



Cleveland Public Theatre

Premiere Fellowship

About Cleveland Public Theatre

CPT's mission is to raise consciousness and nurture compassion through **groundbreaking performances** and life-changing education programs. CPT's programming agenda is to produce work that is outside the mainstream, offering a much broader range of work available to the Cleveland public and expanding the impact and originality of theatre across the country. CPT strives to make work that is excellent, extraordinary, and nationally competitive.

Our new play development programs are based on our years of experience, community input, and key principles of focusing on artists; valuing diversity of approach, aesthetics, and perspective; and balancing impact with investment.

We hope to be a model for nurturing local talent in similar sized markets, the most regarded cultivator of new theatre for Cleveland audiences, a laboratory for promising research and investigation, and a launcher of significant new plays. We envision CPT as a nationally recognized hub for the development of new theatre that is extraordinary, edgy, and relevant.

Premiere Fellowship Overview

With dedicated funding from Cuyahoga Arts and Culture (CAC), CPT offers the Premiere Fellowship for theatre artists committed to new play development. CPT will award four artists who have demonstrated excellence in their craft and a commitment to new plays. We are especially seeking artists who can most benefit from working with CPT artistic staff and artist teams.

The Premiere Fellowship is available for an array of theatre artists: designers, stage managers, choreographers, scriptwriters, devising playwrights, directors, and actors. Fellows will enter into a nine-month contract with CPT to undertake artistic work, collaborate with CPT artists, and engage in the life of the theatre. Fellows will receive a financial award plus additional CPT fees for work undertaken during the time of the fellowship.

Fellowship Description

The Premiere Fellowship supports the work of individual artists who are dedicated to new play development. Fellows will engage in a variety of activities as part of the fellowship and receive significant support for their artistic work.

The Premiere Fellowship is only for artists who are currently residents of Cuyahoga County and who remain so for the duration of the fellowship. Students enrolled in full-time or equivalent Undergraduate or Graduate programs are not eligible.

Fellows are encouraged to take on work at other organizations throughout the time of fellowship.

COVID-19:

CPT prioritizes the health and safety of artists, staff, and audiences. This has led to an extraordinary season of work so far—including Zoom performances, socially distanced live films, and prerecorded work. The below information was originally based on a season of live and in-person shows. For the foreseeable 2020/2021 Season, we are seeking artists who are interested in alternative means of theatre. We are especially interested in artists who come with ideas, innovations, and potential projects that can be done safely and have deep or wide impact on the public.

Cleveland Public Theatre will:

- Award the fellow with the Premiere Fellowship, which includes a financial award: \$1,800 for Early-Career artists, \$4,000 for Mid-Career (and beyond) artists, and additional payment for all project-based work.
- Offer at least one significant artistic project over the course of the year at the standard fee for CPT or the fee determined by SDC or AEA as applicable.
- Offer additional benefits including free tickets to CPT shows, access to CPT office resources, and access to CPT equipment and stock.
- Provide rehearsal, shop, and writing space, as available, through December 2021.
- Provide one staff liaison for each fellow.
- Provide support from a peer or mentor to be jointly chosen by CPT and the fellow.
- Invest production costs associated with the work of the fellow to be determined with the fellow.

All Premiere Fellows will: (the following general participation is included in the artistic award)

- Attend a majority of opening nights at CPT and play an active role in the life of the theatre, which includes attending artist meetings, volunteering when appropriate, and being a great ambassador for CPT throughout the fellowship.
- Enter into a contract with CPT for one or more project specific contracts.
- Participate in CAC artist requirements, such as being listed on the CAC website.

- Maintain proper accreditation of the fellowship in all standard bios through 2023.
- Participate in new play development programs as audience, facilitator, or respondent.
- Attend monthly cohort meetings.
- Participate in program reporting and evaluation.

Fellows will receive separate compensation for the below work at the standard fee for CPT or the fee determined by SDC or AEA as applicable.

- Participate as an actor, designer, director, writer, etc. in at least one production at CPT (likely virtually).
- Participate in at least one workshop or Station Hope project (likely virtually).

Selection Process

The selection process for Premiere Fellowships has three steps. CPT will notify applicants of the status of their application at the conclusion of each step.

1. Applications will be scored by three internal reviewers. Top scoring projects will move to the next round. Please note, reviewers may reach out to applicants for clarity and additional information.
2. Applications will be assessed by an out-of-town theatre professional focused on new work, a local artist, and at least one CPT staff member. The highest ranked proposals will move to the next step.
3. An interview will be held with artistic staff to discuss the proposed projects (if applicable), artistic goals (both personal and project related), past experiences, etc. This may also be an opportunity to layout a potential plan for the potential fellowship and for fellows to ask additional questions. Final selection will occur at the conclusion of this step.

