



Frequently Asked Questions About Pied Piper Theatre

1. Why is it necessary to pay \$315 in participation fees if my child is cast in a production? How can I pay only \$267.50?

There are many costs that go into each production such as buying the rights to the play from the publishing company, scripts and music rentals, professional fees, school or theater rental, utilities, printing t-shirts, copying costs, publicity, etc. On average each PPT production costs about \$40,000 to put on stage. Ticket sales cover only a part of the costs. Rights can run as high as \$10,000 for some shows and one of our venues charges about \$14,000 for one weekend. Your child is also receiving training from experienced theatrical staff in acting, singing, and choreography. If you are a member of the ARTfactory, the participation fee is discounted to \$267.50.

2. Is there a non-refundable \$10 audition fee?

There is no fee to audition at this time.

3. Who is involved in the casting of a production?

The Director, Music Director, Choreographer, and Theatre Arts Director/or ARTfactory representative, (and sometimes the accompanist and assistant director) are the only staff members allowed in the audition room. The Director, Music Director, and Choreographer make all casting decisions jointly behind closed doors. Producers and other staff members are NOT involved in the final selection of the cast.

4. What are the responsibilities of the Director and Producer in a production?

The Director is responsible for the casting, blocking, dialogue, and making the final decisions concerning choreography, music, sets, costumes, makeup and technical options. The Producer is responsible for organizing the production so that it runs smoothly; overseeing rehearsals and coordinating all communications from the parents to the director. The Producer is in charge of each committee, making sure that each is working effectively.

5. Why is a Parent/Performer Contract necessary in a PPT production?

Each cast member and parent is part of the team that helps the production run smoothly. The contract helps to ensure that everyone is aware of their responsibilities, the rules for the productions and the commitment necessary to create a successful production.

6. My child had a lead part in a previous production so why does he/she have a non-speaking role in this one?

Each production is different and each Director will cast each person he/she feels best fits the requirements for each role. The Director makes the final decision. EVERY role in each production is important and ALL roles support one another.

7. Why is it necessary for the parents to volunteer for two committees during a production?

Pied Piper Theatre productions are large, usually with a cast of 40 – 45 children. PPT relies on volunteer help from everyone involved in order to handle all the requirements for such large productions. Each parent working on a pre-production and a production committee ensures the best play possible. There are many committees to choose from based on interest, talent and time involved.

8. I have a full time job, how can I volunteer for two committees?

There are many committees that take little time but are important to the production such as publicity, rehearsal monitor, green room monitor and house. Producers have information on these and other committees available.

9. Why is it necessary for the families to contribute food and/or drinks for the Family Gathering, and intermission sales?

Each production has a budget and the staff works diligently to maintain as low a cost as possible for the cast. Providing food and/or drink contributions helps keep the costs down. In addition, most of the intermission proceeds are used toward the cast party.

11. Why is each family responsible for helping promote the production and distributing posters?

Even if the production is professional and well done, if the public doesn't come to see it, the play is not a success. The cast performs their best to a full house and the large audience response is cherished by the cast, staff and crew. Our families cover a wide geographical area throughout the Northern Virginia region and are PPT's best source of publicity for each production.

12. Is it really that important for my child to attend every assigned rehearsal, even those called by the director which were not on the original rehearsal schedule?

Yes, it is imperative that each cast member attend each assigned rehearsal and be punctual so that the smooth flow of the dialogue, blocking, and choreography can be developed quickly. The cast member is excused from a rehearsal only if the absence was noted in the schedule conflict sheet at the time of auditioning, if there is a family emergency, or the cast member is in the hospital, contagious or is having to quarantine because of a potential positive Covid test. The Producer needs to be informed in advance of all absences. It is absolutely essential that all cast members be present for all rehearsals during Tech Week (the week before the show opens.) Attendance will be monitored and unexcused absences will result in a meeting with ARTfactory staff.

13. Why does each cast member need jazz shoes? Where do we get them?

Jazz shoes are needed to do all stage work and for all choreography. The stage floors have to be kept mark free and jazz shoes are needed for foot protection. They can be purchased at dancewear stores or online. For a small fee, jazz shoes can also be rented out for the production from PPT.

14. Is each rehearsal supervised by more than one adult?

Yes, in addition to the Directors and Producer, many rehearsal monitors (a pre-production committee) are supervising and monitoring the rehearsals. The cast is never left alone without adult supervision.

15. Why is the dismissal procedure from each rehearsal so strict?

Each cast member is dismissed when the parent or designated driver comes to the rehearsal door. Cast members are not allowed outside without adult supervision to ensure their safety.

16. Where are the emergency forms kept for each cast member? Who is responsible for any emergencies that may come up?

The producer is responsible for all of the emergency forms which will be accessible during all rehearsals, tech week, and the performances. The Producer will take charge of any emergency and will have a phone available at all times.

17. Are food and drinks allowed in the rehearsal hall? Are food and drinks allowed at the performance venue for Tech week, dress rehearsals or the performance?

NO food and drinks (including gum) is allowed at rehearsal or performance venues. Food and drinks may be consumed outside before the rehearsals or performances begin. Water in a closeable plastic bottle is allowed inside. This applies to all cast, crew, staff members, parents and family members. Actors are not permitted to eat or drink while in costume.

18. Why can't seats be saved in the auditorium before the doors are opened to the public?

All of our activities are advertised and open to the public. Although we appreciate the tremendous volunteer support we receive from our cast parents, we are required to maintain a policy of fairness for all of our patrons and audience members. (The only exceptions are seats set aside for the Director's use if requested and priority seating for the handicapped. A few minutes before the doors open, Scout troops are usually seated together on side aisles or in the balcony in order to keep children from being separated from their chaperones.) Any coats, reserved signs, etc. will be removed before the doors are opened.

