# A picture containing text  Description automatically generatedACT-CINCINNATI WRITTEN CRITIQUE TEMPLATE

NAME:

GROUP:

PRODUCTION:

DATE:

**FRONT OF HOUSE**

**HOUSE:** Addresses front-of-house elements, not specifically performance-related. Was the box office or ticket counter easy to locate? Were tickets handled appropriately? Were the public areas (lobby, restrooms, house, etc) clean and inviting? Were the house staff members friendly, efficient, and knowledgeable? If there were preshow and intermission refreshments, were they of good quality and presented well? Was traffic flow smooth, with minimal crowding? Did the house staff adequately handle any issues, either your own or others that you may have observed? If attempted, how well were the group’s efforts to tie house into the theme of the show executed (décor enhancements, costumes, intermission snacks, etc)? Was seating arranged for clear visibility for all audience members? Was the seating comfortable and temperature of the house conducive to watching the production? Keep in mind that some of these elements are not under control of the producing group if they rent their facility.

·Enter judge’s comments here

**LOBBY DISPLAY**: Addresses the show-specific lobby display only, not other elements of the front-of-house as specified above. If lobby display was used, was it located in a highly visible area where the audience could view it comfortably? Did it tie into the concept of the production, or was it used only to display pictures of the actors? Was it creatively and artistically pleasing to the eye? Did it enhance the production?

·Enter judge’s comments here

**PRE-SHOW:** Addresses anything done artistically to enhance audience experience after entering the actual performance space. This combines décor, lighting, sound (music or other effects), possible character interaction (this might bleed into lobby space, but should not be considered under House), and preshow announcements to create a mood prior to the curtain. In all cases, did the choices support the theme of the production? Was preshow audio selection appropriate, and played at a proper volume? Was anything done to enhance the décor of the performance space? Did the lighting preset help to set the mood for the show? If characters (and/or ushers) interacted with the audience, was it done in a manner that helped set the mood for the show? Did preshow announcements tie in with the theme of the show, at an appropriate volume and length, and contain the needed information?

·Enter judge’s comments here

**PROGRAM:** Addresses content and layout of program. Was the program well-organized so that the necessary information is easy to find? Was it easy to read? Was it without typographical or grammatical errors? Did the program itself tie in with the theme of the production (examples of this might include choices of font, clip art, special sections discussing era-or locale-specific items of interest)? Are graphics clean, with good saturation and resolution (not pixelated)? Was everything easy to find, and did the program have a coherent flow?

·Enter judge’s comments here

**ORIGINAL ART:** Addresses only credited original artwork associated with the program and/or promotional posters. This might include either Poster Art, Program Art, or both, and may be called out differently depending on the group. If credited, did the artwork (including font selection, logo design, and graphic art content) convey the feelings of the concept of the production? Was it creative and artistically pleasing to the eye?

·Enter judge’s comments here

**TECHNICAL EVALUATION**

*Note: For all technical elements, consider how much was attempted (level of complexity), and how well it was executed (level of quality), within the context of the show requirements and director’s vision as evidenced by the overall performance.*

**SET DESIGN:** Sometimes referred to as scenic design, this addresses only the design (not execution) of all elements of the stage setting –walls, wagons, draping, use of video projection (was it appropriate to use it as an element, not the actual execution)... any element which defines the playing area for the action. Did the set establish locale, period and mood, and support the director’s vision of the show? Did it provide variety in levels and playing areas to give the director blocking options? Did overall design and furniture placement provide good sightlines for the audience? Could the actors move easily about the set as required by the script? Were entrances designed into the set to allow for smooth blocking flow? Were elements such as wall switches and outlets included, if appropriate? Were backing areas (outside the main playing area) included in the design? Did the set design facilitate rapid scene changes as required by the script?

·Enter judge’s comments here

**SET CONSTRUCTION:** Addresses the actual execution of the design –we are evaluating how well it is built here. Different levels (raised platforms), staircases, moving elements all are harder to build than a simple one-level set. How demanding was the design, and how well was it executed? Did the set construction demonstrate effective craftsmanship; are screw heads hidden, seams treated to minimize visibility, walls plumb and solidly reinforced, no creaking of platforms? Were there moving elements (wagons, moving panels, etc)? Were there doors and/or windows? If so, if they were operated by actors, did they work as intended? Was there creativity in construction materials used? Is trim (baseboards, door/window casing, chair rail, crown molding) neatly installed? Was everything solid so that actors were comfortable moving around on the set?