Criteria

We are seeking artists who have a strong record of working on new plays given their time in the field. We are looking to form a diverse cohort from different disciplines, perspectives, and level of experiences.

New Plays

This fellowship is focused on development of new plays, which for us specifically refers to world premiere productions or other original work. Second and third productions of new scripts play an important role in the process, so work on such productions may also be considered to some

extent, especially if the lead creator was actively working on the project and involved in the production.

Career Assessment & Minimum Requirements

The Premiere Fellowship is for artists at different points in their career. Please note that the following guidelines are set to inform assessment and may not be rigidly adhered to. *For example, though a full production with a three-week run is required for playwrights—an interactive installation piece open for many hours each day may be determined to be equivalent, even if it had a shorter run.*

Early-Career Minimum

- Playwrights (scriptwriters and other creators)
 - One full production at a professional theatre (minimum run of three weeks)
- AND
- Two workshop productions or readings at a professional theatre (minimum two public performances) or equivalent
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- Actors, Stage Managers, Designers, Choreographers, Directors, etc.
 - One full production world premiere at a professional theatre (minimum run of three weeks)
- AND
- Three full production world premieres at a professional theatre (minimum run of three weeks)
- OR
- One full production world premiere at a professional theatre (minimum run of three weeks) AND 4 readings or workshop productions (minimum 2 public performances) at a professional theatre, or equivalent combination

Mid-Career Minimum

- Actively working in the professional field for 10+ years.
 - Playwrights (scriptwriters and other creators)
 - Three full productions at a professional theatre—this refers to three different scripts or three different created works (minimum run of three weeks each)
- AND

- 10 workshop productions or readings at a professional theatre (minimum two public performances), or equivalent
- Actors, Stage Managers, Designers, Choreographers, Directors, etc.
 - Three full productions of world premiere at a professional theatre (minimum run of three weeks)

AND

- 5 full production world premieres at a professional theatre (minimum run of three weeks)

OR

- 10 readings/workshop productions at a professional theatre, or a combination.

Please note: Applicants who have a wealth of theatre experience but little new play development experience must still fulfill the above requirements and be able to demonstrate a commitment to new work. Your career assessment should focus on new plays. For example, a director who has many productions under their belt but has only one or two full production world premieres may want to identify themselves as “Early-Career.” Likewise, an established Mid-Career performer who wants to focus on scriptwriting and has less experience in that area may want to apply as an Early-Career scriptwriter (the minimum requirements would still be needed).

Also Note: We appreciate there are some gray areas here! We ask all applicants to define where you feel you are at in your own work. If you feel you don’t meet the minimum requirements for Mid-Career but feel strongly that is the category you should be in, and you would like your application to be compared with others in that category, then we encourage you to make that case. OR if you feel that you *could* qualify as Mid-Career but feel your experience will not be as competitive as other Mid-Career artists (whose application yours would be compared to), you could opt to identify as Early-Career.

Exceptions

The above is a guide to assist us in evaluating applications in the best way to determine merit for an award and readiness for the other work of the fellowship. However, CPT has a track record of looking at the bigger picture and reconsidering notions of “excellence.” Some of the most powerful experiences we have had as audience members were not in large professional theatres. We also see the huge benefits of artists who work predominantly with youth or in specialized, non-professional settings. So, for example, if someone had *directed* productions with a theatre program in prisons, we may assess those experiences as “professional,” especially if the artist was compensated for that work. It’s all about the context. If an artist believes they qualify, we encourage an application to state that and offer guidance and explanation.

Multi-Disciplinary Artists

CPT celebrates artists who work in various realms of theatre-making. Artists who identify as working in multiple areas are encouraged to state those disciplines in the application. However, it is important to note that evaluators will be specifically looking at your application based on all the disciplines you state, and reviewers will be comparing applications in similar categories. So, if an artist has directed ten plays and had a few workshop productions of a script they wrote, they may want to clarify that they are primarily a director so that reviewers can focus on those achievements, rather than comparing them to other playwrights with significantly more experience.

Reviewer's Overall Criteria

In addition to the above, reviewers will be using the following criteria in assessing the application:

- Artistry
- Artistic understanding in the work and in their assessment of their own work
- Commitment to and appreciation for the new play process
- Fit with CPT's aesthetics and processes and potential projects of the 2020/2021 Season
- Potential impact of fellowship on the fellow and the public

Advice to Applicants

The Premiere Fellowship is not intended to serve all theatre artists. This program is for artists who love new play development, have a hunger for feedback and guidance, and who will be positively impacted by the fellowship and CPT artistic guidance. The Premiere Fellowship will focus on artists whose work aligns with CPT's mission and programming agenda.

Every reviewer engaged in this process has been through selection processes on both sides (as reviewers and applicants) and we have tried to create an application and program that will make a big impact on the community. Please approach the process with generosity and the spirit of assuming best intentions. We approach your application with those same values.

