



* New rules changes are noted in red

2027 Season Participation Rules

I. Definitions

Award Category – One of thirty-four different awards that are presented every season to the Award Winners.

Awards Ceremony – An event that presents the winners with their awards.

Award Winner – An individual/theatre that has won the award they were nominated for, having been selected from one of the Official Nominees.

Community Theatre – A theatre company that does not pay their actors, but may pay their directors, crew, and other workers of the production a stipend. For the purposes of the MAT Awards, these theatres primarily stage adults (over the age of 18) to their Submitted Productions. School or children’s programs do not fall in this category.

Judging Panel – A panel of judges that view the submitted Musicals, Plays and Original Works and score the productions to determine who is nominated and ultimately wins the Award Categories, per Production Category.

MAT Board – A board of individuals made up of the President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer, and Director of Ceremonies of the Metropolitan Atlanta Theatre Awards. They are solely for the purpose of enforcing rules and general management of the organization and ceremonies/events.

Metropolitan (Metro) Area - Theatres that perform within the county limits of Fulton, Dekalb, Cobb, Gwinnett, Clayton, Henry, Cherokee, Douglas, Fayette, Forsyth, and Rockdale.

Non-Equity Theatre – Any theatre that does not have an agreement with Actor’s Equity Association, a union that is affiliated with Associated Actors and Artistes of America (4As), or any other union that provides professional actors to stage in their shows and/or are paid standard union rates or higher than the standard union rates.

Non-Union Professional – A theatre company that pays their actors, directors, crew, etc. for a production, but does not have a Letter of Agreement with Actor’s Equity Association, a union that is

affiliated with Associated Actors and Artistes of America (4As), or any other theatrical union that requires the theater to pay union rates.

Official Nominee – An individual/theatre selected by a Judging Panel through a vote process, in any Award Category.

Original Works Panel – A panel of judges that view the submitted original works and score the productions to determine who is nominated and ultimately wins the Award Category.

Out-of-Area Theatres – Those theatres that do not fall within the counties defined under Metro Area.

Production Category – One of three categories: Musical Category, Play Category, or Original Works Category that a judging panel is seated within.

Season – A season is any period beginning January 1st of any given year and extending 12 months to December 31st of the following year (The 2027 Season is January 1, 2027, through December 31, 2027).

Submitted Production – A production/show, submitted by a participating theatre company that is to be reviewed and judged by the MAT Judging Panel.

Theatre Representative – An individual, from a participating theatre company, that is solely in charge of working directly with the MAT Board. Each theatre designates one individual as a representative to assist the MAT Board with any information that needs to be provided or communicated throughout the season. This is not a seat on the MAT Board, but the direct point of contact between the MAT Board and the Theatre Company.

“To Be Determined” Production – A production that has not yet been officially selected by the Participating Theatre Company, due to waiting to obtain rights or other reasons, or the dates/times of the production have not yet been determined or announced.

II. Theatre’s Participation Requirements

a. Permissible Theatres

1. All Non-Union Professional and Community Theatres that fall within the Metro Area of Atlanta, are considered permissible. Please see the definition of “Metropolitan Area” under Section I - Definitions.
2. Any production having characters that are primarily made up of children will be considered if everyone cast fits the age of the character (i.e., “Charlie and the Chocolate Factory” is mostly made up of children. However, the adult roles must still be cast by adult actors).
3. No “School Edition” or “Junior” style productions will be allowed.
4. The MAT Board reserves the right to determine what theatres are considered non-union or union. If the MAT Board determines that a theatre is questionable, then it will be reviewed and determined if that theatre may participate by the MAT Board.

