

**Sacramento Area Regional Theatre Alliance**  
**2013-14 Elly Awards Program**  
**Guidelines for Theatres**

The annual Elly Awards honor outstanding achievements of community theatres and artists in the Sacramento area. Elly Awards are named for the late Eleanor McClatchy, who was a devoted patron of the local arts.

**Program Overview**

The Elly Awards program is administered in as objective and confidential a fashion as possible. It operates as follows:

The theatre submits an online application to have its show evaluated. SARTA processes the application and notifies the judges.

Typically five judges attend each production. Judges make their reservations, attend the show, and submit a judging form to SARTA. Judges use a standardized point scale to evaluate an array of production elements delineated on the judging form. The process is confidential; judges are instructed not to discuss their opinions with others.

Judges' scores are tabulated in a computerized database maintained by an independent individual who is not affiliated with any theatre.

The top five scores in each category receive Elly nominations, and the top one receives the Elly Award. The entire process is confidential.

The commitment required of Elly judges is substantial. Judges are volunteers who commit to attending every show assigned to them in their category. During the year-long judging commitment, judges may not be artistically involved in any production within the category they judge and may not judge close family members or any other individual whose relationship to the judge would conflict with the judge's ability to be objective. Judges have a variety of backgrounds; many are active in theatre or have theatrical backgrounds. All have a love of the performing arts and all have a commitment to be objective. SARTA provides orientation, materials, and training.

Statistically, SARTA typically judges over 200 shows in a season. While the number of shows in each category varies from year to year, a typical judge attends 20 to 40 shows during the year.

**Season**

The Elly season begins July 1 and ends June 30.

### **Elly Awards Ceremony**

Elly Award nominations are announced at a Nominees' Reception in August. The Elly Awards Ceremonies (Youth and Adult) are held in September.

### **Theatre Eligibility for Judging**

All productions of non-equity SARTA member theatres, traditionally within a 70-mile radius of Sacramento, are eligible for Elly Award consideration. Individual producers or companies renting SARTA Member Theatre facilities are eligible if the SARTA Member Theatre co-produces the production. The theatre's membership must be current during the entire production.

The mission of the Elly Awards program is to recognize the theatrical achievements of theatres and artists in the Sacramento area. Where an aspect of a production is not consistent with this mission, for example, where sets or costumes were not designed by the theatre, the theatre should indicate on its application that the aspect was not designed by them and is, therefore, not eligible.

### **Equity Actors Performing in Non-Equity Theatre Productions**

Equity actors performing in non-equity member theatre productions are eligible for Elly Award consideration.

### **Minimum Number of Performances**

Productions must run a minimum of two calendar weeks.

Productions must run a minimum of 6 qualified performances.

A qualified performance is defined as follows:

- Performances on Monday through Friday with a curtain time between 7pm and 10pm.
- Performances on Saturday and Sunday with a curtain time between 10am and 10pm.
- Performances on major holidays (New Years Day, Easter, Memorial Day, Independence Day Labor Day, Thanksgiving & Christmas) do not count as qualifying performances. They still may be attended by a judge; however, they cannot be used as one of the 6 qualified performances.
- Performances that judges may not attend, such as previews or benefit galas do not count as qualified performances. Please do not include these performances on the application.

Productions that have performances in both June and July, with fewer than the minimum six performances in June, will be evaluated in the season that begins in July.

### **Productions and Casts**

For the purposes of the Elly awards, a single production shall be defined as a single script produced by a single producing organization during a single season. Two productions shall be considered to be one if they have the same script and occur within 90 days of each other regardless of which season they fall into.

Double cast roles are defined as roles where at least one actor/actress is cast to perform a single role on different nights. Within a single production all roles which are Double-Cast will not be considered for Elly award consideration. This does not include understudies where at least 3 of the judges were able to see the cast actor/actress. Please indicate on the judging application any roles that are double-cast.