We often have follow-up questions for your application. Please answer emails quickly. We are typically reaching out to give you the best chance of being accepted.

Here are some tips we would like to share for applicants based on our experiences in the field as applicants and reviewers:

- Read the application materials at least three times before beginning to work on your responses. Many artists find it is helpful to write down questions before their second or third read.

- Read the application materials after you have completed your responses. This can help bring new perspective.
- Keep the “overall criteria” handy and refer back to it.
- Answer the questions—this may seem obvious but as applicants we sometimes find that we want to tell a specific story or emphasize something that is not being asked.
- Think positively.
 - Rather than focusing on your self-perceived shortcomings, remember why you want this fellowship and think about why you would be a good candidate.
 - Every application process is imperfect and as applicants we have found some application processes and questions to be frustrating. Remember every applicant has the same questions, good or bad. Consider thinking about it as an opportunity to communicate in new ways.
- Reviewers tend to cheer on every applicant—we want to advocate for you. Help us help you by giving us clear information that gets to the heart of the matter.
- Tie theoretical intentions to real life examples. For example: “I believe theatre should be intense and brief, *and that’s why most of my work is under 45 minutes.*” Or “I think humor is the best way to the heart, *which is why I write comedies.*”
- Be bold (but be specific). Share why you think your work is important. And, share why your work is unique. This can be hard for many of us who have been taught to undermine ourselves—but be specific. For example: saying “I am a great actor” is not very meaningful for reviewers. But a specific comment can be very helpful. For example: “My work as an actor has tremendous depth and I am dedicated and focused in the room, which is why you can see in my resume that directors like to work with me over and over again.”
- Frame your own “excellence.” In an application process like this, you have the opportunity to share what you consider to be “excellence” and how you seek to measure your “excellence.”
- Time management: As applicants, we find that making an overall assessment or time goal is useful. Be thoughtful and thorough but avoid overthinking. We estimate that if your work samples are handy and your resume is up to date, the application should not take more than a total of four hours to complete.
- Don’t assume we know. Because readers will include non-CPT staff, even if you have worked with us before, don’t assume that knowledge.

**Please complete the application and submit it with additional materials electronically as an attachment to artistic@cptonline.org.
Deadline for submissions is Monday, November 2, 2020**

Premiere Fellowship Application

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General Information

(Please include the information below in the body of your email and on the first page of your answers to the questions.)

Name:

Address:

Cell Phone:

E-Mail:

Website (if applicable):

Video Link and Password (if applicable):

Questions

Please answer each of the following questions individually in a separate document. **This document should be at least three pages in length but cannot exceed five pages.**

1. Artistic discipline and career trajectory: Early- or Mid-Career Artist. Beyond answering technically, tells us a bit about where you have been and more importantly where you are headed. This is also a good place to explain more about your work.
Examples: "Though I am a Mid-Career actor, I am an Early-Career playwright, and I would like to focus on the latter for this program." Or "Though I only have one professional world premiere, I directed seven premieres while in college, which is unusual for students in that university." Or "I began most of my learning in my church theatre group, and I believe those productions should be considered professional because they involve highly competitive auditions, and all directors and designers are professionals, as are some of the actors."

2. Artistic Statement. Tell us about your process and how you approach theatre and new plays. Share what makes you unique and how you make a special contribution to theatre. Tell us about your values as an artist and how that impacts your work and your audience.
3. Why do you want to participate in the Premiere Fellowship? Is there something particularly important about the timing of this program and your work? How will the fellowship impact you as an artist? How do you feel CPT is positioned to support your artistic growth? What makes your work a good fit for CPT given our mission and programming?
4. Is there any other information we should have while reviewing your materials?

Additional Materials

Please attach the following additional documents to the email.

1. Artistic resume or CV. (You may also include a bio in addition to a resume/CV). Please clarify world premieres and level of production.
2. Letter(s) of recommendation. Minimum one letter. Maximum two. The recommendation should be by a regarded theatre professional who can attest to your artistry and your work as a collaborative artist. Recommendations from professors and teachers are acceptable, but letters from people who are not predominantly in academia are preferred. Please include contact information so we have the option of contacting your recommender(s).
3. **Required for playwrights and directors, optional for others.** Please share ideas for projects you would like to undertake during the fellowship.
4. Work samples. Each applicant can submit up to two videos and two scripts (for playwrights). Reviewers will read a minimum of 30 pages and watch up to 20 minutes of video. Scripts should be included in an email application as a pdf attachment. Videos must be submitted as a link. Please share passwords as needed. Feel free to share a website if you have one (not required or expected). We understand that due to union requirements and resource limitations many artists do not have work samples.
5. CPT may ask for additional materials if we feel it could be helpful to the applicant.

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