5. The following rules regarding Non-Union Professional Theatres and their performers are currently in effect:
 - a. No more than two (2) union contracted actors may be used in a production and must be contracted as a "Special Appearance". Yet, those actors will not be considered for individual awards and will also make the production ineligible for Best Ensemble and/or Best Overall Production. The theatre must produce a copy of the signed/executed agreement before the show opens.
 - b. No Non-Union Professional Actor may be paid higher than \$400 for the entire run of a production, including rehearsals, performances, per diem, pension, health insurance costs, or any combination thereof. If they are, then that individual will not be eligible for an award.
 - c. Directors, Choreographers, Lighting/Sound/Costumes/Set Designers, Stage Managers, and Music Directors may be paid as much as \$700 for the entire run of a production but may not be a contracted union member under any circumstances (unless they are one of the two "Special Appearance" actors in the production and are filling multiple roles. However, the position/category they are filling will be ineligible for award contention).
 - d. It is our understanding that most unions do not allow member actors to be in a production without a union contract or written permission to start with, along with a minimum pay scale that must be met. Therefore, if it is found that there is any violation of their union membership, the show and/or certain people within the production will be disqualified for unethical behavior. Any awards or nominations given to any element of the production may be revoked since it will be considered the theatre's and/or individual's fault for knowingly allowing this to occur.
 - e. Any complaints received regarding a potential violation of this rule, or any suspicion of a violation of these rules by the MAT Board, will require a full investigation by the MAT Board and the participating theatre will be required to produce all paperwork showing legitimacy of contractual/permission terms, payment records to performers, etc. Failure to provide or be thoroughly open about this information may result in automatic dismissal from the MAT Awards and revocation of all awards and/or nominations for the production/people in question.

6. Out-of-Area Theatres will be considered on a season-by-season basis and must be voted on by the MAT Board for participation each year. The following guidelines must be met by Out of Area Theatres:
 - The number of productions permitted will be determined by the MAT Board.
 - Membership Dues are \$100.00 per production, unless providing judges (see Section II-b4, below).
 - To Be Determined Productions are not permitted by Out-of-Area Theatres.
 - No Productions that are only performed for one weekend or less are permitted by Out-of-Area Theatres.
 - Extensions will not be granted under any circumstances to Out-of-Area Theatres.

b. General Application/Participation Requirements

1. Applications may be filled out online. If a paper application is needed, then contact Russ Ivey at russ.d.ivey@gmail.com or 678-207-6434.

2. The deadline date to submit an application and membership dues is **December 1st, 2026** (one month before the season begins).
3. The MAT Board will allow an extension to **December 20th, 2026** (ten days before the season begins) **only** if requested by the theatre company & if the performances of the Submitted Productions do not fall within the 1st Quarter of the season (**January 1st – March 31st**).
4. For each production submission, the theatre must provide one (1) Primary Judge and one (1) Alternate Judge to seat on the Judging Panel. The maximum (capped) required number are two (2) Primary Judges and two (2) Alternate Judges no matter how many productions are submitted in total (However, see Section II b-6 below for judging incentives).
5. Judges must have acceptable theatrical experience through directing/acting/technical positions, have a working and regularly used email address, and have basic computer knowledge for the online voting system or basic use of Excel.
6. Theatres may provide as many Primary Judges as they wish, beyond the required minimum. Doing so, you will reduce the show load of each judge you provide for added flexibility.
 - a. For example: Let's say you are only required to provide two (2) Primary Judges for the season and each judge ends up with 8 shows they have to see. Yet, you decide to provide four (4) Primary Judges. Then each Primary Judge will only have to see 4 shows since you've cut the show load in half.
 - b. Please note that if you choose to provide additional Primary Judges, they **must** be announced at the top of the season and their shows will be designated **before** the season starts. They can not start swapping out shows through the season, which will only confuse the process for the MAT Board and potentially affect scoring and a fair process.
7. We may allow two Primary Judges to act as each other's Alternate Judge if that is all the Participating Theatre Company can provide, on a case-by-case basis.
8. Please keep in mind that if you are having trouble finding a Primary/Alternate Judge, please just ask us to help you find one. We may be able to do this for you to keep from having to pay membership dues. However, you really should find someone yourself, because the point of this is so you have your own "stake in the game".
9. If the Member Theatre can't provide a Primary and/or Alternate judge, then they must pay a membership due of \$100.00 for the production they are submitting in that Production Category. **If the Member Theater provides all of the required judges, then membership dues will be waived.**
10. Theatres are not required to provide judges or pay membership dues for any Original Work submission. This includes if the Original Work is also submitted to the Musical/Play Panel.
11. No theatre may participate without first reading the rules, thoroughly filling out the application, signing the agreement, and turning in the application/agreement with any membership dues by the end of the day of the deadline date.