19. Can I videotape or take photographs during the dress rehearsals?

Music Theatre International has asked ARTfactory to include this in all programs regarding filming: This license does not grant you the right to make, use, and/or distribute a mechanical recording (rehearsal, performance or otherwise) of the play or any portion of it by any means whatsoever including, but not limited to audio cassette, videotape, film, cd, DVD, phone or digital camera. We have a photographer who has volunteered to take photos during one of our dress rehearsals. These photos will be shared with you and the cast free of charge.

20. What is the PPT policy regarding cast dinners after the shows?

Most Directors prefer that cast members go home and rest after the Saturday night performances. Staying out late at large group cast dinners usually shows up in low energy performances on Sunday matinees. If groups decide to eat out, please call well ahead of time and reserve tables. PPT has had numerous complaints from restaurants regarding cast noise and rowdiness, as well as non-payment for meals, tax, and tips. This reflects very poorly on our group in the community. The ARTfactory does not sanction group dinner outings and is not responsible for any cast members who are dropped off at such events. In addition, ARTfactory is not responsible for unpaid bills and tips.

21. Are all the directors and staff members in a production paid? Do they sign contracts with the Center for the Arts?

Yes, the production staff members and Directors are paid a stipend and sign contracts with the ARTfactory. Although the staff receives a nominal paycheck, due to the extensive amount of time and work involved in each production, they donate many hours on a volunteer basis.

22. Why do we have to pay a production fee of \$50?

There will be no production fee for **Cinderella**.

23. What are the responsibilities of the ARTfactory staff?

All policy decisions for the ARTfactory are made by the Board of Directors and the Executive Director. The Director of Theatre Arts serves under the Executive Director and is responsible for overseeing the Pied Piper Theatre, PPT summer camps, The Actor's Studio, and Rooftop Productions. The Director of Theatre Arts is directly involved in hiring directors

and staff, acquiring royalties and rights, securing rehearsal and performance spaces, processing contracts, developing the budget, and coordinating publicity. In addition, the Director of Theatre Arts works with the Producers in overseeing the production.

24. Does the ARTfactory/Pied Piper Theatre have to pay the royalties for each production, even if it is a non-profit organization?

Each play that PPT decides to produce comes from a dramatic arts company that owns the rights to the script and music. The rights for the use of music and scripts, as well as the royalties have to be paid in order to put on that show. Generally, the bigger the production, the higher the price. The total amount paid to the publishing company can run from \$5,000-\$10,000. Specific rules also have to be followed concerning publicity, programs, recording and seating in the auditorium which are set by each production contract with the publisher holding the rights to the show.

25. Will we receive a t-shirt for the production?

Part of your participation fee includes a free t-shirt for the student. Parents may purchase t-shirts for an additional price. Depending on the vendor, the licensing company and the size of the cast prices and styles may vary. When we are able, we try to include the cast names on the back of the shirt. Some licensing companies require us to use their logo and their shirts. When we have that restriction, we will not be able to put the names on the back of the shirt.

26. Do the schools and other performance venues where the production is held donate their auditoriums, stage, back rooms, light and sound equipment and lobby to the ARTfactory?

No, each school or theater has to be rented out for all usage such as the rehearsal at the school, tech week, dress rehearsals, and each performance. School and theater rentals include the building, mandatory custodial and supervisory personnel and lighting and sound equipment, and in some cases, police, box office, and ushering personnel. Past costs have run as high as \$14,000.

27. How are each season's productions chosen?

The play reading committee is made up of Directors, Music Directors, and Choreographers who meet to evaluate perusal scripts and scores. Taking into consideration requests from various PPT evaluations and surveys, the committee must consider play recognition, the target audience including responsiveness and attendance at past productions, financial constraints, and other productions currently being performed in the immediate area. Final committee recommendations are then sent to the Theatre Arts Director and Executive Director for approval.

28. Are there group rates for each production and are backstage tours available?

Yes, a special rate is available to organized groups (ex: scouts, 4-H, birthday parties, etc.) of 8 or more in a party. Backstage tours are given before each show begins to view the activities of the cast and crew members and to learn about what goes on behind the scenes of each production.

29. What is done to get the public to come to each production?

Publicity in the form of word of mouth, posters, flyers, and press releases/advertisements in the newspapers and other media is vital for a successful production. Distribution of posters throughout the area is absolutely essential and is the responsibility of the publicity committee and every cast member family. Press releases are written, sometimes with cast photographs included, and sent to all the newspapers and schools several times during a production run. Reporters are also contacted to possibly do a feature story with pictures on each production. All press and contact with the press is done through the ARTfactory staff only. Parents are not to contact the papers directly, as this creates confusion and has in the past resulted in reporters not running a story. The ARTfactory has no control over when press releases are

published and which pictures the papers decide to print. Social media is also a key resource and families are encouraged to share items posted on the Artfactory and Pied Piper social media.

30. Why can't I direct my show pertinent questions to the director?

The producer serves as our communication link to the director. This helps the director use the time allotted for rehearsal more efficiently. Producers will have all necessary information for rehearsals, production needs and performances. If there is something they do not know, they will find out and get back to you.

31. Are families invited to the cast party after the show? Yes, we encourage families to attend and celebrate with us.

32. Where can I get more information about the ARTfactory, Pied Piper Theatre, and Rooftop Productions?

More information about the ARTfactory, The Actor's Studio, Rooftop Productions or PPT can be obtained from the Producer or by contacting the ARTfactory at (703) 330-2787 or our website at virginiaartfactory.org.