*Double Cast Special Case:* In the case that a production has the minimum number of performances as defined in this document with one set of performers, they may submit that cast with its performances only for consideration. An example is where a production company is doing "Fiddler On The Roof." All the roles are double cast except Tevye. The casts are split so that every actor performs together for at least the minimum number of performances. In this situation, the theatre may choose which cast they would like to submit. Judges will only be allowed to attend performances where the submitted cast performed.

Dual-Casts are defined as a single production where all roles are cast twice. Dual-casts are allowed if and only if each cast has enough performances that meet the requirements under "Minimum Number of Performances". Dual casts can be evaluated for Elly award consideration. Please submit separate applications for each cast. Please include the entire cast on each application. Only after the dual-cast status has been confirmed will the application be accepted. All categories other than leads and supports will be evaluated as one production.

### **Tickets for Judges**

Theatres provide two complimentary tickets for each Elly judge who attends. Please do your best to accommodate judges' requests to attend on specific dates, as often they must schedule multiple productions among limited dates.

### **Categories**

Elly Awards are given in seven categories:

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

Within the Education category, there are separate subcategories for musicals and nonmusical plays.

Education is a special category created to accommodate the growing number of high schools and middle schools who have become member theatres. All productions submitted by high schools and middle schools are evaluated in this category. Productions submitted by community college theatres may be submitted in either the Education category, or one of the other categories, at the theatre's discretion based on its conceived mission.

The Original Works category is for original scripts that have never been produced before. By "never been produced before," SARTA means that the script has never been performed for a paying audience. "Performed for a paying audience" includes any previous performance of the

script, even once, if a ticket was sold or if donations were solicited from the audience in order to attend the performance. Staged readings or performances in a classroom setting while the script was being developed, and such, and for which tickets were not sold, are not considered "performed for a paying audience." Previously-produced scripts that undergo later revisions are not eligible as Original Works.

Two awards are given for Original Works:

1. Original Script – This is a general category for any script in any genre.
2. Original Script, Young Peoples – This is a category exclusively for Young People's plays or musicals. These are musicals targeted at an audience of around 11 years or less. These scripts are often referred to as Storybook plays.

*(If you have a question as to whether your script falls into this category, please contact the Coordinator at [EllyCoordinator@ljjoe.com](mailto:EllyCoordinator@ljjoe.com))*

Theatres are responsible for choosing the category in which their production belongs. Theatres may submit an Original Works production in its natural category, such as Comedy or Drama, in addition to the Original Works category if they choose. This is the only circumstance under which a theatre may submit a production in more than one category.

### **Aspects Evaluated**

In the Comedy, Drama, Musical, Young Peoples', and Education categories, Elly Awards are given for the following:

- Male and female leads
- Male and female support
- Direction
- Set Design
- Lighting Design
- Costume Design
- Sound Design
- Overall Production

In the Young People's categories, separate awards are given for youth (actors under 18) and adults (actors 18 and over). SARTA goes by the actor's age on the opening day of the show.

In the Musicals and Young People's Musicals category and in the Education - Musicals subcategory, Elly Awards are also given for:

- Musical Direction
- Choreography

In the Original Works category, the Elly Award is a dual award given to the playwright and to the production company that produced it. If the playwright and the producing company are one in the same, only one plaque will be awarded. Production companies must provide a copy of the script to each Original Works judge. There are three ways in which they can do so. 1. They may email a copy of the script to the Elly coordinator ([EllyCoordinator@ljjoe.com](mailto:EllyCoordinator@ljjoe.com)). This is the preferred method. The coordinator will then disperse them to the judges. 2. They may mail them to the coordinator (Please email for an address). The coordinator will then disperse them to the judges. 3. They can hand them to the judges at the time that they attend.

Theatres are responsible for designating on the application form which roles they consider to be the leading roles. Generally, leading roles are those the theatre considers "whose story is being told." Roles with the most lines, or roles with the most time on stage, are not necessarily leading roles and may not benefit from being submitted for consideration as leading roles. Theatres will be limited to choosing a maximum of four lead roles for a production.

