

**HIGH SCHOOL
Musical
Theatre
Awards
at PROCTORS**



ADJUDICATOR HANDBOOK 2026

Collaborative School of the Arts at Proctors
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ABOUT: HIGH SCHOOL MUSICAL THEATRE AWARDS



MISSION OF PROCTORS

Through arts and community leadership, to be a catalyst for excellence in education, sustainable economic development, and rich civic engagement, to enhance the quality of life in the greater Capital Region.

MISSION OF HIGH SCHOOL MUSICAL THEATRE AWARDS AT PROCTORS

To celebrate, inspire, and honor excellence and achievement in high school musical theatre, and to highlight the importance of musical theatre and arts education within the greater Capital Region.

ABOUT THE HIGH SCHOOL MUSICAL THEATRE AWARDS AT PROCTORS

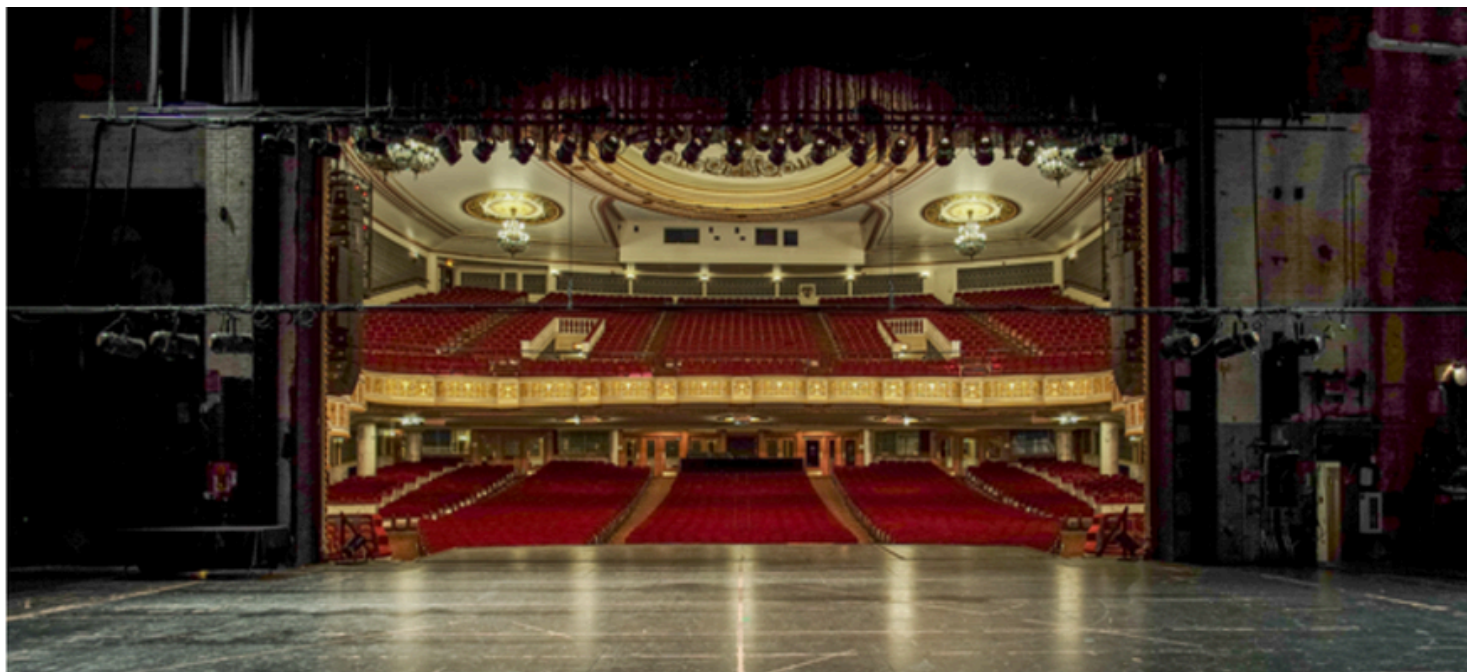
In collaboration with The Broadway League, this event celebrates the vibrant world of high school musical theatre and pays homage to the abundant talent flourishing in the greater Capital Region.

