Sacramento Area Regional Theatre Alliance
2016-17 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.

1. Overview

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

1.1.1. The theatre submits an online application to have its show evaluated. The Elly Program Coordinator processes the application and notifies the judges.

1.1.2. Typically five judges attend each production. Judges make their reservations, attend the show, and submit a judging form to the Elly Program Coordinator. 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.

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

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

1.2. 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. The Elly Program Coordinator provides orientation, materials, and training.

1.3. 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.

2. Mission Statement

2.1. The mission of the Elly Awards program is to recognize the theatrical achievements of theatres and artists in the Sacramento area.

3. Definitions

3.1. Co-Productions – The production of a play or musical with more than one producing theatre.

3.2. Double cast roles – A role where more than one actor/actress is cast to perform that role on different nights.

3.3. Dual-Casts – A single production where all roles are cast twice.

3.4. Production – 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.

3.5. Qualified performance – Performance meeting all of the following requirements:

3.5.1. Performances on Monday through Thursday with a curtain time between 7pm and 10pm.

3.5.2. Performances on Friday with a curtain time between 7pm and 12am.

3.5.3. Performances on Saturday with a curtain time between 10am and 12pm.

3.5.4. Performances on Sunday with a curtain time between 10am and 10pm.

3.5.5. Performances on major holidays (New Year's Day, Easter, Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Thanksgiving and Christmas) are not considered qualifying performances. They still may be attended by the judges.

3.5.6. Performances that judges may not attend, such as previews, benefit galas or shortened performances are not considered qualified performances. These performances should not be included on the application.

3.6. Significant Modification To A Production – For the purposes of the Elly Awards, this is defined as at least three of the following:

3.6.1. Replacing at least 50% of the cast with local talent.

3.6.2. Replacing at least 80% of the crew with local talent.

3.6.3. Replacing at least 80% of the orchestra with local talent.

3.6.4. Changing of the blocking or choreography by someone, other than the original director or choreographer, who is connected with a SARTA member theatre.

3.6.5. Changing Costume, Set, Lighting, and Sound design by someone, other than the original designers, who is connected with a SARTA member theatre.

3.7. Traveling Production – A show that performs at more than one venue during its production run. Its production run will be considered ended when the show is recast or undergoes a significant modification to the production.

3.8. Visiting Production – A production that was originally produced at a Non-SARTA member theatre and then was brought to a SARTA member theatre without significant modification

4. Season

4.1. The Elly season begins July 1 and ends June 30.

5. Elly Awards Ceremonies

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

6. Theatre Eligibility

6.1. Theatres must be SARTA members in good standing.

6.2. Theatres must be within the SARTA Elly Awards boundaries (http://www.EllyAwards.com/Boundaries.aspx).

6.3. Theatres must be non-equity theatres.

7. Production Eligibility

7.1. Elly Awards Mission Consistency

7.1.1. Where an aspect of a production is not consistent with the mission of the Elly Awards, 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.

7.1.2. Where the production itself is not consistent with the mission of the Elly Awards, for example, it is being produced by a non-SARTA member organization (see co-productions below) or with less than 80% local talent, then the entire production is not eligible.

7.2. Minimum Number Of Performances

7.2.1. Productions must run a minimum of two calendar weeks.

7.2.2. Production runs must contain at least 6 qualified performances

7.2.3. If a theatre is forced to cancel show(s) that take them down below the minimum 6, they will be required to withdraw the show.

7.2.4. Productions that have performances in both June and July, with fewer than the minimum six performances in June, may be evaluated in either season depending on which gives the judges more opportunity to attend the show

7.3. Traveling Shows - A Traveling Show will only be allowed if the original producing organization is a SARTA theatre and the first venue is within a 100 mile radius from the SARTA office. Only performances at venues within the SARTA Elly Awards boundaries (http://www.EllyAwards.com/Boundaries.aspx) can be used to determine eligibility. The production would need to be submitted before the first performance at the first venue regardless of whether that performance was eligible. The production would have to comply with all other rules for submitted productions.

7.4. Visiting Productions – Visiting Productions are ineligible for consideration in the Elly Awards.

7.5. Co-Productions

7.5.1. Co-Productions are allowed only if at least one of the following conditions is met.

7.5.1.1. All of the producing theatres are SARTA members.

7.5.1.2. At least 80% of the artistic work (Ex: Direction, Casting, Set Design, Lighting Design, Choreography) is done by the producing theatres that are SARTA members.