12. Each participating theatre company must provide one Theatre Representative.
13. All membership dues must be paid to:
"MAT Awards, Inc."
3022 Eltham Place
Decatur, GA 30033
7. Each theatre company must allow all MAT Judges and Board Members to have free access to all Submitted Productions.
8. Participating Theatres must recognize that the MAT Board reserves the right to dismiss any theatre, participant, judge, or nominee from the awards program at any time if it is found that there is any dishonest/incorrect information on the application, dishonest voting/rigging, judges failing to attend productions, judges failing to turn in their scores in the required time, or any other unacceptable behavior that is determined by the MAT Board. There will be no refunds of membership dues in the case of a dismissal.
9. Participating theatre companies must be willing to provide a one-page ad (designed by the MAT Board or one of its Affiliates) in the programs of the Submitted Productions that will detail the MAT Season's participants, their Submitted Productions, and other MAT related information.
 - a. If the theatre company does not want to provide a one-page ad, then a one-page insert is acceptable (It will be the theatre's responsibility to place these in each program).
 - b. Failure to follow through will result in disqualification of that production from awards consideration.
 - c. Any show that is listed as To Be Determined will not be placed on the MAT Ad.
10. All Participating Theatres must provide a "Judge's Sign-In Sheet" at the box office of every performance so that the judges can sign in and prove that they have attended.
 - a. This sign-in sheet will be provided to the Theatre Representative before the show opens and it will be the Theatre Representative's responsibility to make sure that it's at the box office of each performance.
 - b. When the show closes, the Theatre Representative will be responsible to email/mail/fax the sign-in sheet back to the MAT Board **only** if there is evidence that one of the required judges failed to sign in or attend.

c. Production Submissions

1. No later than three days before the Submitted Production opens, a cast/crew list must be submitted detailing all individuals that are in the show, in their proper award categories along with any character names. (Note: If the same production has been submitted in prior seasons, the MAT Board may use the same categories for the characters, unless special circumstances prevent this). Keep in mind that the MAT Board reserves the right to review these categories to make sure they are fairly determined and may adjust accordingly.
2. If a Submitted Production has a cast of 10 or more people, then headshots should be provided by the Theatre Representative. Group photos are allowed as long as the caption clearly designates who is who in the group shot. *As a note: If you do not provide this, we won't penalize you. However,*

keep in mind that judges have a hard time figuring out who is who in large productions. So, someone may lose out on a vote if the judges don't know who they are. This is for your benefit.

