

# **Elly Awards Program 2008-09 Guidelines for Judges**

The following guidelines are to assist those volunteering as Elly judges.

## **Season**

The Elly season begins July 1 and ends June 30.

## **Categories**

Judges are required to attend all productions assigned to them in one of the following categories:

- Comedy
- Drama
- Musicals
- Young People's Musicals
- Young People's Plays
- Original Works
- Education

The Education category was created to accommodate the growing number of high schools and middle schools who have become member theaters. All productions submitted by educational institutions are judged in this category.

## **Judges' Commitment and Conduct**

Judges must be able to commit their time and effort to one full season.

Judges must attend every production assigned to them. The number of productions varies by category and by season. Beginning in 2008-09, SARTA may place more than five judges in categories with a high volume of productions, and will rotate the productions among the judges such that each production is assigned to five judges but not every judge is assigned every production.

Judges must always stay for the entire production.

Judges may not be artistically involved in any production in the category they are judging.

Some travel is required. SARTA has member theaters as far away as Nevada City, Placerville, Stockton, Yuba City and Fairfield.

Judges must maintain impartiality, discretion and confidentiality at all times. Judges should not publicly express their opinions of eligible productions, and should not discuss productions with other judges before their judging forms have been completed.

## **Judging Procedures**

SARTA attempts to notify judges of each production three weeks before opening night. The Judges' Notification Form includes dates, times, directions, and other pertinent information.

Theaters will provide each judge with two complimentary tickets to each production. Judges are responsible for making their own reservations. Judges should identify themselves by name and as Elly judges when making reservations, to ensure that their tickets are complimentary and that theaters know that judges are scheduling the show.

Judges should reserve tickets immediately upon receipt of the notification form to avoid difficulty if the theater sells out its performances. Many theaters fill quickly, and judges should neither expect nor require special accommodation. We recommend avoiding scheduling reservations for closing weekends, so the judge will be able to reschedule in case of an emergency.

Judges should notify the theater immediately if they must change their reservations. Judges should notify the Elly Coordinator at once by telephone if they become unable to attend a production.

Judging forms are included in the judging packet. Return envelopes, address labels, and postage stamps are provided for judges who submit their forms by US Mail.

Judges must submit their completed judging forms to the tabulator within two weeks of seeing each production. This assures SARTA that productions are being seen and permits SARTA to tabulate scores in a timely manner.

Immediately following the end of the season, judges will be sent a ballot listing the ten top-ranking candidates for each award in their category. They will be asked to rank each of the candidates and return the ballot promptly. The resulting top five candidates are nominated for the Elly Award. The top candidate will receive the Elly Award. This is a silent and confidential balloting process. Judges should not discuss it with others.

Judges should retain copies of their judging forms, notes, and theater programs for one year.

## **Aspects Judged**

In the Comedy, Drama, Musical, Young Peoples', and Education categories, we give awards for the following:

Male and female lead	Set Design	Costume Design
Male and female support	Lighting Design	Overall Production
Direction		

In the Young People's categories, separate awards are given for youth (actors under 18) and adults (actors over 18).

In the Musicals and Young People's Musicals category and in the Education - Musicals subcategory, we also give awards for:

**Musical Direction  
Choreography**

In the Original Works category, we give awards for:

**Original Script (to the playwright)  
Production of Best Original Script (to the producing theater)  
Adapted Script (to the playwright)  
Production of Best Adapted Script (to the producing theater)**

Theaters submitting Original Works productions may also submit the production in its natural category, such as comedy or drama, to have individual performers and technical aspects judged if they wish. This is the only circumstance under which a theater may submit a production in more than one category.

Original Works judges must obtain a copy of the script from the theater on the date they attend the performance for their use in evaluating the script's merits. The script is for the judge to keep.

Theaters are responsible for choosing the category in which their show belongs. Judges may consider this when evaluating the director's concept of the show.

Theaters designate which roles they consider the leads. Judges may consider this, too, when evaluating the director's concept of the show. Judges should evaluate the leads designated by the theater without exception. If the theater designates no leads, judges may assume that the theater conceives of all roles as support or ensemble.

Judges should always evaluate at least three supporting male actors and at least three supporting female actors, unless there are fewer than three male or three female supporting actors in the show. Judges may evaluate additional supporting actors who did an exceptional job if they wish.

Double-cast roles are not eligible for consideration, but judges should evaluate all other roles and the technical aspects of the show.

Judges must always evaluate all technical aspects of each production (set, lighting, and costumes, plus musical direction and choreography if applicable) even if these are not specifically credited in the program and even if the design was very minimal.

**SARTA Membership**

Elly Judges must be members of the Sacramento Area Regional Theatre Alliance. Judges are entitled to a complimentary one-year membership.

**Elly Awards Ceremony**

Elly Award nominations are announced at a Nominees' Reception in August. The Elly Awards Ceremony is held in September. SARTA provides each Elly Judge two complimentary tickets.

SARTA appreciates the tremendous commitment of its volunteers who serve as judges. If judges have questions or suggestions about the Elly Award judging procedures, contact the Elly Judge Coordinator either directly, or through the SARTA Office at (916) 443-8229, or by e-mail at [sarta@sarta.com](mailto:sarta@sarta.com).

Attachments:       Definitions  
                          Point Scale Guidelines  
                          Play Production (Technical)  
                          Judges' Notification Form