



2025-2026 CAPA Marquee Awards

STUDENT HANDBOOK

**for Best Actor/Actress in a
Leading Role-Eligible Performers**

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About the CAPA Marquee Awards

The CAPA Marquee Awards celebrates the accomplishments of area high school teachers and students by recognizing achievements in productions by participating Columbus area high schools. To participate, schools register to have their productions reviewed by a qualified team of adjudicators, who then provide directors with valuable feedback. During the spring, CAPA will present an Awards showcase to recognize the outstanding achievements of high school productions and students. Modeled after the Tony Awards®, the showcase features outstanding performances from participating high schools and celebrates their enthusiasm, dedication, and talent while encouraging participating schools to grow and continue improving their programs.

Purpose

The CAPA Marquee Awards and Awards Showcase are designed to **celebrate**, **support**, and **advocate** for high school musical theatre education throughout the central Ohio community.

Goals

1. To recognize, honor, and encourage excellence in high school musical theatre through a constructive review process of nominated productions by qualified adjudicators;
2. To deliver educational workshops and advancement in dance, voice, acting, and stagecraft for high school students locally, regionally, and nationally;
3. To offer professional development and networking opportunities for students, directors, and school programs;
4. To give students an opportunity to perform on a CAPA stage;
5. To create positive attention for theatre arts and music departments at local schools and school districts; and
6. To showcase the importance of theatre arts education in our schools.

Diversity, Equity, Access & Inclusion

The CAPA Marquee Awards believe to enrich the artistic experience, educational theatre must make room on the stage, around the production table, in the orchestra, behind the scenes, and through the adjudication process for those with different backgrounds, sexual orientation, identification, cultures, and abilities. We believe that we are enriched by the unique perspective all people bring to the arts.

The CAPA Marquee Awards recognizes that there are cultural and systemic barriers that prevent complete inclusivity and equity. We are committed to identify those barriers and intentionally adapt our practices, demonstrate our efforts, and measure the results to promote inclusion and equity.

Best Actor/Actress in a Leading Role Eligibility

To be eligible to participate in The Jimmy Awards®, the Best Actor and Best Actress winners must have played a NHSMTA®-recognized leading role in their school's production. For this reason, only students playing a NHSMTA®-recognized leading role in their high school's production will be eligible for the CAPA Marquee Awards' Best Actor and/or Best Actress in a Leading Role. ([To view click here.](#))

Actor / Actress

For the purposes of the CAPA Marquee Awards and the Jimmy Awards®, students are adjudicated in the category corresponding to their gender identification, not the gender of the role they are playing. *(For example, a female-identifying student recognized for a performance in the role of "Tevye" from FIDDLER ON THE ROOF will be nominated in the Best Actress in a Leading Role category).*

Non-Binary and Gender-Fluid Performers

For the purposes of the CAPA Marquee Awards and the Jimmy Awards®, students identifying as non-binary or gender-fluid may choose to either select the category in which they wish to be adjudicated (regardless of the gender of the role) OR they may be adjudicated based on the gender of the role they played.

Evaluation Criteria for Adjudicated Musical Production Performance

Adjudicators will evaluate students on the execution of the following performance elements displayed within the production:

Acting

- **Believability:** relationship with other characters; motivation; consistency; commitment to role
- **Characterization:** presence of clear and distinctive vocal and physical choices to create a dynamic and compelling character
- **Interpretation:** presence of active objectives and goals

Singing

- **Accuracy:** pitch; rhythm; intonation
- **Tone:** quality; resonance
- **Diction:** articulation; vowel shapes; appropriate use of consonants
- **Technique:** breath support; posture; placement; phrasing

Movement & Dancing

- **Choreography:** footwork; body position; energy; precision; rhythm/tempo
- **Physical Choices:** artistic expression within choreography; intention; facial expressions; gestures
- **Execution:** preparedness; natural integration of blocking; motivation of movement; confidence

Stage Presence

- **Energy:** control over nerves; focused energy; ability to be seen and heard
- **Adaptability:** the ability to “think on feet” and stay in the moment; flexibility to accommodate present circumstances
- **Presence:** fully engaged and present in the world created; strong understanding of role in the greater story

Panel Audition

Due to the nature of the award, the Best Actor and Best Actress in a Leading Role finalists and winners will be determined by both a ***production*** and ***audition*** score. Eligible students receive a ***production*** score from the adjudicators that attend their school productions. The adjudicated score will count as 65% of the total score.

