MAIDENHEAD DRAMA FESTIVAL

The Louis Baylis CHARITABLE TRUST

RULES FOR ENTRY

Tuesday 20th – Friday 23rd April 2027

Norden Farm Centre for the Arts, Maidenhead, SL6 4PF

Adjudicator: Annie Rees, GoDA

Closing date for entries: 31st January 2027

CLASSES AND AWARDS

CLASS 1 OPEN
First: T
Second:
Third:

CLASS 2 YOUTH GROUPS (18 and under at the start of Festival)

CLASS 3 THE BEST UNPUBLISHED PLAY

CLASS 4 THE BEST PERFORMANCE OF A SHORT PLAY
(Range 20-30 minutes)

CLASS 5 BEST COMEDY

CLASS 6
ALL-ENGLAND THEATRE FESTIVAL (Minimum qualification - 70 marks)

SPECIAL AWARD FOR STAGE PRESENTATION
(In making this award, the Adjudicator will look for imaginative and appropriate decor and lighting. It by no means follows that this will be the most elaborate. Costume, make-up, properties, etc., will also be taken into consideration.)

BACKSTAGE AWARD
Awarded by the Committee for the non-visible part of the group which shows best organization, technical ability, preparedness and consideration of others and helps to put on a seamless production.

ADJUDICATOR'S AWARD

Any of the awards may be withheld if, in the opinion of the Adjudicator, the required standard has not been attained.

Marks will be awarded by the Adjudicator as follows:

ACTING: maximum 40 marks
Includes characterisation, speech, audibility, emphasis and variation in tone and gesture.

DIRECTION: maximum 35 marks
Includes interpretation of the meaning and spirit of the play, casting, movement, grouping and general variation in tempo. Where, in the opinion of the Adjudicator, the handling of the cast creates difficulty, s/he will take this into account.

STAGE PRESENTATION: maximum 15 marks
This includes the appearance of the stage, properties, lighting, make-up, costumes etc.

DRAMATIC ACHIEVEMENT: maximum 10 marks
This covers the Adjudicator's general impression of each performance, and marks will be awarded for enterprise in the choice of play or production and general effectiveness in high dramatic achievement.

RULES OF THE MAIDENHEAD DRAMA FESTIVAL

1. Who can enter:
   a. As an independent Preliminary Round Festival Maidenhead is not obliged to follow the AETF rules on eligibility, but it is our general intention to do so.
   b. Rules can be viewed in full on their website https://www.allenglandtheatrefestival.org/rules-and-downloads
   c. We reserve the right to waive any of these rules if we believe it to be in the interests of our Festival.
   d. Such an entrant would not, obviously, be able to opt to go forward.

2. Societies are allowed to enter more than one team if they wish, but no person shall perform on more than one occasion. An actor in any play may be the producer of another.

3. Performers for entries for Class 2 (Youth Group) must be 18 or under at the commencement of the Festival; i.e. the age limit does not apply to producers, stage hands, etc.

4. The entry will be a One-Act Play or an extract from a longer play. The accepted definition of a one-act entry is a two-hander that must feature two characters who both make a substantial contribution to the dramatic action and who interact meaningfully throughout the piece. For clarity, a play will not qualify if it is essentially a monologue with a second performer used mainly as a listener, observer, narrator or occasional respondent. The roles do not need to be equal in size, but both performers must have a substantial dramatic presence and sustained interaction with one another.

5. The Festival Committee has discretion to accept or refuse plays, and priority will be given to one act plays. Playing time must be at least 20 minutes, and no longer than 55 minutes.

6. Any competitor wishing to substitute another play for that originally entered will be liable for an additional fee to cover the Adjudicator's extra work, and administrative costs.

7. No entry can be considered unless it is accompanied by an original copy of the play marked with any cuts or alterations (a photocopy will only be accepted if the play is solely published on the internet, out of print, or unpublished). Copies of plays will be available for collection at the end of the Festival.

8. It is the duty of all entrants to obtain and produce to the Festival Organiser prior to the festival a written licence for permission to perform and for permission to make cuts or alterations.

9. Plays obtained over the internet are considered published and written permission to perform must be obtained, whether a fee is paid or not. Likewise, written permission to perform must be provided by the author of an unpublished play

10. The order of playing (time and date of performance) shall be decided by the Festival Committee with a view to arranging the best possible programme in the interests of the audience.

