

# Première

*A Festival for New and Emerging Theatre Makers*

## **Brief**

Première is an initiative supported by the University of Stellenbosch's drama department to encourage the creation of new theatre work by the students of the department. These productions may be presented in any style/genre, with a duration of between 35 and 50 minutes.

## **Aim**

Première's aims to foster a culture of continuous artistic collaboration within the student body of the drama department by encouraging the creation of new theatre work. The emphasis is on producing high quality productions in an environment that is stimulating, exciting, uplifting and inspiring. The emphasis is on the creation of productions that are of a high standard in an environment that is stimulating, exciting, enriching, and inspiring. Première also provides opportunity for the cultivation of ties between student theatre makers and the industry, and to promote audience awareness and attendance within the wider student body of the university.

## **Parameters**

All productions entered to the festival must

- be a new, previously-unperformed theatrical work;
- have a runtime of between 30 – 50 minutes;
- have a creative head (a director, choreographer, or similar) who will take responsibility for the production;
- have a production manager (who may also be the creative head).

Any productions where rights of any kind are payable, are not permitted. This includes the rights for poetry, music, prose and plays.

There are no restrictions in terms of language or content, however relevant information must be disclosed in advance.

Only current undergraduate and postgraduate students of the Stellenbosch University Drama Department can enter the festival.

Please note that a student is only permitted to be involved in a maximum of two productions in any capacity whatsoever.

## Structure

The festival is structured as follows:

- All productions must register for participation by 15 January 2021 at [premierfees.co.za](http://premierfees.co.za).
- The registered productions then submit a written proposal in digital format before 12 February 2021. The information regarding the format is in this document under the heading "The Digital Proposal."
- The proposals are then judged by a panel of experts. The productions must then present a five-minute pitch on 19 February 2021 wherein they motivate their production's inclusion to the festival.
- At the conclusion of the selection process, the approved productions begin rehearsals to be ready for their technical move-in and performance.
- All productions will receive a timeslot to move into the theatre. The length of this move-in is determined by factors such as the number of approved productions.
- All productions will performance once during the week (Monday – Friday), with three productions performing each evening.
- At the end of each evening, a panel of adjudicators will provide feedback to the productions in the form of a semi-structured discussion forum.
- The adjudicators then select three productions that will receive a second performance at the Gala evening (Saturday): the Première Curtain Call.
- At the Première Curtain Call, the judges will award prizes that recognizes all the productions that performed during the week, including:
  - Best Director
  - Best Script
  - Best Actor in a Lead Role
  - Best Actress in a Lead Role
  - Best Actor in a Supporting Role
  - Best Actress in a Supporting Role
  - Best Ensemble
  - Best Overall Technical Aspects and Design
  - Best Stage Management
  - Best Technical Achievement
- The adjudicators will also announce the winning production (Best Production).
- The individual prize winners each receive a trophy and a cash prize of R2 000.
- The winning production receives R20 000 and an opportunity to perform at the US Woordfees 2021 or 2022.

## Adjudicators

The panel of adjudicators will consist of professional practitioners who will watch every production and will provide extensive feedback and critique at the end of each evening to the productions.

- There will be four adjudicators during the Première festival week:

- One adjudicator is internal (i.e. involved in some capacity with the Drama Department);
- Three adjudicators are external (i.e. professional practitioners).

## Workshops and Mentorship

Each production has access to a mentor with whom you can be in contact to help refine your production. The production team is required to invite the mentor to three rehearsals.

There will also be a series of workshops to provide general advice to the respective creative teams. These workshops include topics such as directing, script writing, and technical refinement. The creative team of each production is required to attend these workshops.

## Dates and Logistics

### Venue

Première takes place at the Adam Small Theatre Complex in Stellenbosch in the following venues:

- Première: The Lab at the Adam Small Theatre Complex.
- Première Curtain Call: The Auditorium at the Adam Small Theatre Complex.

### Datums

Please note the following dates for Première 2021. You must strictly adhere to these dates.

Digital Registration for Proposals Open	2 November 2020
Digital Registration for Proposals Close	15 January 2021
Digital Submission of Proposals	12 February 2021
Rehearsal and Technology Test for Proposals (Online)	17 February 2021
Proposals (Online)*	19 February 2021
Announcement of Results	24 February 2021
Orientation (Online)	26 February 2021
Workshop: Text Development 1	12, 13, 14 March 2021
<i>Classes Begin</i>	<i>15 March 2021</i>
Workshop: Text Development 2	9, 10, 11 April 2021
<i>Classes End</i>	<i>15 May 2021</i>
Photography for Advertising *	7, 8, 9 May 2021
Submission of final Production Information	31 May 2021
Technical Move-ins*	26 July – 7 August 2021
Première Festival Week*	9 – 13 August 2021
Première Curtain Call and Award Ceremony*	14 August 2021

Dates marked with a \* means that the creative team needs to be physically present.

All productions will receive three hours to move into the theatre which should be used to plan lighting, sound levels and to test and mark décor placement.

## **Tickets and Prices**

Tickets for the festival are as follows:

- R80 per evening during the week (9 – 13 August 2021 at 18:00).
- R120 for the Première Curtain Call (14 August 2021 at 18:00).

Participants are required to attend the Première Curtain Call and therefore do not need to purchase a ticket.

Participants can watch the productions that are playing on the same evening as them for free but must purchase tickets for the other evenings should they wish to attend.

## **Procedures**

All entries for the festival must pass a screening process consisting of a digital submission and a live pitch. Thereafter, a panel will permit the production entry into the festival.