Mirroring the prestige of the Tony Awards, the National High School Musical Theatre Awards (The Jimmy Awards) is an annual red-carpet affair honoring participating schools in a dazzling award ceremony each May. The event features a diverse range of accolades, including individual and group awards, both on stage and behind the scenes. The recipients of the Outstanding Lead Performer awards will serve as ambassadors for Proctors and the Capital Region at the annual Jimmy Awards in New York City.

The National High School Musical Theatre Awards (NHSMTA), a program of The Broadway League, was established in 2009 to elevate the importance of theatre arts education in schools and reward excellence in student performance. The program impacts over 100,000 students annually who participate in high school musical theatre competitions sponsored by thirty professional theatres throughout the United States.

Our regional Outstanding Lead Performers will receive an all-expenses paid trip to New York City where they will receive professional instruction and compete with students from other regional programs for scholarships and the title of Best National High School Actress and Best National High School Actor.

ABOUT: PROCTORS



With more than 650,000 people attending over 1,700 events each year, Proctors has become the premier arts organization in the Capital Region. From touring Broadway shows to intimate concerts, dance recitals, and graduations to the winter farmers' market, Proctors is a living room for the Capital Region and a haven for arts and community organizations of all kinds. Education programs at Proctors impact more than 35,000 children from 400 schools in 100 districts each year through the Collaborative School of the Arts.

ABOUT: COLLABORATIVE SCHOOL OF THE ARTS

At Proctors, you have come to expect world-class dance, theatre, music, and film; the Collaborative School of the Arts is no exception. Motivated by the belief in the value of arts in education, we offer a variety of educational programs to tens of thousands of students each season to inspire and cultivate career paths in the creative fields as well as to develop and welcome a vibrant and diverse palette of patrons and artists.

The school encompasses Proctors, Capital Repertory Theatre, and Universal Preservation Hall, and hosts community events, summer arts training programs, in-school, after school programs, internships, artists residencies, career training opportunities, and unrivaled performance experiences like Broadway Camp and HSMTA. [For more information visit collaborativeschoolofthearts.org](https://collaborativeschoolofthearts.org).

OVERVIEW: ADJUDICATION



Proctors will appoint and train a panel of adjudicators comprised of qualified education and arts professionals to serve as judges. Adjudicators are provided training and orientation materials before the start of the adjudication period. Three judges will attend each participating school show and award points based on a designed scoring rubric. Scoring will consider each participating school, and each adjudicator will submit their scores and comments into a secure portal for all group and individual categories. These scores will determine nominations across all categories.

After the HSMTA ceremony, each school will receive their scores.

Following this, scores are tabulated to determine up to 20 finalists for Outstanding Lead Performer. Those students will participate in callbacks to determine the top 10 finalists who will perform at the show before the top two lead performers are announced.

Proctors Collaborative believes in doing what it takes to make our diverse Capital Region community more equitable, accessible, and inclusive. As teachers and students consider characters to submit for Outstanding Leads, we have requested their sensitivity to the casting history in theatre and how it has negatively impacted underrepresented communities. We encourage casting selections that are authentic and in line with the roles being played and have added this element to the scoring sheets.

The **HIGH SCHOOL MUSICAL THEATRE AWARDS** show will be **Saturday, May 16, 2026**, and adjudicators are encouraged to attend and celebrate their participation in this grand event, honor the school and students' achievements, and revel in all the many components and partnerships that align for the magic to happen each year. Seats for the showcase will be arranged through the adjudicator coordinator.

PROCESS

Adjudicators attending a production are provided with a copy of the school and performance details before attending the production. This is the school's opportunity to relay the rationale behind the show choice, the vision of the director, and/or any special challenges faced in the delivery of the final production.

School performance adjudication: **Friday, Feb. 6 to Sunday, March 29, 2026**

Adjudicators are assigned to schools by Proctors. Assignments based on preference and availability. Adjudicators will not be assigned to a school in which there is a conflict of interest.

Three adjudicators representing Proctors will attend productions. If a show is double-cast, the school's director will specify the cast they wish to have adjudicated.

