoring. An overarching look at the scoring guidelines is below.

DEVELOPING (1-4)	PROFICIENT (5-9)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presented the story practically, so that the events logically transpired but without impact to the characters. At times the effort to improve skills supersedes the story. • All technical elements served the basic requirements outlined in the script, but there is no evidence of collaboration with other areas to present a unified concept. • The musical selection was not appropriate, included harmful content or stereotypes, or did not showcase the school/cast talents and resources and produced few engaging moments. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Created a layered story with clear, evolving characters through a practical approach with moments of creativity evident. • An attempt was made to present a unified concept with input from all technical and performance components. • The musical selection rarely showcased the school/cast's diverse talents and resources, producing some interesting and engaging moments with some obvious missed opportunities.
SKILLED (10-15)	ADVANCED (16-20)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong storytelling with solid, believable characters and a creative approach. • A clear vision of the concept for the production was carried out with some evidence of creative collaborations from technical and performance areas. • The musical selection was appropriate and showcased some of the diverse talents of the school's performers and technicians, producing mostly strong elements of musical theater. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Masterful storytelling with authentic, emotion-driven characters and a meaningful, memorable, and unique approach. • A clear, focused vision of the concept for the production was fully integrated with creative collaboration from each technical and performance area to ensure design consistency and advance nuanced themes. • The musical selection was appropriate and showcased the diverse talents of the school's performers and technicians, producing elements of quality musical theater.

ENCOURAGING A GROWTH MINDSET

Feedback can be daunting, especially for young performers just starting their journey to the stage. The Spotlight Awards encourages the development of a growth mindset, helping participants to recognize feedback as an opportunity to hone their ever-evolving skill sets.

What is a growth mindset?

- The belief that success comes from ongoing personal development, and your skills and abilities can grow through effort, learning and practice.
- A focus on development in setbacks - You bounce back, pick yourself up, and try again. A growth mindset embraces challenges and views failure not as evidence of limitations, but as a springboard for growth.
- Focus on continuously improving your skills and abilities, rather than “winning”.
- Open to constructive criticism, realizing it creates growth and the chance to learn, improve and develop skills.

Strategies for Fostering a Growth Mindset in the Classroom

Helping students develop a growth mindset requires deliberate effort from teachers, but many of the methods can be easily integrated into existing practices.

- Normalize struggle and provide challenges. Struggle is part of the learning process and emphasizing and reinforcing that idea helps students react positively when they feel challenged. Part of developing a growth mindset is teaching students to overcome obstacles.
- Embrace the word “yet”. If someone makes the statement “I’m not a math person,” adding a simple qualifier will signal that a process exists for gaining ability. “You’re not a math person yet.”
- Demonstrate mistakes and celebrate corrections. Mistakes should be viewed as learning opportunities. Teachers can model this outlook in reactions to their own mistakes and steps they take to correct a mistake.
- Reward improvement rather than results. When praising someone for a job well done, highlight the **journey** they took rather than an end product. When we recognize the effort and persistence behind a good result, rather than attributing it to innate qualities, our feedback is more meaningful, and encourages the recipient to revisit those positive behaviors when faced with their next challenge.
- Set goals. Helping students set incremental, achievable goals demonstrates the attainability of growth and progress.
- Develop cooperative exercises. Working together to solve problems emphasizes process and reinforces the importance of getting help and finding solutions. It also deemphasizes individual outcomes.
- Don’t oversimplify. “You can do anything!” may feel like harmless encouragement, but if students aren’t put in a position to overcome challenges, they’ll conclude that such statements are empty, and the feedback will lose credibility.
- Celebrate growth. This reinforces the emphasis on effort and process. It also provides opportunities to share valuable learnings.



PREPARING STUDENTS TO RECEIVE FEEDBACK

Giving and receiving feedback are skills that take practice. When giving feedback, students may worry that they will hurt their peers, or may simply state if they liked something instead of providing useful feedback. When receiving feedback, students may misinterpret or internalize it and think they're being criticized rather than viewing it as an opportunity to learn and grow. How can you help prepare your students to give and accept feedback to improve and develop skills, as well as gain resilience and confidence?

Feedback is not the same as criticism.