7.5.2. All co-productions must be submitted under one SARTA member theatre. That theatre will be the point of contact for the production. All theatre level awards (ex: Overall Production) will be awarded to the theatre that submitted the production.

8. Actor Eligibility

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

9. Cast Eligibility

9.1. Within a single production all roles which are Double-Cast may not be submitted for **lead role** consideration. This does not include understudies where at least 3 of the judges were able to see the cast actor/actress.

9.2. *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.

9.3. 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.

10. Judging

10.1. Categories

10.1.1. Theatres are responsible for choosing the category in which their production belongs. Theatres may submit an Original Works production in its natural production 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.

10.1.2. Production Categories – There are 7 production categories

10.1.2.1. Comedy – Typically these are lighter shows where the ending is more positive then the beginning.

10.1.2.2. Drama – Typically these are shows involving conflict or contrast of characters.

10.1.2.3. Education Musicals –Musicals submitted by high schools or middle schools.

10.1.2.4. Education Plays – Comedies or Dramas submitted by high schools or middle schools.

10.1.2.5. Musicals – Productions where much of the dialog is delivered with music. Musical theatre has less music than an operetta or and opera.

10.1.2.6. Youth Theatre Productions – Productions that done by youths for a general audience. Includes both plays and musicals. To qualify for this category the following guidelines must be met:

10.1.2.6.1.	**Cast size over 20**	At least 80% must be under the 20 years old.
10.1.2.6.2.	**Cast size 10 to 20**	No more than 4 can be 20+ years old.
10.1.2.6.3.	**Cast size under 10**	No More than 2 can be 20+ years old.
10.1.2.6.4.	Only actors under the age of 20 will be considered for roles.	
10.1.2.6.5.	Crew of any age will be considered.	

10.1.2.7. Children's Theatre Productions – Productions done for a youth audience (typically under 10 or 12 years of age). Includes both plays and musicals. All actors will be judged. Awards will be given separately for Youth (Under 20) and Adult (20+).

10.1.3. Original Script Categories – There are two original script categories. These are given out to first time scripts being produced by member theatres.

10.1.3.1. 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.

(If you have a question as to whether your script falls into this category, please contact the Coordinator at EllyCoordinator@EllyAwards.com)

10.1.3.2. Original Script – This is a general category for any script in any genre.

10.1.3.3. 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.

10.2. Aspects Evaluated

10.2.1. Production Categories

10.2.1.1. Male & Female Leads

10.2.1.1.1. Theatres are solely responsible for designating on the application form which actors/actresses they consider to be in 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 actors/actresses for a production.

10.2.1.2. Male & Female Support

10.2.1.2.1. Theatres are responsible for designating on the application form which actors/actresses 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 eight supporting actors/actresses for a production.

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

10.2.1.3. Technical Aspects

10.2.1.3.1. Direction
10.2.1.3.2. Set Design
10.2.1.3.3. Lighting Design
10.2.1.3.4. Costume Design
10.2.1.3.5. Sound Design
10.2.1.3.6. Overall Production

10.2.1.3.7. 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. The exception to this rule is where a theatre has indicated that a given design was not done 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. Also a design element will be considered not eligible if it does not conform to the mission statement of the Elly Awards.

10.2.1.4. In the Children's Theatre Production category, 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.

10.2.1.5. In the Musicals, Education Musicals, Youth Theatre Productions and Children's Theatre Productions categories, Elly Awards are also given for:

10.2.1.5.1. Musical Direction
10.2.1.5.2. Choreography

10.2.1.5.3. Judges will consider musical direction and choreography only for musicals, education musicals, youth theatre productions and children's theatre productions where the musical option has been selected on the application form.

10.2.2. Original Script Categories

10.2.2.1. 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 the Elly coordinator (EllyCoordinator@EllyAwards.com) by email for distribution to the judges.

10.3. Tickets

10.3.1. 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.

10.3.2. Judges may, at times request more than two tickets. They are required to pay for those tickets. Please notify the coordinator if a judge requests more than 2 complimentary tickets.

