

DRAMAFEST

An Exciting Opportunity for Stagedoor Manor Students Who Are Interested In Writing For the Stage!

In 1981, Stephen Sondheim founded an organization called Young Playwrights Inc.

His goal was to discover and nurture young writing talent for the stage.

Stagedoor Manor, in conjunction with Young Playwrights Inc., is excited to offer our students **an opportunity to produce and publish** their original work!

DRAMAFEST is a one day event, each session, during which 5 original 10-minute scripts will be performed for a full student audience and invited industry guests.

The 5 scripts are jury-chosen from entries received and read before the student arrives.

Winners are announced on the day the cast lists go up, and student playwrights will spend the next 10 days working with a professional director and stage manager to produce their shows.

The competition is open to ALL ages on equal basis with a NEW competition EACH session. While participation in DRAMAFEST will not affect primary shows, it does replace a class in your student's schedule.

The 5 winners from all 3 sessions will have their work (with photos from each production) published in a collection by OnStage Press, a division of Samuel French, Inc.

Special invited guests who attended in 2007 included:

Tony-winner Richard Maltby; Tony-winner Jeff Whitty; Brad Lohrenz (Director of Licensing for Samuel French); Janet Brenner (President - Board of Directors, Young Playwrights); Award-winning author, Arlene Hutton; Award-winning lyricist, Jeff Blumenkrantz; Award-winning director, Eric Nightengale; and General Manager of Manhattan Theatre Club, Florence Seery.

**We encourage ALL interested students to take advantage
of this unique opportunity!**

See your original characters and words brought to life!

YOU, the playwright, will direct and produce your show in the beautiful Oasis Theater for an audience of over 300!

Your original script will be published by the oldest and most famous theatrical publishing house in the world, Samuel French Inc!

**STAGEDOOR MANOR DRAMAFEST
IS A PLAY WRITING COMPETITION WITHIN THE STAGEDOOR COMMUNITY
OPEN TO ALL AGES, ALL THREE SESSIONS**

Please CAREFULLY read the following rules and entry deadlines:

DRAMAFEST 2009

The goal of DRAMAFEST is to give young writers the opportunity to experience the thrill of seeing their work come to life on stage. Student performers will share in the excitement and all will benefit from the challenge of creating a finished product, on their own, in a limited time frame. Professionals are there to guide them and facilitate the process. The competition is open to all ages with a new competition each session.

1. **Material must be the original work of the author, previously unpublished.** No collaborations, adaptations, screenplays, or musicals will be considered.
2. **The play must run (produced) no longer than 10 minutes and have no more than 5 characters.** Less than 10 minutes, less than 5 characters is OK.
3. **Subject matter and language must be suitable for all ages of audience.** Final five choices will be made by Stagedoor Manor directors and administration.
4. **You may submit as many scripts as you like, but only ONE may be a winner.** Those students who are staying more than one session, and are **NOT** winners in their first session, will have their submitted scripts considered for the following session.
5. **Authors may not perform in their own productions.** Student actors may perform in only one production per session.
6. **Scripts MUST be submitted NO LATER than the postmark date for each session! They must be typed, stapled, and have numbered pages. NO EMAIL SUBMISSIONS. THE NAME OF THE AUTHOR SHOULD NOT APPEAR ON THE SCRIPT!** Only the title will be used to identify the material for final five selections. Your name and return address must be on the script's mailing envelope. **Check all these items BEFORE you mail!**

DRAMAFEST POSTMARK DEADLINES FOR 2009

Session 1: Postmarked by June 10 * Session 2: Postmarked by July 1 * Session 3: Postmarked by July 22

Ten-Minute plays are meant to be performed with bare minimal production detail. If your script requires a specific costume or prop for production, be prepared to have it sent from home.

The stage you will be directing on is in "the round" (the new OASIS Theater). Sets will consist of chairs, a table, or blocks and little else. Lights will have minimal changes as well.

Casting of shows will be done with the help of the Stagedoor casting team...please do not pre-cast your show with friends! They may find their schedule prevents them from participation.

DRAMAFEST rehearsals will take place during the third period class of each day, so you will be giving up one class period every day to direct your show. Your actors will also be required to give up some class time. This is different from the 2008 schedule, but we feel it will ultimately serve you better.

More details on the new schedule when you arrive at Stagedoor. You will be working independently, but supervised by a director and stage manager who will guide you and make suggestions along the way.

PLEASE BE SURE OF ALL OF THE RULES AND DEADLINES LISTED ABOVE!

STANDARDS OF SELECTION **(and some really good advice!)**

Entries will be read with the following criteria in mind:

PLOT: How is the story structured? Developed? Does action build? Is there a beginning, a middle, and a resolution?

CHARACTERS: Are they defined? Do they grow and change? Do they have needs or goals that propel the action of the play? Do they have relationships within the story?

DIALOGUE: Is it consistent to the individual characters? Bring them to life?

CONFLICT: Does it drive the play? Challenge the characters? Create tension and give purpose to the plot?

DRAMATIC PREMISE AND ORIGINALITY: Is there a core theme to the play? Did the playwright deliver his message? Is the approach fresh? Is the style original?

REMEMBER: A script needs a story with a purpose. It needs a beginning, middle, and resolution. We want to meet people we find interesting and challenging. We may relate to them, or find them totally foreign, but we want to discover what makes them tick. We want to experience a growth, change, or revelation with them. **Characters need objectives.**

There is a difference between a story and a skit. A skit usually takes a situation, or group of people, we all recognize and makes it bigger than life in a humorous way. Think "Saturday Night Live." We already know the situation and are affirming our knowledge by sharing the laugh.

Write a story, not a skit.

There is a difference between telling a story and exposing a conflict. Have you ever been an audience to one of those endless arguments between people who are on opposite sides? There will be no winner or loser...just an airing of their points of view? **Conflict is essential to a story, but if there is no change or resolution to the conflict, we soon lose interest.**

If you are going to tell a story of pain and loss, then you must also tell the story of how your characters coped with the pain and loss: how they survived, persevered, or changed. What influenced their journey or how did the journey affect others? Where did they start? Where are they going? Most important: why should the audience care? **What message do you want to send?**

BEST ADVICE: Know the ending BEFORE you write the beginning. Think it through FIRST. Spend time with your characters and question their motives, test their relationships, discover their goals.

AND MOST IMPORTANT OF ALL: HAVE FUN !!