3. Productions must be submitted no later than the end of the day of the application deadline date.
 - a. Productions do not have to be cast or staffed by the deadline.
 - b. Performance locations **must** already be determined and indicated on the application, along with dates/times.
 - i. If the dates of the production are “TBD”, then the dates must be secured by April 1st of the active season, and the production must fall after July 1st of the active season.
4. Original Work submissions are unlimited.
 - a. “Original Work” will only be provided if 3 or more original productions have been submitted in total.
 - b. They will not be included in the Musical/Play Categories unless specifically requested by the theatre.
 - i. If it is requested that the Original Work be submitted to the Musical/Play Categories, then it will count as the “one production submission” that is allowed under that category.
 - c. An “Original Work” is only qualified for the MAT program if the following criteria is met:
 - i. It has never been performed before (a read-through does not count).
 - ii. It must be written by a current resident of the State of Georgia.
5. No less than 50% of a production’s performance dates must fall within the season’s timeframe. If the show only runs one weekend, the entire weekend must fall in the season’s timeframe and be at least four performances.
6. No productions may be submitted for review that will be “double cast” in performance roles. However, if one or two roles are double cast due to schedule conflicts or something of the like, then those roles will not be eligible while the rest of the production is eligible.
7. Actors/Actresses may not be placed in more than one acting category (i.e., if an actress is 15 years old and is playing “Dorothy” in *The Wizard of Oz*, technically she is qualified for both the Leading Actress and the Youth Award categories. However, she can only be placed in one acting category, **not both**).
 - a. It is up to the theater to decide which category they prefer this person to fall in (*just a suggestion: Put them, reasonably, in a category they have the best chance at*).
 - b. This rule does not apply to an actor who is also a tech/staff worker, director, or other non-acting category (i.e., if an actor is listed as Major Supporting and is also the Set Designer, then they are permitted to be listed in both categories).
 - c. We would like to point out that just because it is up to the theatre to decide what category people fall in, the MAT Board will review these submissions to make sure that people are not placed in “unreasonable” categories. If this happens, the MAT Board will re-categorize those submissions to better suit the award program in a fair and impartial manner. Secondly, if this show has been reviewed in the past at some other venue, we may use the same category as past submissions.

11. If two or more production submissions are of the same production, then the award categories must be identical. The MAT Board will ensure this takes place after conferring with all theatres that submitted the identical productions.
 - a. (In 2008, *Chicago* was submitted by two separate theatres. Therefore, the MAT Board made sure that all of the characters were in the same acting categories for both productions).
12. In the event that video recording of a production is needed, solely for voting purposes only, the theatre must allow the MAT Committee to video tape a performance. This will be strictly in line with copyright laws and the MAT Committee guarantees that it will not violate those laws by distributing/selling those recordings that are needed. It will be for archival purposes only.
13. If a Judging Panel has 13 shows or higher submitted to it, a Judging Matrix will be created to accommodate the high show load for the judges (see Section IV-6).
 - a. Judges will be placed on the matrix in a manner that keeps them away from their “home theatre” as much as is reasonably possible (Naturally, we can’t control how many or who the judges are. So, if we get a large flux of judges who happen to all be tied to the same “home theatre”, naturally some of them will have to judge their home theatre’s show in order to keep the matrix balanced. However, the MAT Board will do everything in their power to prevent this).
 - b. The matrix will be sent out to all Theatre Representatives for approval and comments once it has been completed.
14. In all Director and Technical Categories, “Assistant Director” and “Co-Director” type roles will be permitted but their official title will be announced during the nomination process.

d. “To Be Determined” Submissions

1. If a participating theatre is still trying to secure the rights to a production after the January 1st deadline, then a “To Be Determined” posting may take place until those rights are secured. However, the guidelines set forth in Section II c-3 shall be enforced.
2. “TBD” productions must land in the latter half of the season (July 1st – December 31st).
3. “TBD” Productions forfeit their right to have their productions advertised at other theater locations during the season. However, the “TBD” Production must still have the MAT Ad included in their production programs at the time of the performances.
4. The MAT Awards must be notified no later than 3 months before the production opens of what the production is, along with the dates of the production so that judges may schedule accordingly.

III. Representatives

1. There will be one Representative, per participating theatre, each season.
2. The purpose of a Theatre Representative is to assist the MAT Committee on communicating anything back and forth between the participating theatre and the MAT Board that is needed (*i.e., providing the Judging Panels with Cast/Crew lists, ensuring that the Judge’s Sign-In Sheet is at the Box Office each performance, etc*)

3. Whatever Theatre Representative's contact information provided on the application will be solely used as the direct form of communication between the Theatre Representative and the MAT Awards. If the Theatre Representative fails to comply with any requests, or fails to respond to emails, phone calls, etc., then the theatre, or production, will be considered "in default" and will not be reviewed by the Judging Panel.