Adjudicators must rate all categories below except those noted with *

Outstanding Musical
Outstanding Lead Performer (1)
Outstanding Lead Performer (2)
Outstanding Supporting Performer (1)
Outstanding Supporting Performer (2)
Outstanding Ensemble
Outstanding Choreography
Backstage Excellence
Outstanding Achievement*
Spirit of Theatre*
Dance Excellence*
Rising Star*

Proctors recommends that schools allow adjudicators to attend performances anonymously so that they can fairly evaluate the production.

Following the performance, each adjudicator will complete a score sheet and some brief comments relating to the show that will be shared with schools. Scores must be submitted **no later than 48 hours after the performance. Due to the many deadlines looming, there will be no exceptions to this requirement going forward.**

The last day to submit school show scores for the final weekend is **Monday, March 30, 2026**. This only applies if you are the adjudicator for the **March 29, 2026**, show. Otherwise, all scores are due 48 hours after viewing the performance.

AWARD DESCRIPTIONS

Outstanding Ensemble Award represents recognition for a group of performers who have demonstrated exceptional collaboration, cohesion, and performance quality as a collective unit. This award celebrates the collective effort and synergy of the ensemble cast, recognizing their ability to work together harmoniously to enhance the overall quality and impact of the production. Judge evaluations and scores determine this award.

Outstanding Choreography Execution Award represents recognition for individuals or groups who have demonstrated exceptional skill and precision in performing choreography. This award celebrates those who bring choreography to life with outstanding performance quality, contributing significantly to the overall impact and success of the production. Judge evaluations and scores determine this award.

Backstage Excellence Award represents recognition of a group of students for demonstrating teamwork, professionalism, and a commitment to excellence behind the scenes. Student-run crews, costume crews, set construction crews, stagehands, or any group of students who have dedicated time in a backstage capacity in one of the HSMTA adjudicated musicals are eligible. Information provided by teachers and judge feedback will be evaluated for this award. This award highlights the critical, often unrecognized, work that goes into making a production successful, celebrating the dedication, skill, and teamwork of those who ensure everything runs smoothly from behind the curtain.

Outstanding Musical Award represents high recognition for a musical production that excels in numerous areas of performance and production quality, including direction and design, creative vision, technical areas, choreography, and cohesion of all elements. This award celebrates a musical production that excels across all areas, recognizing the collective efforts of the cast, crew, and creative team in delivering an outstanding and memorable performance. Judge evaluations and combined scores across five categories are combined to determine this award. One Outstanding Musical per budget tier will be selected. The top three nominees in each tier will be invited to perform at the annual High School Musical Theatre Awards ceremony in May.

Outstanding Achievement Award represents recognition for a school that demonstrated remarkable resilience and success despite facing significant challenges. Challenges may include limited resources, adversity, logistical hurdles, technical difficulties, or performance-related challenges. This award celebrates the group's perseverance, teamwork, and determination to deliver a great performance despite these obstacles, highlighting their dedication and commitment to their craft. This award will be selected based on information received from schools about their production challenges combined with judge feedback about the show.

Outstanding Lead Performer Award represents recognition for an individual who has delivered an exceptional performance in a leading role. This award celebrates the talent, hard work, and dedication of the lead performer who has made a remarkable contribution to the production with their performance. Judge evaluations and scores determine this award. A triple-threat audition will be required for finalists to assess abilities in singing, acting, and dancing, and scored by a core panel of industry professional judges, including directors, artistic directors, acting and vocal coaches, and choreographers. The top 10 performers will perform at the annual High School Musical Theatre Awards ceremony in May at Proctors. The two finalists for this category will participate in the National High School Musical Theatre Awards, the Jimmys, in New York City, for 10 days in late June. **Their participation will be fully sponsored by the Collaborative School of the Arts.**

Outstanding Supporting Performer Award recognizes an individual who has delivered an exceptional performance in a supporting role. This award celebrates the talent and dedication of the actor in a supporting role who has made a significant and positive impact on the production. Judge evaluations and scores determine this award.

Spirit of Theatre Award recognizes two students who embody exceptional dedication, enthusiasm, and passion for theatre. This award will be given to two students who go above and beyond in their contributions to the theatre program, showing a true passion for the art form and a commitment to excellence. The award will be chosen by students during the week of rehearsal among finalists and representatives performing and representing their schools. Voting for this award will happen the Friday before the ceremony.

