

## Play Selection

The selection of plays for your students to perform should always be grounded in the abilities of your students. There may be a desire from both the students and instructor to take on scripts that may be beyond the present abilities of the group.

- It's best to always start small, focusing on work that will challenge the students but that will not be beyond their present capacities as performers or your abilities at present as their director.
- It is also very important to have a sense of your school and community when selecting which plays to perform.
- Is your play selection one that engenders the type of support you need from school administrators and parents? Something to consider, they are your co-producers after all!

### NASCENT

Once you have established your group, select plays that will work for them that are fun and challenging as well as both *age* and *gender* appropriate. If you have eight girls in your group, it does no one any favors to do an adaptation of *Lord of the Flies!*

- Don't be in a hurry to search for published material at this stage of the program's development. There can be great fun and much less expense in looking at a favorite story of the group that can be adapted to suit the best interests of your group.
- Readers Theater is a great source and at this stage and can be very helpful in the development of your actor's basic skills of reading, listening, creating character and building ensemble.

#### ➤ NASCENT ACTIVITY

**For this activity, you'll need the following resources, found as addendums to this document:**

- **Web resource 1:** Free Reader's Theater Resources:

### INTERMEDIATE

As in all acting pursuits, it is good never to stray too far from the fundamentals before moving on. Always instill the basic acting principles like listening, focus and concentration and creating character as you go.

- It is also essential at this stage to be aware of the school's resources before taking on published texts. Would you be able to hold a fundraiser at your school in order to secure the rights for a published script?
- If the answer is no, intermediate students can benefit from working solely from Reader's Theater scripts before moving on to published texts.
- Book adaptations can be fun and rewarding for the group to take on or company-created works found through group improvisations can be extremely rewarding at this stage of the groups' development. If you feel you and the group are ready though to work on actual scripts there is a wide variety of options to choose from, including one-act plays.
- Always remember though, the solid exercises and work on technique should never be neglected, which is all too common when the group realizes that they now can begin to wear costumes!

#### ➤ INTERMEDIATE ACTIVITY

**For this activity, you'll need the following resources found as addendums to this document:**

- **Web resource 2:** Pioneer Drama Service

### ADVANCED

At this stage it becomes even more critical to select plays that showcase the members of your ensemble. This is the stage of their young careers where a few of them (hopefully more) may be considering careers in the theatre. That being said, a note of caution which still remains true to the age appropriate/ ability appropriate credo. Select plays/roles that appropriately showcase their abilities *now*.

- There are a myriad of opportunities that wonderfully showcase young actors in both classic and contemporary plays.
- If however, you want to “stretch” your actors or if you feel ready to expand your repertoire so your actors get to play roles beyond their age-range, that’s fine, but I would caution not to make a habit of it if possible.
- You will have many character –actors and students who are not “lead” potential that can fulfill character-oriented ensemble assignments. But whenever possible balance their casting in your respective seasons with roles for them that are age-appropriate.
- If drama teachers can select plays for their entire ensemble as well as their star students that are age and range appropriate for high school, it will be very much appreciated by your students when they get to the next level.

#### ➤ ADVANCED ACTIVITY

**For this activity, you’ll need the following resources found as addendums to this document:**

- **Web resource 3:** Top ten most performed plays in high schools
- **Web resource 4:** Top ten most performed high school plays and musicals

### MUSICAL THEATRE

The same rules apply when working with drama clubs who have a musical focus that apply to working with drama students. Always ground your selections in the abilities of your students. There will be a tendency to want to do the latest Disney musical because perhaps that’s what inspired them to be in the club in the first place; however as with drama students, you are really doing your students a disservice if you embrace these big musicals right out of the gate, plus they are expensive!

#### ➤ MUSICAL THEATRE ACTIVITY

**For this activity, you’ll need the following resources found as addendums to this document:**

- **Web resource 5:** Pioneer Drama Service Musicals for Children
- **Web resource 6:** MTI Broadway Junior
- **Web resource 7:** MTI shows
- **Web resource 8:** Tams Whitmark

As you look for titles at this level, you will most likely need to pursue the rights for specific projects. The agents at MTI, *Music Theatre International* are usually very collaborative and responsive with high schools because after all they have to be careful to protect their clients. Good luck!

Here’s a list of musical theatre resources for Musical Theatre Drama Clubs from nascent to advanced:

### ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

#### WEB

- <http://www.aaronshep.com/rt/RTE.html>
- <https://www.pioneerdrama.com/>
- <http://www.playbill.com/news/article/top-10-lists-announced-for-most-performed-plays-and-musicals-in-high-school-174508>
- <http://www.npr.org/sections/ed/2015/07/30/427138970/the-most-popular-high-school-plays-and-musicals>
- <https://www.pioneerdrama.com/Musical-Child.asp>
- <http://www.mtishows.com/broadway-junior/shows>
- <http://www.mtishows.com/>
- <http://www.tamswitmark.com/>