This is difficult for many students to grasp. Feedback is not a personal attack or inherently negative; in fact, it can include praise and compliments as well as advice, suggestions, and observations. There is a difference between feedback (which can be positive or negative but is meant to help students improve) and criticism (which is generally negative). **Receiving feedback does not mean that the student is a bad actor/writer/student/person – it means someone sees potential for improvement and cares enough to help them grow.**

- **Activity to try:** As a class, brainstorm examples of feedback they've experienced in the past that they thought were criticisms or that they took personally. Then examine each piece of feedback and rewrite it to demonstrate how students can frame the comment in a way that helps them improve rather than as a personal attack. For example: "I couldn't understand what you were saying during your monologue" doesn't mean "I'm a terrible actor who nobody can understand." A student can turn that into "Next time I will slow down and enunciate more clearly."

Feedback is necessary for improvement.

Without feedback, students won't know how they are progressing or what they can do to improve in the future. Emphasize to students that they will receive feedback for the rest of their lives, particularly when they enter the workforce. Remind students that every job in existence (performing arts-related or otherwise) comes with feedback in various forms, such as auditioning for roles, applying for positions and/or promotions, receiving client testimonials, and getting performance reviews.

Accepting feedback gracefully and being able to apply it and move forward are necessary parts of students' growth and development.

- **Activity to try:** Divide students into pairs to prepare a brief scene – improvisation, mime, tableau, or a scripted short scene. After rehearsal time, combine two pairs together to perform for each other. Ask each group to prepare 2 pieces of feedback, one to give verbally and one to give as written feedback.

We as educators must take seriously our responsibility to create growth-mindset-friendly environments – where kids feel safe from judgement, where they understand that we believe in their potential to grow, and where they know that we are totally dedicated to collaborating with them on their learning. We are in the business of helping kids thrive, not finding reasons why they can't. – Carol Dweck

Help your students develop self-awareness.

Most students are aware of their efforts and when asked, will give a fairly honest assessment of their work. Asking students during rehearsals how they thought a run-through went often brings out responses that are on point for what needs to be fixed or adjusted. In a classroom setting, this can be applied to how an exercise went and could be done together as a class or individually as an exit slip or reflection.

- **Activity to try:** Ask students how they think they did. Was the run-through ready for an audience? How could they improve next time? What do you think the group needs to do to make this sequence better?

Content on this page adapted from Theatrefolk.com's blog Giving and Receiving Feedback by Kerry Hishon

SHOW SELECTION AND CASTING

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

The Spotlight Awards is dedicated to celebrating, uplifting, and honoring the rich diversity of individuals across Tennessee. We strive to create an inclusive environment where every student, teacher, and adjudicator feels valued, appreciated, and empowered to express their authentic selves. Through ongoing dialogue and meaningful engagement with all communities, we are committed to amplifying a wide spectrum of voices, stories, and experiences, ensuring that everyone is seen, heard, and represented in this program. Our goal is to foster a space where every identity and background is recognized and celebrated.

Show Choice

We acknowledge the educational value of using the classroom to explore a wide range of stories and experiences that expand students' worldviews. At the same time, we encourage schools to thoughtfully reflect on the diversity of their own communities and audiences when selecting shows and casting performances. With an abundance of musicals to choose from, directors are encouraged and expected to select works and make casting choices that authentically honor a variety of cultures, identities, and lived experiences, while ensuring that scripts and direction avoid perpetuating stereotypes or exclusionary narratives.

Character Representation

When selecting a show, directors should thoughtfully consider the representation of characters in the story and how these portrayals will impact both students and the audience. It's important to choose shows that avoid objectifying women through text or costuming. Additionally, it is crucial to select shows that respect all individuals by avoiding objectification and stereotypes related to race, gender, sexual orientation, culture, identity, disability, or expression. This includes ensuring that the script and costuming do not perpetuate harmful or limiting portrayals. Directors should also ensure that all cast members, especially those from historically marginalized groups, are given the opportunity to play fully developed, authentic characters rather than being confined to one-dimensional or stereotypical roles. This approach fosters inclusivity and reflects the richness of diverse lived experiences.

Color-Conscious Casting

A theatre that truly reflects the richness and diversity of American culture is one that resonates with everyone. We encourage the use of color-conscious casting, rather than color-blind casting. To be blind to someone's race, ethnicity, or identity is to overlook their unique experiences and contributions. Color-conscious casting embraces the differences we see and experience every day, asking how these differences can deepen and enrich the story being told, while fostering representation and authenticity on stage. This approach values each person's identity and the powerful perspectives they bring to their roles.

