

Michigan State University
Wharton Center for Performing Arts
&
Department of Theatre



Student Information Packet*

- Frequently Asked Questions
- Festival Highlights Timeline
- Script Submission Rules
- Sample Script Format
- Application Form – Required
- Cover Sheet (1) – Required
- Description Pages (6) – Required

*Download a copy at www.whartoncenter.com/education

2009-2010 YOUNG PLAYWRIGHTS FESTIVAL – FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What is it?

High school students write and submit one-act scripts to a juried competition. Twelve semifinalists will be chosen to work with a faculty mentor to revise their scripts for a second reading. Six finalist scripts will be selected from the second reading to be produced and performed at Wharton Center by MSU Theatre Department student's preceded by a mentoring process.

What is the professional theatre mentoring aspect of YPF? (*See attached description*)

What is happening May 15 & 16th? (*See attached description*)

What are the awards?

All 12 semifinalists will receive certificates of participation.

All 6 finalists will receive certificates of participation and a \$200 award.

The remaining 6 semifinalists will each receive a \$100 award.

How can students learn to write scripts?

Visit Wharton Center's website for a listing of resources, playwriting tips and comments from participants in the Festival www.whartoncenter.com/education

What is the schedule of events in the Festival?

Friday, Nov. 20, 2009 Deadline to submit scripts (postmarked by date)

January 2010	-Twelve semifinalist scripts chosen -Playwrights work with faculty mentor to further develop scripts for a second reading
February 2010	-Six finalists selected from second reading of scripts -Finalists and directors meeting-professional theatre mentors are assigned to each finalist
Sat, May 15, 2010	-Dress rehearsal runs-playwrights see dress with their mentors
Sun, May 16, 2010 1:30 PM	-Free public performance of six finalists' plays at Wharton Center -Reception, Recognition and Awards Ceremony
4-8:30 PM	-Forum for playwrights, directors, actors to assess the work of all plays in a moderated session
Mon, May 17, 2010 10:00 AM	-Free high school performance of six finalists' plays at Wharton Center

For more information download forms at
www.whartoncenter.com/education

Email: briseno@msu.edu
Phone: 517-884-3141

September – November

Visit www.whartoncenter.com/education for playwriting tips and a downloadable Student Information Packet that includes entry rules, required forms and a sample script format.

Friday, November 20, 2009 – Script Entry Deadline

- Scripts submitted must be postmarked by Friday, November 20, 2009.
- Application form (downloadable) must be signed by student, sponsoring teacher and parent or guardian and returned with scripts.
- Playwright must be a Michigan high school student in grades 9 – 12 to enter.
- Scripts must be original works.
- See Script Submission Rules for complete details.

January 2010 – Twelve semifinalist playwrights chosen to work with faculty mentor, Robert J. Roznowski, Professor of Theatre/Acting at MSU, to prepare their scripts for a second reading.

February 2010 – Six finalist scripts selected to be produced on stage

- Playwrights are assigned a professional mentor.
- Finalists and directors meet to discuss scripts.
- Auditions, casting.

May 2010 – Performances showcasing six original works written by high school students, produced by students from MSU's Department of Theatre and performed on the Pasant Theatre stage at Wharton Center.

- **Sunday, May 16, 2010, 1:30 pm – Free Public Performance**
 - Pasant Theatre, Wharton Center for Performing Arts
 - Post-performance Reception, Recognition and Awards Ceremony
 - 4:00-8:30 pm-Forum for playwrights, directors, actor's to assess the work of all plays in a moderated session. Dinner provided. Playwrights are required to attend.
- **Monday, May 17, 2010, 10:00 am – Free High School Performance**
 - Pasant Theatre, Wharton Center for Performing Arts
 - Download School Reservation form at www.whartoncenter.com/education
 - Reservations due by April 8, 2010.

What is the professional theatre mentoring aspect of YPF?