Based on the eligible performers’ production scores, we will notify our 30 semifinalists on **Monday, April 13, 2026**.

Semifinalists will be invited to attend a panel audition on **Saturday, April 18** from **10am-3:30pm** at the Ohio Theatre. The panel audition will consist of a song and dance audition. The scores from the panel audition will count as 35% of the total score (the song as 25% and the dance as 10%) and will be combined with each semifinalist’s production score to determine our finalists and winners.

Participation in the panel audition is mandatory to be eligible as a finalist for Best Actor/Actress in a Leading Role.

Required Participation Forms

To participate in the Panel Audition, semifinalists must complete and submit the following digital forms by **NOON on Friday, March 27**. All forms will be available on our website beginning **Monday, February 9**.

1. **25-26 Intent to Participate Form**
2. **25-26 Audition Form**
3. **25-26 Media Release Form**
4. **25-26 Emergency Medical & Release Form**

The **25-26 Intent to Participate Form** must be submitted to acknowledge eligibility and to accept the terms and conditions of the program spelled out on our website. If a student is unable to participate or does not wish to participate in the program, they *will not* be eligible to be nominated for Best Actor/Actress in a Leading Role, although they may still be eligible to participate in the overall Awards program as a member of their school's ensemble, opening/closing number, and/or Best Musical Production number.

The **25-26 Audition Form** must be submitted to provide information about your song selection.

The **25-26 Media Release Form** and the **25-26 Emergency Medical & Release Form** is required for all BA/BA in a Leading Role-eligible performers.

Note: If you already submitted the 25-26 Media Release & Virtual Learning Form and/or the 25-26 Emergency Medical & Release Form for a previous workshop or activity this school year, you are not required to submit it again.

Song Audition

- Students should select an audition song (ballad or up-tempo) from the 2026 Jimmy Awards® Qualifying Shows list. ([To view click here.](#))
- The song may not be from the same musical as your CAPA Marquee Awards-eligible role.
- The song should not exceed 2 ½ minutes. If the song is longer than 2 ½ minutes, appropriate cuts must be made. *You may be issued a score penalty if the song goes over time allotted.*
- For the audition, students should bring clearly marked sheet music that includes the piano accompaniment *in the correct key*. An accompanist will be provided. Students are not permitted to sing acapella.

Evaluation Criteria for Song Audition

Adjudicators will evaluate students on the execution of the following elements for the song audition:

Singing/Vocal Technique

- Enunciation, Diction, Intonation
- Breath control, support
- Quality of Tone

Acting/Character Development

- Clear given circumstances and song environment established
- Portrayal is believable, truthful
- Character arc, discovery

Movement

- Specific physical details and choices utilized
- Ease and freedom of movement
- Appropriate posture

Overall Presentation

- Appropriate energy and focus
- Ownership of the material
- Commitment
- Professionalism

Dance Audition

- Students will be taught a short dance piece. After learning the piece as a group with the choreographer, students will be asked to perform the piece in small groups in front of the adjudicators.
- Students should wear clothing appropriate for a dance audition. Clothing should allow for a full range of movement. If you wear a dress or a skirt, you must have tights on underneath. Footwear must be worn and must be closed-toed and closed-heeled and appropriate to dance in. Tennis shoes or character/jazz shoes are preferred. Dancing in sandals, flipflops, socks, or bare feet will not be permitted in our facilities.