IV. Judging Panels

1. Participating Theatres must provide one primary judge to seat within the Production Category that their production is submitted, and one alternate judge. Both must have acceptable theatrical experience, as determined by the MAT Board.
2. There will be a minimum of 5 judges per Production Category (*although, the MAT Board will try to make the judging panels larger depending on how many judges they can acquire that are qualified to be on the panel*).
3. Each judge will get one vote, per vote process, by filling out a score sheet for each production.
4. Each judge will be required to sign the provided "sign-in sheet" at each production location. If there is any evidence that any judge has not attended the minimum number of required productions, then their vote will not be counted at the end of the season.
5. Judges may not participate in any Submitted Production that they are voting on.
 - a. They are permitted to be in a production they are not voting on and will be eligible for an award.
 - b. If a judge is slated to see a production and does not see that production, by using their alternate, they still may not be in the production and/or be eligible (*this eliminates games of trying to be in a show and be eligible when they were supposed to judge it*).
6. If a Judging Panel has 13 productions or higher, then an approved judging matrix will be created to allow each judge to only see approximately 12 shows, or less, as much as possible.
7. Representative Judges that do not attend a production or fail to secure an Alternate Judge in an adequate amount of time, stand to not only be dismissed from the MAT Awards but will also put their Member Theatre in jeopardy of dismissal from the entire season.
 - a. The theatre may be fined twice the membership dues amount in order to be reinstated.
 - b. The Member Theatre is responsible to ensure that their judges are doing their jobs.

V. Award Categories

1. The following Awards will be reviewed, judged, and awarded each season:
 - a. Leading Actor, Musical
 - b. Leading Actress, Musical
 - c. Leading Actor, Play
 - d. Leading Actress, Play
 - e. Major Supporting Actor, Musical

- f. Major Supporting Actress, Musical
 - g. Major Supporting Actor, Play
 - h. Major Supporting Actress, Play
 - i. Minor Supporting Actor, Musical
 - j. Minor Supporting Actress, Musical
 - k. Minor Supporting Actor, Play
 - l. Minor Supporting Actress, Play
 - m. The Moira Thornett Director's Award, Musical
 - n. The Moira Thornett Director's Award, Play
 - o. Music Director (Musical Category Only)
 - p. Set Design, Musical
 - q. Set Design, Play
 - r. Costume Design, Musical
 - s. Costume Design, Play
 - t. Lighting Design, Musical
 - u. Lighting Design, Play
 - v. Sound Design, Musical
 - w. Sound Design, Play
 - x. Choreography (Musical Category only)
 - y. Original Work
 - z. Best Ensemble, Musical
 - aa. Best Ensemble, Play
 - bb. Youth Award, Musical
 - cc. Youth Award, Play
 - dd. Best Overall Performance of a Musical
 - ee. Best Overall Performance of a Play
 - ff. The President's Award (as eligibility requires)
 - gg. Honorary Stage Manager Award (chosen by MAT Board every 5 Years)
 - hh. Board Award (chosen by one or more MAT Board members)
2. The "Youth Award" will be given to any adolescent, age 16 or younger, for demonstrating an exceptional acting/singing/dancing talent. This is a non-gender award.
 3. The "Moira Thornett Director's Award" is an award provided to the best director of that production category.
 - a. This was originally titled "Best Director" but was changed in honor of the late Moira Thornett (*first recipient of this award in the Musical Category*).
 - b. At this time, only Directors and/or Co-Directors are permitted. We do not allow "Assistant Directors".
 4. "Best Ensemble" is awarded for the best cast. This is an award to the theatre (*Individual Actors are not considered Nominees/Winners*).
 5. "Best Overall Performance" is an award for the best production. This is an award to the theatre (*Individual Actors/Directors/Tech Workers are not considered Nominees/Winners*).