Mentors are directors or playwrights from Michigan and around the Mid-West who are currently working in the professional theatre and have had experience working with young people. Once the six finalists are selected they will be assigned a mentor. For the next 4-5 weeks playwrights and their mentors will work to make revisions in the script. Communication will be by email, phone or both. While everyone has time constraints it is assumed that mentors and playwrights will spend about two hours a week working together with the playwright spending some additional time outside of those discussions to revise the play. Once the revisions are completed the revised plays will be sent to the MSU Department of Theatre in preparation for rehearsals.

At present the mentors for 2010 are:

- Seth Gordon – Associate Artistic Director, Cleveland Playhouse
- Carol North – Artistic Director, Metro Theatre Co. St. Louis
- Tony Caselli – Artistic Director, Williamston Theatre
- John Lepard – Executive Director/Director/Actor, Williamston Theatre
- Michael Haney – Associate Artistic Director, Cincinnati Playhouse in the Park
- Randy Wyatt - Playwright in Residence – Whole Art Theatre, Kalamazoo

Note: Mentors are subject to change

What is happening during the weekend of May 15 and 16, 2010?

On Saturday May 15, 2010 mentors will gather at the Wharton Center with their playwrights to meet each other and then watch a dress rehearsal of their play. This will be followed by a period of discussion about seeing the play for the first time. This will most likely be an afternoon session. On Sunday May 16th at 1:30pm playwrights and mentors will watch the public performance of the plays. This will be followed by the awards ceremony. From approximately 4:00pm to 8:30pm all playwrights, mentors, directors and actors will meet for an ARTIST'S FORUM where each play and production will be discussed. The forum will be moderated by one of the mentors. The Wharton Center will provide a lite supper and beverages during this event. ALL SIX FINALISTS WILL BE REQUIRED TO ATTEND BOTH THE SESSION ON MAY 15 AND 16TH. Finalist playwrights may invite two guests to the May 16th ARTIST'S FORUM.

2009-2010 YOUNG PLAYWRIGHTS FESTIVAL

SCRIPT SUBMISSION RULES

Eligibility:

Each participant must:

- Be a Michigan high school student in grade 9 – 12.
- Be sponsored by a teacher willing to serve as the liaison between Wharton Center, the school, and the student applicant.
- Submit an application form with script. Parent, sponsoring teacher and student signatures are *required*.
- If you are selected among the six finalists:
 - You must be willing and available to work with a professional theatre mentor for 4-5 weeks prior to rehearsal.
 - You must attend a dress rehearsal of your play on Saturday, May 15 and the public performance on Sunday, May 16, followed by an Artist's Forum from 4:00-8:30pm (See FAQ for details).

Guidelines:

All plays must:

- Be original works.
- Have no more than 6 characters.
- Require only simple props, costumes, settings, and effects.
- Have a maximum length of 12 pages.

Format:

Scripts must be typed or word-processed and pages numbered:

- Separate different characters' dialogue by one blank line.
- Prepare 6 copies of the script for submission.
- Staple a Cover Sheet Form (downloadable) and a Description Page (downloadable) to the first copy of the scripts.
- Staple a Description Page only to each of the remaining five copies of the scripts (no student names on these 5 copies as they are sent to judges anonymously).
- Place application and all **six** copies of script with Cover Sheet and/or Description Page in one large (eg 9 x 12) envelope. Use a separate envelope for each student applicant's set of six script copies and application form.

*See
sample script format
on-line*

Mail application (downloadable) and scripts to: Young Playwrights Festival

Attn: Laurie Briseño

Wharton Center for Performing Arts

Michigan State University

East Lansing, MI 48824-1318

Download forms at:

www.whartoncenter.com/education

All entries must be postmarked by Friday, November 20, 2009.

Failure to meet any of the rules or guidelines will be grounds for disqualification from the festival.

Judges' decisions are final. Awards are not transferable.

HOW TO WRITE IN PLAYSRIPT FORMAT

by

Someone U. Know

Someone U. Know's
Address as well as
Phone Number and
E-Mail

© O'Leary, 1998

[As soon as you write something creative, it is automatically copyrighted as yours. You can also call the copyright people in Washington, D.C. who are nice and helpful or mail a copy of the manuscript to yourself to keep sealed until that moment in court when you get to use it as proof. Meantime you should always put the c down with your name and date so people are reminded they aren't supposed to steal your characters or words. Titles can't be copyrighted and anyone can use them.]

