

Phoenix Drama Club

Audition and Role Assignment Rationale

Regarding the Selection Process:

Many students feel that because they have been in the JCB Drama program for years and done many shows, they are entitled to the lead roles, regardless of acting ability or appropriateness to the roles. Unfortunately, real life isn't like that. In professional theater, the only thing that counts is talent. Most actors spend their whole career playing minor roles, waiting for that "big break".

Here at JCB, the director's primary consideration is appropriateness of the student to the particular role. Almost equally important is ability. Our audience will be paying cash to come and see this play. We owe it to them to deliver a quality product. Other factors like seniority only come into consideration when there are two people equally suited and qualified for the same role. No student is "entitled to" or is "owed" a particular role simply by being an upperclassman or because he or she has been in previous theatrical performances. Each production is new endeavor and roles must be earned.

Past Practice: Theatrical roles are usually assigned in the following manner and for the following reasons:

- Lead roles are usually, though not always, assigned to upperclassmen. The reason for this is that they are the ones who have been in the program the longest and have had the most time and opportunities to polish their acting skills.
- Freshmen and newcomers to the program are usually, though not always, assigned secondary roles. The reason for this is that these people, in general, have not had experience in theater. They may have ability, but it's not polished yet. They need time and experience to hone their acting skills. In addition, the directors have never worked with most of these individuals and have no idea their reliability, maturity, stability, etc. These people will need to demonstrate what they can do, in essence, to prove themselves.

Exceptions: This is not to say a freshman will never get a lead role, or a four-year veteran always will. What it boils down to is this:

- If you really want a particular role, **you must sell it at your audition!** If the directors can't see the character you are trying to portray, *you won't get the part*. That is why it is so important to prepare a good audition.
- During the course of the rehearsal process, maintain a professional attitude and demeanor. Don't burn any bridges! These same directors will be casting future plays and they have long memories. Show them your professionalism and commitment to the team at all times.
- If you are an upperclassman, don't get lazy and assume you will be handed the role you want. You may be replaced by a talented underclassman.
- If you are a freshman or newcomer, you will need to really dazzle and blow the directors away with your audition if you want a lead role.

Dealing with Disappointment:

After every audition there are some really happy people and a whole bunch of disappointed ones. How you react to this disappointment is critical. First of all, remember that a theatrical production is a team effort. Your reaction will either build up and support the team, or tear it down. There is no place on the team for bitterness and resentment. Disappointment is okay, it's going to happen. You must channel that emotion in a positive direction. Think of ways to improve your acting skills and your audition. The directors will be happy to work with you in this area. However, you must realize that coming to the directors and venting anger and frustration is counter-productive and will not change the outcome of the auditions. Once roles are assigned and posted, they will not be withdrawn except under very rare and extreme circumstances.