Cultivating Inclusivity in your Theatre Program

- **Invite Diverse Voices:** Bring in guests from the community to enrich your classroom and rehearsal spaces with diverse perspectives. This allows for a broader representation of experiences and helps create a more inclusive environment.
- **Broad Representation in Your Program:** Ensure that diverse perspectives are reflected not only in the actors on stage but also in your designers and crew. Collaborate with other faculty members to engage participants from various clubs and subject areas, enriching your theater program with diverse talents and viewpoints.
- **Create an Inclusive Environment:** Foster an inviting and inclusive space in your classroom and theater. When everyone feels welcomed, valued, and respected, it enhances the growth and success of your program.
- **Evaluate Relevance of Character Race:** As a director, consider whether the race or identity of characters is central to the story and consult the script for relevant information. This will guide your casting decisions and ensure thoughtful, informed choices. Research and understand the issues presented in the show to create a more inclusive and positive environment.
- **Adapt Scripts Thoughtfully:** Collaborate with licensing companies to modify any problematic lines or songs in your script. Many shows offer options for updating outdated or insensitive content. Small adjustments can make a significant impact in creating a more respectful and inclusive production.

We want the actors onstage to reflect the mosaic of the world around us. We want young people to see people who look like them onstage and think, 'Wow, there might be a job for me, I can do this too.'
- Tara Rubin, founder of Tara Rubin Casting

OVERVIEW OF SCHOLARSHIPS AND PERFORMANCE OPPORTUNITIES

These elements are optional and are open to all participation tracks. Details for each can be found in the following pages.

Rising Star Scholarships

Several nominations and scholarships will be awarded to students in 9th grade based on video audition submissions. The number and type of scholarships provided will vary (may include monetary, and/or free registration to camps and workshops).

Arts Leadership Scholarships

Several nominations and scholarships will be awarded to graduating seniors planning a career in the arts who exhibit the highest level of excellence in their craft and embody leadership skills in their school and community. The number and type of scholarships provided will vary (may include monetary, and/or free registration to camps and workshops).

Design Symposium Gallery

Student Designers' work will be presented at the annual Design Symposium in March 2025 at the Tennessee State University's Cox/Lewis Theatre. The Design Symposium will be an artistic display of theatrical design (all areas of theatrical design welcome) renderings as well as images and displays of fully realized creations.

The Design Symposium display will be open for viewing March 28-31, 2025, in the TSU Cox/Lewis Theatre Lobby and Rotunda.

Encore Ensemble

All schools participating in the Community track will have the opportunity to nominate 1 student to perform in the Encore Ensemble with Spotlight Alumni during the Spotlight Awards Ceremony. Students in the Encore Ensemble will be required to attend rehearsals for this performance.

Professional Review

Students in all participation tracks may request professional review for video auditions at any time during the year. To do this, students should contact Spotlight Administration at education@tpac.org for instructions on submitting their videos. Written feedback will be provided within a week of video submission and will be based on the Audition Rubric found on the Spotlight website.

RISING STAR SCHOLARSHIPS

Several nominations and scholarships will be awarded to students in 9th grade based on video audition submissions. The number and type of scholarships provided will vary (may include monetary, and/or free registration to camps and workshops).

Deadlines and Announcements

Scholarship Applications will be due by January 15. Scholarship recipients (multiple honorees in each category) will be announced at the Kickoff Celebration on January 25.

Application Details

Students applying will submit the following materials.

- Online Application
- Media Release (signed by parent/guardian through DocuSign)
- Headshot for the nominee – must be high-res jpg files (8"x10 at 300 DPI)
- Resume for the nominee – one (1) page
- Audition Video Including:
 1. Student introduction (Name, School, Grade, selected song titles/show)
 2. 1 song from a Broadway musical, Songs should be between 2-2.5 minutes in length each

Submission Guidelines

- FIRST – Online application needs to be submitted first. ([Link to Rising Star Application](#))
- Upon receipt of the application, parent/guardian will get an email from DocuSign to submit your Media Release.
- To submit your other items, you will need to title the files **PRIOR** to uploading to the request link. Please label all files with RISING STAR - FIRST NAME LAST NAME – [TITLE OF SUBMISSION ITEM / i.e. HEADSHOT or RESUME]
- Once your files have been titled correctly, use the dropbox link below to upload directly to Spotlight Administration.
- **Submit items by using this request link - <https://www.dropbox.com/request/5e4xE19nioDhmjNJaB7i>**

Audition Rubric

Selections will be based on the Audition Rubric found on the Spotlight website.

ARTS LEADERSHIP SCHOLARSHIP

Several nominations and scholarships will be awarded to graduating seniors planning a career in the arts who exhibit the highest level of excellence in their craft and embody leadership skills in their school and community. The number and type of scholarships provided will vary (may include monetary, and/or free registration to camps and workshops).