ACT ONE

Scene 1

A stage in a small edgy big city theater. There are two chairs CS [center stage]. The THEATER DIRECTOR, a young, edgy, big city guy is sitting in one of them. The PLAYWRIGHT enters. Like all playwrights, this character is so charismatic some of the spotlights implode trying so hard to compete with intense light as PLAYWRIGHT walks toward other chair.

THEATER DIRECTOR

Do you know how to write dialogue in format?

PLAYWRIGHT

Haven't a clue.

THEATER DIRECTOR

You center the name of the character talking and put the name in caps....that's short for capital letters.

PLAYWRIGHT

Is that right.

THEATER DIRECTOR

Then you write the dialogue without quotation marks. Then you space and do the same thing with the character talking back.

PLAYWRIGHT

And being confrontational? Talking back and giving the first character a hard time? I mean if I were to start arguing with you? If I were to get loud? (Shouts) If I were to be a very

PLAYWRIGHT (CONT'D) [continued]
 misunderstood kind of character who won't...BEHAVE!

THEATER DIRECTOR
 That would make for conflict and interest and good theater.

PLAYWRIGHT
 So if I just have people saying nothing much about anything...? If they just talk about what interests me and nothing much happens, it's not so good?

THEATER DIRECTOR
 (Snoring. Wakes up)
 ...huh? Right! Yes. You'll put everyone to sleep if your characters have no conflict.

PLAYWRIGHT
 What if I want to write some action that happens without any dialogue going on?

Then you describe it over here as succinctly as possible. You also have to put any characters you refer to in caps. In other words, if the PLAYWRIGHT is going to walk DS or US [downstage – toward the audience – or upstage – toward the back] or SL or SR [stage left which is the actor's left or stage right, the actor's right] you describe it over here. It should be significant. Don't write a novel here. And don't direct the play's dialogue. The directors like to do that and can get kind of huffy if you do their job for them. And don't have a character doing what that character wouldn't be caught dead doing. The actors like to become real people and if you make their characters into jerks they can get pretty steamed.

PLAYWRIGHT
 (Leaning toward DIRECTOR)
 What if, like, my friends? They all like talk like this? Can I, like, write dialogue like...you know...like they really talk?

(Beat) [This means you want the actors to wait a second as though they are thinking or need a little time to react. If you want them to wait a longer time, use (Pause).]

DIRECTOR

Please do. Although with only a few lines of dialogue, you could make your friends sound intelligent. You could also place them in the last century or a thousand years in the future and you can also set them down in any kind of place you'd like.

PLAYWRIGHT

Like a cave? Or a racetrack? Or a funeral? Or the middle of the ocean?

DIRECTOR

Assuming they can swim.
(Pause.)

PLAYWRIGHT

I can do anything.

DIRECTOR

Exactly. Just put it in the right format and we'll believe every word.

2009-2010 YOUNG PLAYWRIGHTS FESTIVAL - APPLICATION

PLEASE TYPE OR PRINT

STUDENT INFORMATION (PLEASE NOTE PREFERRED CONTACT METHOD WITH AN *). It is crucial that directors be able to reach you during rehearsals for any questions they may have regarding your script. They will try to reach you at the preferred method you have marked with an * .

NAME SCHOOL HOME STREET NUMBER GRADE CITY STATE ZIP AGE EMAIL ADDRESS HOME PHONE

SPONSORING TEACHER INFORMATION (PLEASE NOTE PREFERRED CONTACT METHOD WITH AN *)

NAME EMAIL ADDRESS PHONE

How did you learn about the Young Playwrights Festival?

TITLE OF PLAY

STUDENT

If I am selected as a finalist, I will be assigned a professional theatre mentor and agree to work with him or her to revise the play for a period of 4-5 weeks prior to rehearsal. See FAQ for details.

This confirms my intent to participate in the 2009-2010 Young Playwrights Festival. I confirm that my submission is an original work (plagiarized materials will be disqualified). I also confirm that, should my work be selected as one of the semifinalists or finalists, I will be able to participate in all meetings, rehearsals and the performances as necessary.