Theatres are also responsible for designating on the application form which roles they consider to be the supporting roles. Generally supporting roles are those that are not leads but which are included in telling the story. Theatres will be limited to choosing a maximum of ten supporting roles for a production.

Judges will be allowed to designate a role that is not included as a support, if they see a spark that they believe that should be recognized. This role will have to be recognized by at least three judges before it will be considered for a supporting role.

All roles not specified on the application will not be considered by the judges.

Judges will automatically judge the direction and all technical aspects of each production whether credit is specifically given in the program or not. The technical aspects include set, lighting, sound and costume design. Judges will consider musical direction and choreography for musicals and young people's musicals only. The exception to rule is where a theatre has indicated that a given design was not designed by them and is then ineligible. For example, if the sets were purchased or rented as a whole and no design for them was provided by the theatre, they would be considered ineligible.

### **Application Process and Fees**

Please submit the completed Elly Judging application with applicable fees at least 28 days prior to opening night. If actors have not been determined at the time of the 28 day deadline, please indicate the lead and support roles, rather than the actors' names, and submit the application on time.

There is a \$30 application fee for each production submitted. If you submit an Original Work in its additional natural category, please check both categories on the application and submit both fees.

There is an additional \$30 late fee for any application submitted less than 28 days before opening night. If you submit the application after the 28 day deadline, please include the additional \$30 late fee. No late applications will be accepted in the month of June. All applications submitted in the month of June will be evaluated in the next season if possible.

No production will be accepted for judging until the fee is received. No production will be accepted for judging after the production has opened.

Theatres may prepay fees for future productions if they wish. Unless fees have been prepaid, applications received without payment will not be processed until payment is received.

### **Application Deadlines**

Applications received within 28 days of the opening date will be considered a late application and charge an additional late fee.

Applications received within 10 days of the opening date will be considered very late. These productions will not be considered received until confirmation that at least 3 judges can attend the production. If at least 3 judges cannot attend, the production will not be accepted and the application fee will be refunded.

Applications received within 5 days of the opening will not be accepted.

Major changes to applications will be received only until the first performance. After that, only spelling corrections for the cast and crew will be accepted.

Original Works scripts MUST be ready by opening night. If a script is not available on opening night, the production will be rejected and the fees refunded.

### **Other Responsibilities and Reminders**

Your accepted application becomes the judges' notification form. Please give clear directions to your theatre. Directions must originate in downtown Sacramento. Include any special instructions. If your theatre is in a larger facility, like a school, also include directions from the parking lot to the theatre. If your theatre is in an area where there are unique parking issues, please include them as well. Theaters are responsible for including any local driving obstacles that would make following the directions difficult or impossible. Where applicable, please indicate the approximate driving time from Sacramento and any special parking instructions.

Please notify SARTA immediately if you cancel a performance or change a leading or supporting actor.

Please have your box office keep track of Elly Judges' reservations. You can help us by notifying SARTA ten days before closing night if judges have not reserved tickets by then. Please provide the names of the judges that have reserved tickets so SARTA can identify and contact those that have not yet reserved tickets.

Please contact the SARTA office at (916) 443-8229 or by e-mail at [sarta@sarta.com](mailto:sarta@sarta.com) if you have questions regarding the Elly Awards program. Additional program information can be found in the Elly Program Guidelines for Judges.

### **Elly Program Guidelines Modification Procedure**

Changes to these guidelines will be considered and voted on by the SARTA board and the Elly Program Coordinator, once a year on the last Saturday of April. All changes will be considered at that time only. Afterward a revised version of this document will be made available on the SARTA website and distributed to member theatres.

Any SARTA member may submit change suggestions in writing to the Elly Program Coordinator, at [EllyCoordinator@ljoey.com](mailto:EllyCoordinator@ljoey.com), by midnight, March 1<sup>st</sup> of the current season. These will be compiled by the coordinator and distributed to members by SARTA.