·Enter judge’s comments here

**SET DECOR:** Addresses the finish of the set, including paint (stage floor, walls, wagons), wall décor, set dressing, furniture selection (placement is purview of set design), and other similar elements. Did the wall coverings, paint and other furnishings enhance the design of the set? Were the set pieces period appropriate and consistent within the context of the show? If the set was intended to look ‘realistic’, does the space look appropriately lived-in? Did the walls and floor exhibit appropriate texture (wallpaper, layered paint colors, carpet paint treatment, etc)? Were period pieces (if used) in a condition appropriate for the era of the show? (eg, a Victorian furniture piece set in a Victorian era show should look new, the same piece in a modern show may show some age, depending on the show).

·Enter judge’s comments here

**LIGHTING DESIGN:** Addresses only the lighting design-includes what was intended, using washes, pools, spots, specials (including use of gobos) and coloring to support the director’s vision; execution is correctly timed attacks and fades, coordinated with the stage action and sound. Complexity of design correlates to complexity of execution –the more cues, and the more closely coupled they are with the onstage action, the harder the job of the light operator. Did the lighting enhance the mood, movement and plot development? Was there creativity within facility (look at the group tech capabilities listing) & budget constraints? How complex was the design (number of cues, coordination with action and sound, use of color to enhance mood)? How well did the execution synchronize with sound, action, and changes in mood?

·Enter judge’s comments here

**LIGHTING EXECUTION:** Addresses only the lighting execution-complexity of design correlates to complexity of execution –the more cues, and the more closely coupled they are with the onstage action, the harder the job of the light operator. How well did the execution synchronize with sound, action, and changes in mood? How many cues were there? How critical was the timing for the different cues?

·Enter judge’s comments here

**SOUND DESIGN:** Addresses only the sound design -includes use of inputs (body/fixed microphones, sound recordings, live musicians), and use of sources (speakers and live, unaugmented sound) needed to achieve balanced audio for a production. The more inputs and sources, and the more cues (miked actors going on/off stage, sound effects, etc), the more complex the design. Did the show effectively use microphones, balance of stage voices with sound effects and/or music to support the director’s vision? Was the interaction of the sound effects with live action believable, with good levels for the audience to hear the effect in context with the action? Was there creativity in the choice of the preshow & intermission music, if any? Did the choices for sound effects and/or music blend with overall action? Were effects properly sourced (eg phone rings coming from phones, toilet flushes coming from bathrooms, etc)? Were there any practical sound effects? Were there any sound effects or background music during the show? Were they synchronized with other effects or action? Was music used to cover scene changes? How many cues were required (few/moderate/large number)? (Note –if the sound operator cannot mike an actor high enough to be heard over the orchestra without feedback, it is usually a design problem. If the actor can be well heard, but feedback occurs anyhow, it is usually an execution problem.)

·Enter judge’s comments here

**SOUND EXECUTION:** Sound execution includes only the execution of the above design during the performance, bearing in mind the complexity of the design. Execution is the real-time mixing of the inputs, selection of sources, and execution of cues to achieve the design goals. The more inputs and sources, and the more cues (miked actors going on/off stage, sound effects, etc), the more complex the execution demands. Did the show effectively use microphones, balance of stage voices with sound effects and/or music to support the director’s vision? Was the interaction of the sound effects with live action believable, with good levels for the audience to hear the effect in context with the action? Was sound synchronized with other effects or action? How many cues were required (few/moderate/large number)? Were cues executed in a timely manner? Did the sound operator achieve a good balance between vocals and orchestra without feedback? (Note –if the sound operator cannot mike an actor high enough to be heard over the orchestra without feedback, it is usually a design problem. If the actor can be well heard, but feedback occurs anyhow, it is usually an execution problem.)

·Enter judge’s comments here

**SPECIAL EFFECTS:** Addresses any items not normally covered under other areas, including concepts, creativity, and level of difficulty. Includes video projection, pyrotechnics, magic tricks, trained animals, doorbells, telephones, appliances, puppets, etc. Did special effects enhance the production by being an important part of the action? Was the design, timing and execution consistent with the rest of the show? Were all special effects designed and executed in a safe manner?