I understand that Wharton Center for Performing Arts and the Michigan State University Department of Theatre reserve the right to record, videotape and/or photograph any and all of the performance of my work and participation in any events associated with the Young Playwrights Festival, and reproduce and/or distribute all or part of these recordings or photographs and the original text of my submission as deemed appropriate without compensation.

I understand that any award I receive from the presenters and/or sponsors of the Young Playwrights Festival for my participation is non-transferable.

STUDENT'S SIGNATURE DATE

PARENT/GUARDIAN'S SIGNATURE DATE

SPONSORING TEACHER

I confirm my intent to sponsor the aforementioned student's application for the 2009-2010 Young Playwrights Festival. I confirm that, should this work be selected as a finalist, I will make all appropriate arrangements for the student's release from regularly scheduled school classes and activities to participate in all meetings, rehearsals and the performances as necessary.

SPONSORING TEACHER'S SIGNATURE DATE

MAIL APPLICATION AND PLAY SCRIPTS

WITH APPROPRIATE COVER/DESCRIPTION SHEETS TO: 2009-2010 YOUNG PLAYWRIGHTS FESTIVAL ATTN: LAURIE BRISEÑO WHARTON CENTER FOR PERFORMING ARTS MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY EAST LANSING, MI 48824-1318

ALL ENTRIES MUST BE POSTMARKED BY FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 20, 2009

2009-2010 YOUNG PLAYWRIGHTS FESTIVAL – **COVER SHEET**
(STAPLE 1 OF THESE TO ONLY 1 COPY OF THE SCRIPT)

PLEASE TYPE OR PRINT

STUDENT INFORMATION (PLEASE NOTE PREFERRED CONTACT METHOD WITH AN *). It is crucial that directors be able to reach you during rehearsals for any questions they may have regarding your script. They will try to reach you at the preferred method you have marked with an * .

NAME _____ SCHOOL _____
HOME STREET NUMBER _____ GRADE _____
CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____ AGE _____
EMAIL ADDRESS _____ HOME PHONE _____

SPONSORING TEACHER INFORMATION (PLEASE NOTE PREFERRED CONTACT METHOD WITH AN *)

NAME _____
EMAIL ADDRESS _____ PHONE _____

TITLE OF PLAY _____

CHECKLIST

- APPLICATION FILLED OUT COMPLETELY AND SIGNED BY PARENT, SPONSORING TEACHER, STUDENT
- SCRIPTS TYPED OR WORD-PROCESSED
- PAGES NUMBERED (Handwritten page numbers are OK)
- SIX (6) COPIES OF SCRIPT
 - ONE COPY OF SCRIPT WITH COVER SHEET AND DESCRIPTION PAGE STAPLED ON TOP
 - FIVE (5) COPIES OF SCRIPT WITH ONLY THE DESCRIPTION PAGE STAPLED ON TOP (THESE 5 COPIES DO NOT INCLUDE NAMES - SCRIPTS ARE ANONYMOUS TO JUDGES)
- SEND ONE STUDENT APPLICANT'S SIX (6) SCRIPTS AND APPLICATION PER ENVELOPE (eg one large 9 x 12 yellow envelope) TO ADDRESS BELOW

I have completed the above checklist:

STUDENT'S SIGNATURE _____ **DATE** _____

MAIL TO: 2009-2010 YOUNG PLAYWRIGHTS FESTIVAL
ATTN: LAURIE BRISEÑO
WHARTON CENTER FOR PERFORMING ARTS
MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY
EAST LANSING, MI 48824-1318

**ALL ENTRIES MUST BE POSTMARKED BY
FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 20, 2009**

2009-2010 YOUNG PLAYWRIGHTS FESTIVAL – **DESCRIPTION PAGE**

(STAPLE 1 OF THESE TO EACH OF THE 6 COPIES OF SCRIPT)

PLEASE TYPE OR PRINT

TITLE OF PLAY

SETTING

PLOT

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF EACH CHARACTER (MAX 6 CHARACTERS)

1.

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