

ACT Play Submission Guidelines 2008-2009: Our 58th Season

Who May Submit?

Albany Civic Theater is both a community theater and a theater community. Our directors, like all volunteers, are unpaid. Therefore, we expect those who direct for us to have demonstrated both a commitment to our theater and an understanding of how we operate.

This packet goes out to:

- People who have directed for us before
- People who have expressed interest in directing
- Others whose names have been suggested to us as potential directors
- Anyone on line who is interested (<http://albanycivic.org>)

New Directors

Box office intake accounts for 90% of our revenue. Each show is a financial risk we take seriously. Just as important are our volunteers. As a director, you may have a brilliant vision and an amazing script but your “people skills” are going to determine whether or not those folks volunteering will come back and do shows with us (and see them as well).

Before you may direct at ACT, you MUST -- at a minimum -- have served as a stage manager or assistant director on at least one ACT production. We urge all would-be directors to get as much experience on how we do things here at ACT as possible. The better we know you...the more we have seen of your skills...the more likely the possibility you will be sitting in the director’s chair on opening night.

If you are new to directing, please be realistic. Think “small cast shows” with low tech. Shows that are big in scope (or complicated in intimacy...as many two person shows are) are best saved for you when you are more experienced and know who to enlist in your major project.

If two or more people submit the same script, it will be up to the Play Reading Committee to determine which, if any of them, is selected to direct the show based on director qualifications, scheduling, other scripts each has submitted and all the usual factors that go into director selection.

What to Submit

You are invited to submit up to three plays you would like to direct. To give the Play Reading Committee the greatest flexibility possible--and yourself the greatest chance--please consider submitting plays of different styles, cast sizes, periods, etc. See the page on “Choosing a Script” for details.

Submitting a Musical

Because of their inherent scope and complications, first time directors should avoid submitting a musical. If you have the experience and desire to mount a production, please contact Jim Guynn

(email: jrguynn@comcast.net) to determine whether an orchestra is likely to be available at the time(s) when you'd like to direct. It is difficult to get pit musicians at certain times of year. We also expect those submitting musicals to have a musical director lined up. Please include a tape or CD of the music for the Play Reading Committee.

Providing Scripts

Each prospective director must submit scripts at their own expense to the committee. Wisdom dictates that you make a copy (or two...or three) of the script and keep the original for yourself. The theater cannot pay for preview copies. Please adhere to the submission deadline of 5:59 p.m. January 20, 2008. (A 1-minute grace period is provided for the deadline-impaired.)

In addition to scripts, please submit:

- A brief cover letter explaining why you want to direct at ACT
- One copy of the directors application form (enclosed)
- One copy of the play submission form (also enclosed) *for each play* you submit. You may wish to bind these forms into the front of the scripts.

Just drop these off in the box located in the ACT mail room or mail to:

Play Reading Committee
ACT P.O. Box 82
Albany, OR 97321

Selection Process

The ACT Board of Directors will pre-screen director applications (scheduled for the February 3rd board meeting) to determine if they meet the minimum qualifications before passing their submissions along to the seven-member Play Reading Committee. For more information on the prescreening process, contact President Beth Bentley by phone, 967-8035, or email: bethbentley@iinet.com. If you have had problems working with volunteers in the past., you may want to address those problems and explain how you have addressed them in order to prevent their recurrence.

Scripts from qualified directors go to the Play Reading Committee appointed from the ranks of ACT's member and chosen to represent a broad range of theater experience, interests and tastes. The committee will:

- Read the scripts
- Look closely at director needs and schedules
- Select a balanced season of comedies, dramas and musicals for submission to our paid membership, which will meet on April 6th, 2008 to adopt a final season.

In the process, committee members may contact you with questions about your plays, schedule or other issues. But they may not, so it is in your best interest to make sure you fill out the forms as completely as possible. This is your chance to sell your show...and yourself, as the director.

Choosing a Script

First, let me thank all of the wonderful board presidents for having done all of this work ahead of me. You may notice that this letter is pretty much the same as previous years. I'm taking advantage of all

the thought and expertise that has gone into past letters and pretty much copying what I've been given.

Consider our Audiences

ACT attracts a diverse audience. While our "core" patrons -- those who consistently buy season tickets and attend most plays -- is made up of older people, we have begun to draw a younger, more diverse group that, depending on the play, might include families with younger children, well-off professionals looking for the kind of quality entertainment they might find in Portland and "niche" audiences who may not attend our theater regularly but will turn out for a specific play that appeals to their own interests.

An important question to keep in mind is, "Who will want to come and see this?" By all means, submit that quirky play that you love, but consider submitting plays with a broad appeal as well. We may do one or two offbeat shows a year, but remember...ACT survives on its box office. We must craft a season that draws enough people to pay the bills.

Consider our Talent Pool

Actors come in all kinds of shapes, sizes, sexes, ages and hair color. The Play Reading Committee tries hard to select a slate of plays which have plenty of roles for men and women, young and old, veteran and novice. Strive for balance of roles. If you submit a play with twenty male roles, you might consider submitting a play with twenty female roles as well. Think of the talent in the community and ask yourself, "Do we have the folks to do this?" Sometimes the right play will draw people in. Again, the key is to offer the Play Reading Committee as many options as you can.

Submit Plays you Love

Sometimes, in an effort to submit "more choices" for the play reading committee, directors will submit one play they love and then throw in two they're not crazy about just to fill out the "three-play" guideline. What is true for auditioning for plays is doubly true for submitting to direct them...you wouldn't put down that you were willing to take any role if it wasn't true...don't commit yourself to directing a play that doesn't turn you on. If you are in the position of being "in love" with only one play, then be true to your vision and submit that one play. But remember, the play reading committee may not love it the way you do or it may not be a "fit" for the season. Giving them options of different plays that you would love to direct increases the likelihood that you will be directing next season.