·Enter judge’s comments here

**COSTUME DESIGN:** Addresses coats, clothing, shoes, accessories, jewelry (if any), etc –anything that you might ‘wear’. Other items likely fall into ‘properties’ (such as umbrellas, compacts, cigarette cases). If costumes are distressed, somebody may have put in effort to age those pieces. Larger shows are more difficult than smaller shows; shows which span multiple days require multiple costumes for each character, which adds to the complexity. Did the costumes support the period, characters and an overall design concept? Did the individual costumes tell us something about the character wearing it? Was the costume color palette consistent, and did it complement the scenic design elements? Were there period-specific accessories, shoes, etc? Was clothing supposed to be new and in good repair, or distressed, and were appropriate choices made? Did costumes fit well? Were dress hemlines at appropriate length for the period? Were costumes created specifically for a show to fit a particular actor or a particular need? (If so, producing groups are encouraged to give credit to costume construction/seamstresses, separate from design.)

·Enter judge’s comments here

**MAKE-UP AND HAIR DESIGN:** Addresses both normal and special make-up effects. Was the make-up appropriate to the show concept, and consistent across the cast? Was it appropriately creative or unobtrusive as demanded by the play? If a period show, were correct colors and styling used in makeup application? Were hair style and/or wigs appropriate to the period of the show, of good quality, and well-fitted?

·Enter judge’s comments here

**PROPERTIES:** Addresses all items handled by actors during the show. Were the properties appropriate and effective? Did all props look like they were in their proper condition, given the supposed age of the item? Were actors easily able to use their props? Did the props fit the time period and the storyline requirements? Were there any particularly unusual items, which may have required time and work to create? Was there food involved in the show, and was it consumed?

·Enter judge’s comments here

**PRODUCER:** Addresses how well the producer brings together the production’s technical elements, ensuring all show elements mesh together and are executed in a timely manner during the rehearsal process so that the show flows seamlessly from beginning to end. Keep in mind that period shows are harder to execute from costume/props/décor perspective than contemporary shows, and that shows that are light/sound heavy require not only more time to rig, but also more time to rehearse to achieve smooth execution –it is the producer’s job to balance those requirements with the time in the space and ensure available rehearsal time for tech aspects as well as performances. How complicated were the different technical elements of the show (lighting, sound, costumes, set, props, etc.)? Were technical elements all executed at a high level of quality? Were there any technical elements which took you out of the moment while watching the show? How effective was the unified quality of the technical aspects of the production as a whole, taking into consideration degree of difficulty? Was there a flow from house to final curtain?

·Enter judge’s comments here

**FOR A PLAY**

*NOTE: Judges should address each performer individually. For larger cast shows, the major characters should be addressed individually, but it is acceptable to comment on minor roles as a group.*

**ACTING IN A PLAY:** Addresses overall credibility of the characters portrayed by actors. Were dialects effective and consistent, while still allowing the audience to understand the dialogue? Was the dialogue itself understandable, with clear diction and good volume? Were posture and movement consistent with other choices made in the characterization? Did the actor demonstrate concentration at all times, remaining engaged as appropriate to the characterization? Did the actor demonstrate ease with dialogue, with appropriate cue pick-up and natural delivery? Did the actor demonstrate a facility with blocking and stage business? Did the actor demonstrate an appropriate range of emotions, including transitions between emotional states? Did the overall interpretation of role fit with the rest of the ensemble?

·Enter judge’s comments here

**FOR A MUSICAL**

*NOTE: Judges should address each performer individually. For larger cast shows, the major characters should be addressed individually, but it is acceptable to comment on minor roles as a group.*

**MUSICAL THEATRE PERFORMANCE:** Addresses overall credibility of the character portrayed by the actor as well as the mastering of the vocal music performance and movement (choreography) required by the character. If dialects were used, were they effective and consistent, while still allowing the audience to understand the diction? Was the dialogue itself understandable, with clear diction and good volume? Was diction clear & crisp so lyrics could be understood during musical numbers? Were posture and movement consistent with other choices made in the characterization? Did the actor demonstrate concentration at all times, remaining engaged as appropriate to the characterization? Did the actor demonstrate ease with dialogue, with appropriate cue pick-up and natural delivery? Did the actor demonstrate a facility with blocking & stage business? Did the actor demonstrate an appropriate range of emotions, including transitions between emotional states? Did the overall interpretation of the role fit with the rest of the ensemble? Were dances well executed? Did vocal interpretation match the actions? Did the performer have proper intonation and pitch?

·Enter judge’s comments here

**CHOREOGRAPHY:** Addresses all design of dancing or movement synchronized with vocals. Were the dances matched to the theme and period of the show? Were the dances matched to the level of ability of the performers? Was there an organic flow into and out of dance numbers? Was the use of physical space pleasing to the eye and appropriate to the scene? Not all songs require traditional choreography styles, did the styles of the "blocked movement" songs fit the show's progression and allow for character development? Were levels and visual pictures created that added to the strength of the dances (ex. Crossing lines, featured dancing, partner work as needed, appropriate use of props, sets and open space on the stage)? Are the transitions specific to the needs and flow of the dance?