Deadlines and Announcements

Scholarship Applications will be due by January 15. Scholarship recipients (multiple honorees in each category) will be announced at the Kickoff Celebration on January 25.

Application Details

Students applying will submit the following materials.

- Online Application, including a brief written description of what leadership means to you
- Media Release (signed by student or parent/guardian through DocuSign)
- Headshot for the nominee – must be high-res jpg files (8"x10 at 300 DPI)
- Resume for the nominee – one (1) page
- Teacher Recommendation letter
- Topic Response Video Including:
 - Student introduction (Name, School, Grade)
 - Topic Response – Students will submit a 3-5-minute video of themselves responding to the following concepts: *Why is theatre meaningful to you? Why is theatre important in the world today? How do you hope to bring the arts to others in your life/career?*

Submission Guidelines

- FIRST – Online application needs to be submitted first. ([Link to Arts Leadership Application](#))
- Upon receipt of the application, parent/guardian will get an email from DocuSign to submit your Media Release.
- To submit your other items, you will need to title the files **PRIOR** to uploading to the request link. Please label all files with ARTS LEADER - FIRST NAME LAST NAME – [TITLE OF SUBMISSION ITEM / i.e. HEADSHOT or RESUME]
- Once your files have been titled correctly, use the dropbox link below to upload directly to Spotlight Administration.
- **Submit items by using this request link - <https://www.dropbox.com/request/5e4xE19nioDhmjNJaB7i>**

DESIGN SYMPOSIUM GALLERY

Student Designers' work will be presented at the annual Design Symposium in March 2025 at the Tennessee State University's Cox/Lewis Theatre. The Design Symposium will be an artistic display of theatrical design (all areas of theatrical design welcome) renderings as well as images and displays of fully realized creations.

The Design Symposium display will be open for viewing March 28-31, 2025, in the TSU Cox/Lewis Theatre Lobby and Rotunda.

Gallery Display Opening

On the evening of March 28, 2025, TSU's Theater department and TPAC's Spotlight Awards will host a Symposium Gallery Opening Reception at 5:00 PM. Student artists will be on site with their creations to share about their creative process.

Applications to Design Symposium

Interested students will apply online ([TSU Design Symposium Application](#)) and provide additional digital support materials as indicated below. Students that wish to apply will submit at least 1 design rendering (no more than 5) and/or photos of a constructed item with a 1-page description of each submitted design. Gallery submissions can include a fully constructed garment and/or design renderings from either a realized or unrealized production. Applications will be open until January 15. Spotlight Awards Administration and TSU Theatre department will select participants and notify them as soon as possible.

Symposium Participation Requirements

- Students must arrange transport to TSU's Performing Arts Building for installation of the gallery, the Gallery Opening Reception, March 28 from 4:00 PM-7:00 PM, and on March 31, between 3:00-4:00 PM to load-out gallery contents.
- Students will be required to have a signed media release allowing photos of them, as well as their work, during the Gallery Opening Reception.

Submission Categories

All submissions require a written description of each design including how it fits into the world of the show.

Design Rendering and Image Displays

- Renderings/images of designs with production photos and other digital information to be printed and displayed on a flat board surface.
- Participants can submit up to 5 design renderings for consideration with a 1-page description of each design including how it fits into the world of the show. Design submissions could include design renderings and production photos of the realized designs, mood boards, models, cue sheets or color swatches.
- Participants are responsible for providing high quality images and printed items.

Constructed Item Displays

- Images submitted to show the 3D fully constructed item that would be displayed in person in the gallery on tables or dress forms. Participants are responsible for providing high quality images and renderings to go with these items.
- Students can submit up to 5 photographs showing fully constructed costumes, props or set models. Production Photos of the item in use are encouraged.
- These submissions must also include design rendering and 1-page description for each of the constructed items.

ENCORE ENSEMBLE

Students in the Community and Show Review Tracks are invited to perform at the Spotlight Awards Ceremony on May 17 with Spotlight Alumni in the Encore Ensemble. Students in the Encore Ensemble will learn from a professional director/choreographer and music director, as well as working with the amazing talent from past Spotlight participants.

Ensemble Selection

School Community and Show Review Tracks

- Schools participating in the Community and Show Review Tracks can each have 1 student join the Encore Ensemble.
- Schools must participate in at least 1 Community event during the school year to nominate a student for the Encore Ensemble.
- Theatre Directors will nominate a student to participate, at their own discretion.
- Although not required, it is encouraged that Seniors are given this opportunity first.