### **The Digital Proposal**

All registered productions must digitally submit certain information in advance. A link for this is available on the website ([www.premierefees.co.za](http://www.premierefees.co.za)). The following information must be provided:

- The title of the proposed production
- The names of
  - the writer(s) (if applicable)
  - the director(s)
  - the choreographer/choreographers (if applicable)
  - the stage manager
- The genre of the proposed production (drama, comedy, tragicomedy, etc.) [this describes the overall tone of your production]
- The form of the proposed production (physical theatre, realism, cabaret, etc.) [this describes the form your production will take]
- The language of the proposed production
- The number of performers in proposed production
- A 100-to-200-word motivation for proposed production
  - Motivate why the production should be included in the festival. The vision of the production must be clear: how will an audience benefit from seeing this production? This must be a maximum of 200 words.

### **The Proposal**

- All entrants are required to 'pitch' their production to the at a specified date (see above).

- Entrants are given five minutes, during which they must communicate as many aspects of their proposed production as possible, including:
  - A summary, including its theme, narrative or style;
  - A motivation, including *why* the production should be staged or included in the festival. Ensure that the vision of the production is clear: what would an audience take away from this production.
  - An artistic approach/point of departure, including a preliminary outline of *how* you plan to stage this production.
  - Any other relevant information that will help motivate the production, including, but not limited to logistical matters, such as the names of the creative team involved, and a budget.
- Your proposal may be presented in any way that suits the needs of your production. You are therefore encouraged to be creative.
- The panel may then take another five minutes to ask any questions.
- A crucial point to remember: your proposal should leave the panel with as few unanswered questions as possible. The more information you can present in a clear, succinct and impactful manner, the better.

## **The Selection of Productions**

Productions are screened on a combination of a professional selection panel and peer review.

- The selection panel jointly carries a voting weight of 50%
- The peer group jointly carries a voting weight of 50%

## **The Selection Panel**

- The selection panel considers the following criteria when considering a production:
  - Concept
  - Feasibility
  - Artistic merit
  - Sustainability
  - Innovation

## **The Group of Peers**

Premiere is everyone's festival. For that reason, we invite every registered drama student to attend the submissions and decide on the final programming together.

- Every drama student attending the submissions on February 19, 2021 can serve as peer reviewer.
- An attendance list is kept ensuring that only students who attend the submissions can vote.
- On the day of the pitches, the peer reviewer can vote for 5 productions that they would like to see in the festival.
- Student numbers are used to ensure that the attendance list and the online votes match.

- This are for control purposes only and the specific productions for which the peer reviewer votes remain anonymous.

## Rehearsal Procedures

- Once a production has been approved, rehearsals may begin.
- Be considerate by using the departmental resources, including rehearsal space, sparingly. Be mindful of other productions and assessments that must also rehearse.
- Remember that you are given ample rehearsal time to prevent a bottleneck later in the year.
- Be considerate in terms of rehearsal time with regard to booking rehearsal space: **do not book more than 3 hours at a time. Limit your rehearsals to a maximum of 3 times a week.** During the holidays, this restriction falls away, with the understanding that other productions (including departmental productions) will also want to rehearse at this time.
- **Departmental work (rehearsals for class work, etc.) is given preference in terms of rehearsal room bookings.**
- If there are scheduling clashes with departmental productions, departmental productions are given preference.
- **No member of your company is permitted to miss classwork or rehearsals/performances or departmental productions or assessments by participating in the festival.** You oversee your own schedule, so consider the time you will need and plan accordingly.
- **No one may use Première as an excuse for missing classes, or not doing class work.**
- If any of these rules are violated, the organizers are free to withdraw the production from Première.

## Technical Move-in

The technical move-in is there so that you may integrate any technical requirements into the production.

- You will receive basic sound and lighting rig.
- While there will be a technical team on standby, you must be able to run the technical requirements of the production yourself (including cuing). Your creative head (director/choreographer/etc.) can oversee this.
- You have a limited time in the theatre, so you are encouraged the keep the requirements simple.
- You must communicate any specific requirements in advance (see the deadline above) to ensure availability and to simplify the move-in. This includes requests for microphones, video projectors, and so forth. This must be communicated in written form.

## General Questions

### **Should my production be in either English or Afrikaans?**

Your production can be in any language whatsoever.

### **Must my production contain dialogue at all?**

No. There are obviously productions with alternative requirements, such as those with a greater emphasis on physical theatre. You may use dialogue or language as you see fit.

### **Is there a requirement regarding the style of my production? For example, may I do a musical?**

While there are no requirements in terms of style, you are encouraged to consider the technical limitations of the venue – especially considering the limited move-in time. A musical, for example, requires extensive technical time and expertise that falls outside the possibilities of the festival.

### **May I use live musical instruments?**

You will have access to a digital piano/keyboard. If you need to use other instruments, you must provide your own. If these instruments must be amplified, you must communicate this in advance so that appropriate pick-up microphones can be arranged, *if they are available*.

### **Will I receive technical support for my production?**

You will not receive any official technical support. You are responsible for your own technical requirements; however, you can use your move-in time to select/program lights and sound cues.

### **What technical equipment will be available to use, besides basic lighting and sound?**

Please use your proposal to communicate any specific requirements, or, alternatively, by the deadline for technical requests. While every effort will be made to provide the required technical equipment, factors such as availability and the feasibility of the request will be the deciding factors. Communicate your requirements as soon as possible to prevent disappointment. Audio equipment such as microphones and visual aids, such as a video projector or special lighting effects may also be provided, depending on availability.

### **Will the department provide me a budget?**

The department will not be giving you a budget. You are therefore encouraged to be creative with the resources that are at your disposal.

## Queries

All queries regarding the festival should be sent to Dr André Gerber at [akg@sun.ac.za](mailto:akg@sun.ac.za) or to Miss Elana Snyman at [elanas@sun.ac.za](mailto:elanas@sun.ac.za).