

CBACT Festival FAQ Sheet

GENERAL INFORMATION

~ **What is the CBACT festival?**

The festival is a one-day theatrical event for families in the greater Boston area during which CBACT member theatres perform abbreviated productions of shows and host theatre workshops for children. It's a great opportunity for theatre students to see and appreciate one another's work, for children to have a fun day experiencing live theatre, and for local children's theatres to network.

~ **What is the mission of the festival?**

The mission of the festival is to foster collaboration and appreciation between Boston-area children's theatres. It is not meant to be a competitive environment, but rather a supportive one. We hope to offer a piece of theatre and workshop for every age group (children, youth, teens) through which to grow and be entertained. CBACT members also get the opportunity to network with one another as well as meet potential families interested in becoming a part of your theatre program.

~ **When does the festival take place?**

The festival takes place on a Saturday in the summer, typically in July.

~ **Where does the festival take place?**

The festival takes place at the home of one of our CBACT members' theatre spaces. This location is announced well in advance of the festival to allow for planning of member theatres. The festival hopes to find a home one day at each of the member theatres to foster the awareness of all children's theatre in the Boston area. Because the festival offers workshops, shows, and lunch throughout the day, the host space should be able to accommodate these facets through open rooms, dressing areas, backstage space, traffic flow, advertising set up, and an area for eating.

~ **How does one get involved in the festival?**

Great question! CBACT member theatres are invited to participate in shows and workshops; we do ask for a \$25 participation fee. If you are already a member of CBACT, your theatre *should* be involved in the festival in some way – whether that is bringing a show, pre-show excerpt, workshop, or volunteering. (See separate sections for respective descriptions/questions). If you are a student theatre-lover or parent who wants to bring your child to the festival, we encourage you to sign up for our mailing list so you can get up to date information on ticket prices, dates, and location. Then, all you have to do is plan the time and buy your festival ticket for a day of fun-filled theatre! If you are a student who wants to perform in the festival, talk to your local theatre group about becoming a member.

~ How do I register?

Every year, in January, registration forms for the current festival become available for CBACT members and are handed out at our monthly CBACT meeting as well as emailed out to you. Participating as a performing group or workshop host is assigned on a first-come, first-serve basis; all registrations are due April 1st. Once you have sent in your registration and participation fee, you will be notified of your selection into the festival. (see Performance and/or Workshop questions for more details)

PERFORMANCES

~ What types of shows are appropriate for the festival?

All shows should be entertaining for students, but appropriate for all ages. We do understand that some shows geared toward a teen audience may be difficult to edit for a children's audience; thus, the festival committee tries to schedule shows throughout the day from early shows being best for children ages 3-8 and later shows being best for youth and teens. However, if the content of your show is too questionable for the committee, you may be asked to provide a different production for the festival. If you feel your show falls in the teen category, we will do our best to schedule it in the afternoon – however, if we already have two teen productions lined up for the afternoon slots, you may be asked to change your show or consider performing a pre-show excerpt. Get your registration forms in early!

~ How long can our show be?

45 minutes. Your time slot for your show will technically be 1 hour; however, we must allow for a possible pre-show excerpt within that hour as well as travel time for students to get to the workshops the following hour, which leaves you with 45 minutes to perform your show. Each hour of the day, we offer a show and a workshop selection. Because the students will want to get as much out of the workshops as possible, we keep to a tight schedule, so your show needs to be concluded in time for the workshop hour. If your show is over the time limit at your tech rehearsal, we will ask you to trim it.

~ What genre of show can I bring?

We have had straight plays, musicals, Shakespeare, and improv all perform at the festival! As long as it's age appropriate and fits into our 1-hour time slot, we encourage all genres of shows.

~ What is a "pre-show excerpt"?