Evaluation Criteria for Dance Audition

Adjudicators will evaluate students on the execution of the following elements for the dance audition:

Ability to Pick Up Choreography

- Basic steps are learned
- Performer is adept at accentuating their strengths as mover/dancer

Ability to Portray Characterization through Choreography

- Clear character choices are being made and communicated through movement
- Facial expressions are effectively used
- Characterization is consistently presented throughout the choreography

Overall Stage Presence & Energy

- Appropriate energy and focus
- Ownership of the material
- Commitment
- Professionalism

Panel Audition Prep Workshop

On **Sunday, February 1** from **3:30-5:30pm**, CAPA Marquee Award students who are performing in a NHSMTA®-eligible leading role during the 2025-2026 CAPA Marquee Awards season and plan to participate in the Panel Audition if they are chosen as a Semi-finalist are invited to attend a Panel Audition Prep Session on Zoom. Sign-ups will open on our [website](#) on **Thursday, January 14**. *While participation is not mandatory, it is strongly encouraged.*

Finalist Announcement

The ten finalists (5 Best Actor and 5 Best Actress) will be announced on **Monday, April 20** at **3pm** and will perform a section of a solo number from their nominated role at the Awards Showcase as part of the Best Actor and Best Actress numbers.

CAPA Marquee Awards Showcase Rehearsals

Finalists for Best Performer in a Leading Role will be required to participate in the CAPA Marquee Awards Showcase. If a student is unable to participate or does not wish to participate in the Showcase, they will not be eligible to be nominated for the award for Best Actor/Actress in a Leading Role. Best Actor/Actress

in a Leading Role rehearsals for the 2026 CAPA Marquee Awards are currently scheduled from 2-7pm on Sunday, May 3; 4-9pm on Monday, May 4-Friday, May 8; 4-10pm on Sunday, May 10; 4-10pm, Tuesday, May 12 from 4:30-10:30pm; and a call time of 4pm for the 7:30pm showcase performance on Wednesday, May 13. All dates/times are subject-to-change. The Performer in a Leading Role finalists need to be available for the entire rehearsal period.

Please note: Attendance at all required rehearsals is mandatory for participation in the 2026 CAPA Marquee Awards Showcase to maintain a high level of artistic and production quality in such a short period of time. In the rare event of extraordinary circumstances, the CAPA Marquee Awards reserves the right to waive or modify this requirement. However, the focus of the rule is not on the reason why a student may miss a rehearsal, but on the impact that any cast member missing a rehearsal may have on the group as a whole.

Performance Opportunities

Best Actor/Actress in a Leading Role semi-finalists and finalists may participate in a variety of Showcase numbers. These numbers include:

Opening Number

Semi-finalists for Best Actor/Actress in a Leading Role will be invited to perform in the Opening Number along with two student representatives from each CAPA Marquee Awards school.

Finalists for Best Actor/Actress in a Leading Role are required to perform in the Opening Number along with two student representatives from each CAPA Marquee Awards school.

Closing Number

Semi-finalists for Best Actor/Actress in a Leading Role will be invited to perform in the Closing Number along with two student representatives from each CAPA Marquee Awards school.

Finalists for Best Actor/Actress in a Leading Role are required to perform in the Closing Number along with two student representatives from each CAPA Marquee Awards school.

Best Musical Production Numbers

Each of the five (5) high schools receiving nominations for Best Musical Production will be invited to perform one (1) five-minute ensemble production number from their show during the 2026 Marquee Awards.

Best Actor in a Leading Role Number & Best Actress in a Leading Role Number

The five Best Actor in a Leading Role finalists and the five Best Actress in a Leading Role finalists will perform an excerpt of a song from their leading role during the Best Actor and Best Actress numbers at the 2026 CAPA Marquee Awards.

Song Selection & Submissions for Number: Final song selection and arrangement will be determined by the CAPA Marquee Awards Director and Music Director. You will need to submit your song selection at the Panel Audition on **Saturday, April 18.**

Attire

Song Audition: Please wear clothing appropriate for a musical theatre audition.

Dance Audition & Showcase Rehearsals: Please wear clothing that allows for a full range of movement. If you wear a dress or a skirt, you must have tights on underneath. No dancing in jeans will be permitted.

Footwear must be worn and must be closed-toed and closed-heeled and appropriate to dance in. Tennis shoes or character/jazz shoes are preferred. Dancing in sandals, flipflops, socks, or bare feet will not be permitted.