·Enter judge’s comments here

**CHOREOGRAPHY EXECUTION:** Addresses the execution of the Choreography. How in sync were the dancers with the choreographer's vision? Do they seem well rehearsed and confident? Are most dance members executing the moves comparable to those around them? Do the dancers drive the energy of the dance, for example, are they energetic and peppy when needed? Do they smile if that is what the scene feelings are supposed to convey? Are they graceful and somber during more neutral or dramatic dance? Do they display character reactions throughout the dance, or are they simply going through the choreography as instructed? Do they utilize their spacing or are they constantly running into other members on the stage during dance numbers or transitions? Are the overall stage pictures executed cleanly and consistently?

·Enter judge’s comments here

**MUSICAL DIRECTION:** Addresses the interpretation of the musical score. Was the score mastered and executed well by the orchestra? Did it seem that the musicians were well rehearsed? Did the instrumental interpretation match the mood of the show? Overall, did the instruments blend well and allow for a good balance with the singers? Was timing and tempo matched by the orchestra to the musical director’s conduction?

·Enter judge’s comments here

**ORCHESTRAL PERFORMANCE:** Addresses actual performance of the orchestra. Were the musician's instruments clear and easy to hear? Was the score executed with ease and confidence? Was the music director followed so that cues were mastered throughout the production? Was there a smooth transition in and out of musical numbers? Was timing and tempo maintained throughout the performance?

·Enter judge’s comments here

**VOCAL DIRECTION:** Addresses how well the score was mastered and executed well by the cast. Did it seem that the cast was well rehearsed vocally? Is it evident that time was spent teaching quality diction so the lyrics could be understood? Is it evident that time was spent teaching vocal parts as required by the score? Did the vocal actions match the mood and characterizations of the show? Overall, was there a good balance of intonation, pitch and vocal dynamics?

·Enter judge’s comments here

**VOCAL EXECUTION (VOCAL QUALITY):** Addresses how well the ensemble worked as a unit. Did they have a clear understanding of when certain vocal styles were needed? Was there strength, unison, audible harmonies, and vivacity in their work? As a whole, did the singers on stage convey the show or songs' message with their vocal performance? Were they clear and crisp when singing so lyrics could be heard? Was proper projection used throughout? Was there a strong balance/blend among the singers? Were they confident and well-rehearsed with vocals?

·Enter judge’s comments here

**FOR ALL PRODUCTIONS**

**STAGE COMBAT:** Addresses any instance of physical violence and other physical interactions during the show. This could include just about any potentially hazardous onstage activity, from making love to falling down stairs. If fighting or violence was used, did it seem spontaneous and believable but safely choreographed? If weapons were used, did the audience have a sense of security with the actors’ handling of the props? Did the actors have appropriate movement, verbal inclusions, and facial expressions during combat?

·Enter judge’s comments here

**STAGE MANAGEMENT/SCENE CHANGE:** Addresses overall smoothness of the show’s execution. Did the show start on time? Was intermission timely? How was the speed & smoothness of scene changes? Were there timely entrances of people, props, lighting and other cues? If necessary, were there mid-show corrections for production problems?

·Enter judge’s comments here

**ENSEMBLE:** Addresses how well the cast works as a unit. Did the cast as a whole convey strong and consistent characterizations that gave the production a sense of unity? Was there a sense of teamwork and strong collaboration among the entire cast?

·Enter judge’s comments here

**DIRECTION:** Addresses insight into the script evidenced by attention to detail in the other categories. Did the show demonstrate a solid and consistent vision and interpretation of the script, as reflected in the artistic and technical choices made for the show? Did the show indicate director’s insight into historical or stylistic context of a play, based on consistency in blocking, pacing, characterization, and other stylistic choices? Was the show appropriately paced, enhancing the mood of the underlying script and reinforcing the plot, characters, and relationships? Was blocking motivated, and did it maximize use of stage space and provide unimpeded view of actions for audience? Was the audience focus directed to the most important action on stage at a given moment, with no distractions from elsewhere on the stage? Were effective characters fully developed, and did the audience understand motivations and care about the characters? Were the relationships between the characters believable? Was there a consistent level of performance across the ensemble? Did all these elements support the theme and emotional content of the play?

· Enter judge’s comments here