This is for the theatre who is not able to bring a full show to the festival, or for the theatre who cannot edit the content of their show for the festival audience, or for the theatre who did not get their registration form in on time. We offer another opportunity through the pre-show excerpt to have your students perform and be a part of the festival. The pre-show excerpt is a short 5-7minute performance from a show of

your choosing. In the past, we have had theatres perform a scene from a play, a song and dance from a show, and a medley from a musical. These performances takes place right before another show's time slot.

~ What do I need to provide for my show?

You will be responsible for your show's script (complete with light and sound cues), as well as your cast's costumes, props and set pieces. Each festival host will provide you with space to store your minimal set (yes, we ask that it is very basic), costumes and props overnight. You do not need to bring a piano, mics, lights, curtains, etc. Once you have been selected for the festival, you will be responsible for providing a cut version of your script to the committee as well as a script with light and sound cues for the tech director. The tech director will hold a meeting with all performing theatres prior to the festival date so all technical questions can be cleared up long before you hold your tech rehearsal at the host theatre.

~ How do I prepare for the festival?

Every theatre prepares differently for the festival. You are the best one to know how your theatre can get a show on its feet for that day. Some theatres bring a show that they've done already as a part of their season – they save the costumes, set, and props, rehearse with their cast once or twice to refresh their memories, and then bring the show! Other theatres use the festival as a culmination of their summer program, or to preview their summer show that they're in the process of rehearsing. Still others have brought small touring shows that they bring into schools throughout the year. It is best to plan long in advance for what show you'll bring so you can advertise to your families and make sure your cast members all have the date in their calendars.

WORKSHOPS

~ When do workshops run?

Workshops run for 2 hours during the day. We offer 2 workshops per workshop hour. Our day starts with a show at 9:30am and a workshop hour follows at 10:30-11:30. The next workshop hour is held directly after our post-lunch show at 2:30-3:30. If any host theatre has more than 2 workshop spaces available, we would be happy to offer more workshops.

~ What age groups are the workshops for?

Our family audiences consist of children as young as 2 and as old as 20. Most children who attend the workshops are ages 4-18. We would ideally like to offer a workshop to two major age groups during each workshop hour. So, think along the lines of elementary school-aged children and middle school-aged students. Or middle school and high school. It has been the trend in the past that our younger children come for the morning's events while teens come for the afternoon (10-14 year olds tend to stay all day). So, if you have a workshop for a certain age group, we will probably ask that

you fit into a time slot most appropriate for that age.

~ What types of workshops are successful at the festival?

We typically have two workshop rooms available – one large and one medium-sized. There is sometimes a piano/keyboard available (please inquire about this if you're interested in teaching a workshop with music). Usually the workshops that are successful offer hands-on, group activities with a performance-type element. Your workshop can incorporate performance throughout or culminate in one. (This should not a lecture type workshop). Kids want to perform and be educated in something new! The more specific the topic and age group, the more appealing it is to kids. Stage combat, audition technique, improvisation, fairytale performance, puppetry are just some of the workshops that have drawn people in.

~ What supplies do I need to bring for my workshop?

Everything! We will supply the space for you to teach, but you should supply all of your own materials – paper, pencils, cd player, scripts, props, etc. (You can always ask, however, if there is something available that you might need).

~ What do I need to do to get people to attend my workshop?

Be early, friendly when kids walk in and ready to go! We'll do the rest by advertising in our press releases, posters and postcards, the festival program, and announcements and signs.

VOLUNTEERS

~ Who should/can/needs to volunteer at the festival?

Because this is a CBACT event, each CBACT member should participate as a volunteer in some fashion. By saying that we need your theatre to volunteer means only that we need representatives of your company to be willing to put 1 hour of time each into the festival. If you are not a CBACT member but wish to get involved through volunteering, please send us an email and we will find a place for you! We will have a volunteer committee who will make the process super easy for you! All we need to know is that you will be there.

~ What does volunteering entail?