6. The “President’s Award” is presented to anyone who has surpassed a cumulative 10 Nominations over the years. The number of wins is irrelevant, since the MAT Awards recognizes that being nominated is an honor within itself.
7. The “Honorary Stage Manager Award” is an award, chosen by the MAT Board, and presented to one individual who has produced outstanding Stage Management work through the years.
 - a. The MAT Board will consult with member theatres to get recommendations and will make a decision based on those recommendations.
8. The “Board Award” is chosen by one or more members of the MAT Board.
 - a. These could be a combination of actors, directors, and/or tech staff and will encompass those that did not receive a Nomination by the Judging Panels.
 - b. It is replacing the “Honorable Mention” category from past seasons.
9. The “Music Direction” category will permit the Music Director and Conductor as part of this category. However, no “Assistant Music Directors” are permitted.

VI. Nomination Procedures

1. Judges will use a scoring sheet, provided by The MAT Board, to score each show.
2. No longer than one week after a production closes, the judge must submit their scoring sheet to the MAT Committee.
 - a. New judges, who have never been on a judging panel with the MAT Awards before, will be given till one week after the closing of their third show to turn in the forms for all three shows.
3. Failure to turn in the scoring sheet in a timely manner will result in the dismissal of a judge and suspension of the theater that provided the judge for one full year.
4. Each scoring method must be cast in the exact way that the form dictates. Failure to follow instructions will void the score in question.
5. Each judge must submit their scores to the MAT Committee via email or online *voting (depending on what is available for a given season)*.
6. Judges may only score individuals/shows that they are mandated to see.
7. The President and another Board Member will tally the score sheets. The top five nominees of each Award Category, with the most points, will be considered the Official Nominees unless there is a tie for fifth place.
8. The MAT Board will post the Nominees on the MAT Awards (www.matawards.com) website, applicable social media, along with individual congratulatory phone calls.
9. If a judge submits an incorrectly filled out score sheet, but there is still time to make corrections before the deadline, then the MAT Board will try to contact that judge and ask them to correct their errors.

10. The highest and lowest scores will be removed from the vote count, with only those scores in the middle being counted toward the vote tally.
 - a. A minimum of five scores must exist in order for a tally to take place. By removing the highest and lowest scores, this should leave at least three scores to tally.
 - b. The MAT Board reserves the right to create a “ghost judge” in cases where insufficient tallies exist. This takes place where the MAT Board averages all of the scores and uses that average as an additional “judge” to meet the three score minimum.

VII. Voting for an Award Winner

1. Winners may only be chosen from the Official Nominees that were determined, per Award Category.
2. The winner will be chosen from the points during the Nomination Phase. The individual/theatre with the most points will be declared the winner.
3. Those that tally may **not** reveal the Award Winners, or any scoring, to any person until after the Award Ceremony under any circumstance.
4. If a tally of the votes determines there is a tie for winner, then the tie will stand.
5. The MAT Board will keep all score sheets and tally forms on record, for one full year, in case there is ever a dispute about legitimacy. Only Theatre Representatives may review tally sheets and score sheets.

VIII. The Award Ceremony

1. The Award Ceremony may take place anytime after December 31st, 31 days after the end of the season.
2. The MAT Board will be responsible for sending out the Official Nominee invites and preparing the plaques for the ceremony. The MAT Board will cover the expenses of these items, using membership dues that were paid by the participating theatres.
3. It is each theatre’s responsibility (specifically the Theatre Representative) to make sure that the MAT Board has the correct addresses and phone numbers of every Official Nominee.
4. The ceremony may be hosted by any theatre that volunteers to do so, as long as the theatre can accommodate the size of the ceremony. If a theatre volunteers to host, they may receive all of the profits through ticket sales of that event (the MAT Board will be reimbursed for their expenses first).

5. The ceremony will be a semi-formal to formal event.
6. The hosting theatre will be responsible for arranging drinks, food, seating, volunteers (although the MAT Board will certainly assist), and general expenses of the ceremony unless there is no hosting theatre. In this case, the MAT Board will take over the responsibilities of the previous mentioned, using the monetary contribution provided by each theatre.
7. The MAT Board will be responsible for the schedule of presentations and entertainment of the ceremony (which may include performers from all of the participating theatres). Each participating theatre will be given an opportunity to assist with the presentation, if so desired.

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