

## Festival of High School Musicals - Adjudicator Comments 2008

*Following are some quotes from the very comprehensive adjudication sheets submitted by last year's adjudicator, Steven Thomas, Artistic Director, Theatre Collingwood. We hope these suggestions will be useful to you!*

### Costumes

- Costume/Makeup These were very well designed and executed, including footwear, which is something often overlooked at this level
- As a general note to wardrobe, please, when hats must be worn, instruct the actors to wear them back on the head a little so the light can easily get to the eyes. Of necessity, the beards will hide a part of the face already and to lose the eyes as well can inhibit what the audience can read from the actors' faces

### Preshow Experience

- One of my pet peeves is the appearance of any character from the production in costume before the performance and unfortunately, I saw a number of actors in the 'public' areas before we began. We should save the surprise for the audience until the curtain opens. An important thing to remember is that when we mount a production and sell tickets, we are committing to a tacit but very important agreement as follows: We, the audience, in consideration of the money we are paying to you the performing company, are willing to suspend our belief in our reality and believe in the world which you are creating on the stage. We, the performing company, in consideration of the money you, the audience, are paying, will create a world in which you can completely believe. We must always remember that because it applies to the whole experience.
- Another pet peeve that I have is either performers or technical staff crossing the stage for any reason after the audience is in. No less than 4 different crew members did so before the performance. Something to watch out for in the future.

### Acting

- For a young person to 'age' into their 40's, it requires in physical terms recognition of the imperceptible yet ever-advancing slowing down of the human body. Where one once leapt, one now steps, where one ran, one now walks and so on.
- [actress] was just on the edge of the light so I lost her a little from time to time. Every good

performer learns how to be a "light seeker". Remember we want to see you and you want us to see you.

### Sets

- The first scene change was smooth and well choreographed and gave me confidence that this was not going to be a "play about scene changes" (you know, ten lines of dialogue followed by a five minute scene changes in a blackout. Believe me, I've seen it!).

### Microphones

- Every cast member using a microphone should know that it is his/her responsibility to ensure that every mike has new batteries before every performance, and that there should be no metal (buttons for example) in the costumes.

### Upstaging

- I want to make mention of something that happened at this point in the action (which I noticed that actually affected [actor] earlier in the act). There were some 'extracurricular shenanigans' occurring from a couple of the performers who were not in the centre of the action at that moment. I will not mention their names. The intentional distraction from the focus of the action and/or from the ability of the featured actor to concentrate and focus on his or her performance is called 'upstaging' and it has no place in theatre of any form at any time. Period. Remember that your audience, no matter when it is attending--closing, opening or any other performance--is entitled to the best performance you can give. Giving in to the temptation to 'horse around' because it is a closing performance and 'who cares anyway' is a big no-no!

*During discussions following the Festival, the adjudicator requested that, if there are adults performing roles in the cast, they be clearly identified in the programme since no awards will be given to adults. He also requested that in cases where a role is shared by more than one performer, the programme clearly identify which performer is performing for each show.*