NEW! Rising Star Award is selected by the director, choreographer, and music director during rehearsal week. This award honors a performer who shows exceptional potential, growth, and a standout work ethic.

NEW! Outstanding Dancer Award is selected by the choreographer during rehearsal week. This award recognizes a dancer whose technique, versatility, and expressive performance consistently elevate the choreography.



CALLBACKS FOR LEAD PERFORMER

All students eligible for Lead Performer will be adjudicated twice to give them a final score. The first adjudication will take place when judges attend the school production performance. Up to 20 candidates will then go on to callbacks for a second score.

The callbacks will be held **April 18, 2026**. They will take place in an audition-style setting at Proctors and will include vocal/acting performances and dance performances to evaluate their “triple threat.” The callback judges will be those of local theatre professionals and different than the original judges.

- Callback scores will be due at the end of callbacks.
- These scores will determine the top 10 nominations for (Lead Performers 1 and 2) for the 2026 program. Proctors will announce the Outstanding Lead Performer nominee **April 20, 2026**.
- Final scores will be calculated and sealed, remaining confidential until the High School Musical Theatre Awards **May 16, 2026**.
- Each participating school will be notified of the date adjudicators will attend their show. On chosen dates, schools will reserve two complimentary tickets per evaluator attending. Tickets should be held at the school’s box office under “Proctors HSMTA adjudicators” unless otherwise noted.

NEW YORK COUNTIES ELIGIBLE FOR PARTICIPATION IN THE HSMTA AT PROCTORS

Albany	Hamilton	Schenectady
Columbia	Herkimer	Schoharie
Essex	Montgomery	Ulster
Fulton	Rensselaer	Warren
Greene	Saratoga	Washington

NOMINATIONS/WINNERS

- Names of nominees and winners of each category will be made public.
- Nominations will be sent to all schools via email.
- Five nominations will be given for each category.
- Three nominations for Outstanding Musical per budget tier. These schools will be invited to perform during the ceremony in May.
- Four nominations will be given for Outstanding Lead Performer (1 and 2), along with Outstanding Supporting Performer (1 and 2).

Production Information Form

A school production information form will be available in a portal for judges, which will include cast lists, names of characters to be evaluated in lead and supporting roles, driving directions, instructions for parking, and other important information pertaining to the production. Please be sure to read through the school's production information form before attending the performance.

Tickets

Once the adjudication schedule is confirmed, Proctors staff will contact high schools to reserve up to two complimentary tickets for each adjudicator attending the production. In most cases, seating will be general admission. Adjudicators should alert Proctors staff of any special needs regarding seating. Tickets will be held under the name of "Proctors" as judges' names are not given to schools.

Attending the School Shows

On the day of the performance, adjudicators should plan on arriving at least 15 minutes before curtain and must remain throughout the duration of the performance. Adjudicators should make every effort to maintain anonymity after the performance, and no oral critique should be provided to the director, other patrons, or students. Adjudicators must be able to attend all their scheduled performances.

Confidentiality

Adjudicators must not discuss their opinions, evaluations, scores, or feedback outside of adjudicator meetings. This includes, but is not limited to: students, faculty, and staff from participating schools, colleagues, friends and family, other adjudicators (outside of adjudicator meetings), reviewers, press, social media, etc. If you receive any press requests, be sure to get in touch with Proctors staff immediately.



Conflicts of Interest

Adjudicators must agree to uphold Proctors conflict of interest policy and should not allow personal preferences or bias to influence evaluations. Per this policy, adjudicators should not have a personal or professional relationship with the participating high schools' musical theatre productions they are assigned to adjudicate. If an adjudicator thinks a conflict of interest might exist, the adjudicator must contact Proctors staff immediately. Definitions and examples of potential conflicts of interest include, but are not limited to:

Professional Conflict of Interest

This includes employment, receiving or providing compensation, gifts, financial support, favors that are substantial in nature, or donations from participating school districts. This also includes board connections, organizational partnerships, volunteer work, business ties, financial investments, or any other professional ties that might positively or negatively influence the evaluation.