Showcase Performance—Opening/Closing Number

Male-Identifying Performers: Black pants (no jeans), a solid, colorful shirt (no black or white), black shoes. Tie optional. **Footwear:** Black tennis, black character, or black dress shoes for men. All footwear must be closed-heeled and closed-toed and appropriate to dance in.

Female-Identifying Performers: Black pants (no jeans) or black skirt and a solid, colorful top (no black or white) OR a solid-colored dress or jumper (black is permitted if wearing a dress or jumper). If a skirt or dress is worn, nude or black tights must be worn. **Footwear:** Black tennis shoes, black or nude character, jazz, or dress shoes with no heel or a low heel (2 inches or less). All footwear must be closed-heeled and closed-toed and appropriate to dance in.

Non-Binary Performers: Select from any of the above attire and footwear options.

Showcase Performance—Best Musical Production Number

Students performing as part of the Best Musical Production numbers will wear costumes decided on by their productions' directors.

Showcase Performance—Best Actor/Actress in a Leading Role Number

Students performing in the Best Actor/Actress Lead Number should plan to wear either a character costume or "red-carpet" attire.

Announcement of Winners

The winners of Best Actor/Actress in a Leading Role and the 2026 Jimmy Awards® nominees will be announced live at the CAPA Marquee Awards Showcase on Wednesday, May 13 at 7:30 pm at the Ohio Theatre.

Winners of Best Actor/Actress in a Leading Role

On Monday, May 18 at 4pm, the winners of Best Actor in a Leading Role and Best Actress in a Leading Role will be required to report to the Ohio Theatre to record the required interview for participation in the 2026 Jimmy Awards®. At this meeting, winners will also be responsible for turning in all required documents for the 2026 Jimmy Awards®, including their resume, required essay, bio, music submissions for their two audition pieces, medical information form, and their release/waiver form and parental release form.

The National High School Musical Theatre Awards®.

The Jimmy Awards®/The National High School Musical Theatre Awards® (NHSMTA®) program impacts approximately 150,000 students who participate in 55 regional high school musical theatre competitions sponsored by presenters of touring Broadway productions throughout the United States. Named for Broadway impresario James M. Nederlander, the program has been the catalyst for more than \$6,000,000 in educational scholarships since its launch in 2009.

Presented by The Broadway League Foundation, Inc., the NHSMTA invites two nominees from each local regional ceremony to New York City for a rigorous theatre intensive that includes coaching sessions, training, and rehearsals led by some of Broadway's most accomplished professionals. Nominees will spend ten days in New York City from Friday, June 12, 2026, through Tuesday, June 23, 2026, and their efforts throughout the week will lead to one extraordinary talent showcase performed live in front of an audience

on a Broadway stage. The fifteenth annual Jimmy Awards will take place on Monday, June 22, 2026, at the Minskoff Theatre. For more information, please visit www.JimmyAwards.com.

2026 Important Dates to Remember

Sunday, May 3, 2026	Awards Showcase Rehearsals (BA/BAs only), Ohio Theatre, 2-7pm
Monday, May 4-Friday, May 8, 2026	Awards Showcase Rehearsals, (Ensemble & BA/BAs), Ohio Theatre, 4-9 pm
Saturday, May 9, 2026	NO REHEARSAL
Sunday, May 10, 2026	Awards Showcase Tech Rehearsal (Ensemble & BA/BAs), Ohio Theatre, 4-10 pm
Monday, May 11, 2026	Best Musical Production Tech Rehearsals, Ohio Theatre, 4-10pm
Tuesday, May 12, 2026	Awards Showcase Dress Rehearsal (ALL Performers), Ohio Theatre, 4:30-10:30 pm
Wednesday, May 13, 2026	Awards Showcase, Ohio Theatre, 4pm Call Time, 7:30pm Performance
Monday, May 18, 2026	Jimmy Nominee Filming, Ohio Theatre, 4-5:30pm
Friday, June 12-Tuesday, June 23, 2026	Jimmy Awards Experience for Jimmy Nominees
Monday, June 22, 2026	The 2026 Jimmy Awards®, 7:30pm, Minskoff Theatre, New York City