We have several areas that you can volunteer in. Box office, ushering, concessions, decorating and more! You will receive notice from the volunteer committee that your company has been assigned 1-2 time slots and areas (all of which will still allow any parents or company members to still see their own company's show or workshop). When you get this notice, we ask that you simply respond to us with the names of your volunteers and you let them know what time they need to be present and where to report.

~ Do volunteers get free tickets?

Unfortunately, no. We strongly believe in the collaboration of everyone to make a day like this work and we hope that parents and company members value the efforts and enrichment of all our children more than the price of a ticket. However....each *participating* theatre company receives 4 complimentary admissions to the festival. Your theatre company manager is responsible for choosing these and alerting the festival committee as to the names of those attending as comps. If your company manager chooses to have you as a volunteer who is also comped, that is his/her choice. (We recommend that managers choose stage managers, workshop leaders, directors, music directors, etc. for their 4 comps).

PROMOTING YOUR THEATRE

~ What kind of promoting is done for the festival?

Each year, the festival committee takes on the bulk of advertising and promotion for the festival, but we ask that each member theatre use what we've created to advertise to their own audiences and families. We will create a poster, postcard, email, and press release that we will then provide to your theatre company to send out, hand out, hang, display in whichever way works best for you. But it's best to get the word out early even if just by sending an announcement out via email or announcing on your website that you'll be attending the festival! Let your families plan in advance!

~ How can I promote my theatre to audiences the day of the festival?

This day is a great day to get the word out about who your theatre is what you do! We have several ways you can promote your theatre. If you cannot produce a workshop or show, (which are the "loud" ways of getting your name out there), you still have the opportunity to display a table filled with information about your theatre, produce slides that promote your theatre, and be a part of our ticket raffle – each of which get your name out there throughout the day.

~ What is a promotion table?

The promotion tables are tables that are set up for your theatre company to fill and decorate however you choose in order to get information out there about your theatre company. Each member theatre – whether you are participating or not – will be provided a table for this purpose. You are responsible for bringing your own promotional materials. In the past, theatres have displayed brochures, banners, business cards, posters, photos, tri-fold boards, video, etc. to fill their tables. It's yours to do what you want with, so take advantage of this easy and effective promotional tool!

~ What are the slides?

Each member theatre company receives the opportunity to display 4 powerpoint slides that run throughout the day, in between shows, in the theatre. You can do whatever you want with these slides, but keep in mind you only have four and you want to make

sure your contact information is easily visible for the audience.

What is the ticket raffle?

Each year, we ask that every member theatre company provide the festival with 4 tickets to a show of your choosing at your theatre. We sell raffle tickets to the audience throughout the day and the winner receives all the tickets in the ticket basket – which, of course, includes your theatre. It's a great way to expand your audience!

THE FESTIVAL DAY!

~ How do I buy tickets?

Tickets are on sale a month in advance and can be bought at brownpapertickets.com. Tickets are sold as day passes for \$20 (which gets you into all shows and workshops) or individual show passes for \$5 (which gets you into 1 show). Tickets can also be bought the day of the festival at the box office.

~ What do I do for lunch?

Families and participants have an hour for lunch from 12:30-1:30. Each host theatre is unique in how they offer lunch, but we aim to always provide on-site lunch opportunities. Typically host theatres are near enough to local restaurants that participants can leave if they choose to grab a bite to eat and come back in time for the 1:30pm show. We always encourage participants to choose on-site lunches, however, and we ask that member theatres encourage their families to do the same.

~ Will I get a fabulous t-shirt so I can always remember this festival event?

YES! We will have t-shirts on sale prior to the festival for participating theatres to order and purchase. We will also order some extra for families and others to purchase the day of the festival. (Remember, if you're participating, it's cheaper to buy t-shirts ahead of time and it guarantees your cast will get them).

~ What else will be going on besides shows and workshops?

We always try to provide families and participants with adequate activities to keep their theatrical brains crammed! Throughout the day, participants can partake in musical theatre karaoke, scavenger hunts, raffle prizes, t-shirt give-aways, and general networking.