Personal Conflict of Interest

This includes alumni status (only if evaluating that school's production), involvement of family members, spouses, siblings, parents, children participation in productions, or any other personal ties that might positively or negatively influence the evaluation.



OVERVIEW: EVALUATION GUIDELINES

Proctors staff will provide adjudicators with a digital form. Please keep the school's production information form, the program or playbill, and any notes taken during or after the performance to reference while completing the evaluation. Evaluations need to be completed within 48 hours after attending the production. Adjudicators should not share feedback or scores with schools directly or provide an oral critique following the performance.

Feedback

The purpose of written feedback is to provide each school with detailed notes in the hopes of commenting on the notable achievements of the production and offering solutions to the aspects where the production can improve. This is an educational tool, not strictly for review or critique. Feedback should include praise and constructive criticism that connect with the evaluation criteria provided. Whenever possible, adjudicators should include examples from the performance to support comments or be as detailed as possible. Please note that written feedback should not mention or allude to scoring decisions, as adjudicators' notes will be sent without edits to schools.

Scores

Scores will be used to determine winners in each award category. Scores will not be shared with schools and are strictly confidential. A detailed scoring rubric is available in the information packet (rubric attached). Adjudication is based on a 1-10 scale, and an overall statement on the judging process will be included.

Individual Awards

For the purposes of NHSMTA®, students must portray a character from the NHSMTA® qualifying role to be eligible for a Best Actor or Best Actress nomination. Visit collaborativeschoolofthearts.org/hsmta for the complete list of qualifying shows and roles.

Prior to attending a performance, adjudicators will be given information about the school and their production including listing all roles and students eligible for Outstanding Lead Performer 1 and 2 as well as Outstanding Supporting Performer 1 and 2.



Definition of a Supporting Role

Best Supporting Actor and Best Supporting Actress qualifications are defined below. Character(s) must have all the following:

- Character(s) must be scripted, named characters.
- Character(s) not listed as on by the NHSMTA qualifying roles list.
- Characters(s) must appear in more than one scene.
- Character(s) must have solo lines of dialogue.
- Characters(s) must have clear, significant contributions to the central or sub-plot(s).
- Character(s) must be portrayed by a student in the grades 9-12 to be eligible for a supporting nomination.

Definition of a Lead Performer

For the purposes of NHSMTA, a qualifying role in an approved musical in which the character has a name, provides a vehicle for the actor or actress to demonstrate the ability to deliver the exceptional performance of a solo song, and the ability to interact with other leading and featured performers in scenes and/or songs.

Unless identified as an “Ensemble Cast Musical,” an approved musical may not have more than six qualifying roles. Such roles do not have to be evenly divided between genders. Lead roles will be listed on each production form.

For approved musicals with both a book and libretto, a qualifying role must, at a minimum, include:

- At least one solo, featured song
- Appearances in more than one scene with spoken dialogue with other leading or featured performers
- Appearances in both or all acts

For approved musicals with a libretto only, a qualifying role must, at a minimum, include:

- At least one solo, featured song
- At least one song featuring solo lines or dialogue with other leading or featured performers in the same song
- Appearances in both or all acts



IMPORTANT DATES

Adjudication training:

Wednesday, Jan. 21

HSM TA school performances adjudication period:

Friday, Feb. 6 to Sunday, March 29

Adjudication scores due:

48 hours after the performance,
unless you are seeing the March 29 show

Nominations announced:

Wednesday, April 1

Callbacks adjudication training:

Wednesday, April 15

Callbacks at the MainStage at Proctors:

Saturday, April 18

HSM TA Outstanding Lead Nominations announced:

Monday, April 20

HSM TA Ceremony at Proctors:

Saturday, May 16

QUESTIONS/COMMENTS/HELP

If you have any questions, would like to give feedback to improve future High School Musical Theatre Awards, or need help at all through the adjudication process, please feel free to contact the Proctors staff. We are always happy to help!

PROCTORS GENERAL INFORMATION:

Proctors
432 State Street
Schenectady, NY 12305

Administration: (518) 382-3884

Tickets: (518) 346-6204 or by
visiting atproctors.org.

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