10.3.3. Please let the coordinator know if and when your seating becomes limited or sells out. That way the judges have this information when making reservations.

11. <u>Content Guidelines</u>

11.1. Sensitive Content

11.1.1. It is the sole responsibility of the theatre to make the Elly Program Coordinator aware of any content that may be an issue for the judges. The Elly Program Coordinator and the judges make an attempt to look up shows before attending. However, the very nature of Original Works makes them impossible to look up. The Elly Program Coordinator must be notified of any offensive or difficult topics might cause a judge to be unable to attend or read a script. This does not mean that these shows will not be accepted. It just means that we need to be able to prepare our judges for extreme material. These topics include but are not limited to:

11.1.1.1. Nudity
11.1.1.2. Suicide

11.1.1.3. Self-Mutilation

11.1.2. Please err on the side of caution and let us know about anything that you think might be an issue.

11.1.3. In addition, Young People's Performances are usually attended by young people. This is especially true for our judges. The topics above as well as excessive sex, profanity or violence may make these shows difficult to attend by our judges or their children. We especially need to know this information to allow the judges appropriate time to make arrangements to see the show without their children. If a judge feels that they must leave a show for one of these reasons and they cannot reschedule, their scores will not be counted.

11.2. Other Content

When a production includes content that will hit the audience, they must provide seats for the judges that allow them to escape these actions. This is especially true when the action includes content that has the potential to damage the judge or their personal items. A judge may opt-out of attending a performance if this guideline is not met.

12. <u>Application Processing</u>

12.1. Application Deadlines

12.1.1. 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.

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

12.1.3. 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 may not be accepted. If it is not accepted, the application fee will be refunded

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

12.1.5. Cast changes to applications will be received only until two days before the first performance. After that, only spelling corrections for the cast and crew will be accepted. If a performer leaves during the production, they will be removed from evaluation. A replacement will not be accepted. The judges are allowed to add them in a supporting role.

12.1.6. Original Works scripts MUST be received by the coordinator by email before opening night. If a script is not received before on opening night, the production will be rejected and the fees refunded.

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

12.2. Fees

12.2.1. 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.

12.2.2. 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.*

12.2.3. 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

12.2.4. Theatres may pay fees with a credit card or PayPal account. Checks are only accepted by prior arraignment with the SARTA board. Invoices are available on the Elly Awards portal.

12.3. Other Responsibilities

12.3.1. Your accepted application becomes the judges' notification form. Please give clear directions to your theatre. Directions must originate in downtown Sacramento and end at your theatre. 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.

12.3.2. Please notify the Elly Program Coordinator immediately if you cancel a performance or change a leading or supporting actor.

12.3.3. Please make sure that the Box Office phone number is a number where the judges can make an actual reservation or leave a message about making a reservation. Please make sure that the contact phone number is one that is monitored right up to curtain. That way the judges can contact you if they get lost or need to notify you of a cancellation.

12.3.4. Please have your box office keep track of Elly Judges' reservations. You can help us by notifying the Elly Program Coordinator 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 the Elly Program Coordinator can identify and contact those that have not yet reserved tickets.

12.3.5. Please contact the Elly Program Coordinator at (916) 524-4602 or by e-mail at EllyCoordinator@EllyAwards.com if you have questions regarding the Elly Awards program. Additional program information can be found in the Elly Program Guidelines for Judges.

13. Decisions, Appeals and Modifications

13.1. All decisions about eligibility and other aspects discussed in these guidelines will be made by the coordinator and/or the SARTA board.

13.2. The SARTA board reserves the right to reject any application it deems is not consistent with the mission of the Elly Awards program, even if the production meets all other rules and requirements.

13.3. If a producing organization feels that the wrong decision has been made, they have an opportunity to appeal the decision to the SARTA board prior to a production's opening performance or 5 days before the opening performance in the case of production eligibility. All appeals must be made by email to SARTA@SARTA.com.

13.4. 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 Elly Awards portal and distributed to member theatres.

13.5. Any SARTA member may submit change suggestions in writing to the Elly Program Coordinator, at EllyCoordinator@EllyAwards.com, by midnight, March 1st of the current season.

13.6. A meeting to discuss ideas for rules changes, improvements and other issues may be held on the last Saturday in February, if the need exists.