Individual Community participation

- Students that participate on their own (separate from a school) will be eligible to participate in the Encore Ensemble as well. These students must participate in at least 2 community events during the school year (in-person or virtual), and must be available for rehearsals.
- Students that are the only participants from their school can submit a teacher nomination letter for participation.
- Students who participate individually along with other classmates – A Theater Director or Drama Club sponsor at your school will need to select which student to nominate for participation. Reach out for clarification and specific guidelines in this situation.

Ceremony Attendance for Encore Ensemble

Students participating in the Encore Ensemble will be given free admission for themselves, as well as 1 additional seat on hold for purchase.

Rehearsals and Sound Check

Rehearsals and sound checks for Encore Ensemble will be held during the evenings of May 14-16. Students not available for rehearsals will not be allowed to perform at the Ceremony.

SPOTLIGHT AWARDS CEREMONY AT TPAC

The Spotlight Awards Ceremony is an inclusive community celebration of arts education that acknowledges outstanding achievement, growth, and artistry in high school musical theatre and provides an opportunity for students to share their art with each other.

Time and Place

The Spotlight Awards Ceremony will take place May 17, 2025, 7:00-10:00 pm in TPAC's Jackson Hall (505 Deaderick Street, Nashville). Doors will open to the public at 6:30 p.m.

Awards Ceremony Attire

The Spotlight Awards is a red-carpet-style event based on the Tony Awards. The dress for this event is formal.

Ticketing for Community Participants

Awards Ceremony tickets are not provided to the Community or Show Review Track schools. However, individual students participating in the Encore Ensemble will be given free admission and 1 additional seat on hold for purchase.

Encore Ensemble Performance

All Community track participants will have the opportunity to include students in the Encore Ensemble performance during the Spotlight Awards Ceremony. Students in the Encore Ensemble will be required to attend rehearsals for this performance.

Rehearsals and Sound Check

All those performing at the awards ceremony are required to attend sound check. Rehearsals and sound checks for Encore Ensemble will be held during the evenings of May 14-16.

Ticketing for Community and Guests

Tickets are very limited for the Spotlight Awards Ceremony beyond the participating adjudication school attendees. This event is specifically designed to allow these students and teachers to celebrate and share art with each other, therefore adjudication school group tickets will be confirmed before opening any other seats. Tickets can be purchased at www.tpac.org once tickets are on sale in the Spring.

2024-2025 SPOTLIGHT AWARDS – SAVE THE DATE INFORMATION

*Check out some of the upcoming events planned for this school year.
More details will come out for each one along the way.*

SEPTEMBER 16-18, 2024

Registration and scholarship applications open for all tracks. (*Show Review/Community track register through Jan. 15.*)

SEPTEMBER 19

Vocal Master Class with Natalie Weiss
<https://natalieweissofficial.com/>

NOVEMBER 6, 2024, 7:30 PM

Invited Dress Rehearsal for MTSU's performance of *She Loves Me*.

NOVEMBER 11, 4:30-6 PM

Acting Master Class with Ashley Nicole Anderson
**Some will need to have a prepared monologue or song.*

NOVEMBER 12, 2024, 7:30 PM

Invited Dress Rehearsal for Belmont University's performance of *Twelfth Night*.

DECEMBER 10, 5-6:30 PM

Master Class with Laura Michelle Kelly
<https://www.lauramichellekelly.net/>

DECEMBER 17, 2024

Spotlight SINGS! Support our program and join us for this fantastic night of Broadway and Winter songs performed by our talented Spotlight Society Alumni members.

JANUARY 17-18, 2025

Thespian Conference – Come visit us in our sessions

JANUARY 25, 2025

Spotlight Awards Community Kickoff Event

FEBRUARY 10, 2025

Bloody Valentine Event, hosted by Rockvale High School

FEBRUARY 12, 2025

Virtual Panel with Spotlight Alumni in the theatre business and on tour!

FEBRUARY 2025

Master Class TBD

FEBRUARY 26, 2025, 7:30 PM

Invited Dress Rehearsal for MTSU's *Our Town*

MARCH 2025

Master Class TBD

MARCH 27-31, 2025

Design Symposium at Tennessee State University Gallery Opening Reception for designers and guests on March 28, 5:00 PM.

APRIL 28, 2025

Virtual Master Class with Telly Leung
<https://www.tellyleung.com/bio>

May 5, 2025

Virtual Master Class with Adam Kantor

MAY 14-16, 2025

Encore Ensemble (Community and Alumni Performance) and Lead Nominee Closing Number Rehearsals

MAY 17, 2025

Spotlight Awards Ceremony – 7:00-10:00 PM