11. No entry may take more than ten minutes to set and five minutes to strike. This includes special effects. These times are additional to the playing time allowed. Penalties on the same scale as detailed in Rule 25 below may be incurred if these times are exceeded.

12. A set of curtains, a cyclorama and full stage lighting will be provided. A reasonable amount of scenery may be brought. All scenery and furnishings must be fireproofed. Portable lighting may be brought by the teams, but only by prior arrangement with the Festival Stage Director. Sound equipment is available but teams may bring their own equipment should they prefer to do so.

13. Competing teams may meet the Festival Stage Director for a maximum of 50 minutes by appointment on the viewing day, to familiarise themselves with the facilities, test equipment and set lights.

14. All scenery must be delivered to the scenery dock on the day of the performance.

15. Naked lights will not be permitted on stage. Smoking is not permitted on stage. Any potential use of a gun, or other weapons, must be cleared with the festival/theatre in advance.

16. Competing groups will be provided with one free ticket for each member of the cast and crew for the night of the performance and two free tickets for the final performance session and Awards.

17. The Adjudicator will address the audience at the close of each session. On the final day, the winner in each of the Classes will be announced, and the Adjudicator's decision shall be final.

18. Trophies will be held by the winners until their return is requested by the Festival Organiser.

19. No responsibility shall be accepted by the Festival Committee for the loss of or damage to the personal property of competitors, or for any other property or materials they may bring with them, or for any injury sustained by members of competing teams during the Festival.

20. Except on matters strictly pertaining to adjudication, the ruling of the Festival Committee and its interpretation of these rules shall be binding on all competitors. Acceptance of this rule is an expressed condition of entry.

21. By entering the Festival competitors have, in effect, undertaken a contract to give a public performance and are expected to appear even though, for example, one or more principal parts may have to be read.

22. All performing groups should hold Public Liability Insurance with an insurer of repute, and with a minimum indemnity limit of £5,000,000.

23. Maidenhead Drama Festival will be approved by the Royal Borough of Windsor & Maidenhead as a **Body of Persons** under S.37 Children & Young Persons Act 1963, which exempts the need for individual licences for any participants (on stage or off) who are children of compulsory school age. All groups must, however, provide the Festival with such details of the participants as is required by RBWM*, together with a copy of their child protection policy.*

24. **CLASS 6: ALL-ENGLAND THEATRE FESTIVAL ENTRANTS**
    a. The Festival will serve as a Preliminary Round of the All-England Theatre Festival. Unless indication is made to the contrary on the entry form, all eligible teams will compete for selection to go on to all subsequent rounds up to and including the British Final.
    b. These Teams will be governed by All-England Festival Rules and must obtain a minimum of 70 marks to qualify for further rounds.
    c. Copies of the All-England Theatre Festival Rules may be obtained from the Festival Organiser, or from the AETF website – https://www.allenglandtheatrefestival.org/rules-and-downloads

d. Financial assistance may, where appropriate, be given to the team going forward to the next stage.
e. Teams undertaking to go forward must be available to compete in **all** later stages - see dates below.

25. **ALL-ENGLAND THEATRE FESTIVAL ENTRANTS - ADDITIONAL RULE**

The playing time of any All-England Theatre Festival entry should not be less than twenty minutes or more than fifty-five minutes. Contravention of this rule results in loss of marks, as follows:

Up to 1 minute under or over time: 1 mark
Up to 2 minutes under or over time: 3 marks
Up to 3 minutes under or over time: 6 marks
Up to 4 minutes under or over time: 10 marks
Up to 5 minutes under or over time: 15 marks
More than 5 minutes under or over time: Disqualification.

DEADLINES FOR THE 2027 FESTIVAL

31st January	Entry Forms submitted
1st March	Lighting and Stage Plots to Festival Stage Director
	Programme details to be received by Festival Organiser
	Young Persons Participating Form to be received by Festival Organiser
18th April	Stage Viewing and rehearsals, times by appointment
19th April	(If required) Stage Viewing and rehearsals
20th – 23rd April	Maidenhead Drama Festival - Norden Farm Centre for the Arts, Maidenhead
24th April	Eastern Area Final – Norden Farm Centre for the Arts, Maidenhead
5th June	English Final – Roses Theatre, Tewkesbury
2nd & 3rd July	British Final – The Ardhowen Theatre, Enniskillen, N. Ireland

ENQUIRIES

Organiser: Carol Hennessy 07947 055283
carol@hennwinds.me.uk

Stage Director: Paul Everett 07783 076330
pauleverett001@gmail.com