

Comments by Annette Procunier

I just did a festival at the end of February for the quadrant of Ontario I live in and for the first time they had the adjudicator travel to the different cities to see the shows. I went to 4 cities to see full length plays and did an adjudication afterward first for the audience and then privately. Everyone got together the next Sunday for the awards. They had never done this before and it worked well as an alternative as they did not have a place that could host their usual festival as they were hosting the Ontario festival which has now been cancelled.

A couple of interesting things came out of it.

1. The audiences who had never heard an adjudication before were thrilled and
2. The theatres got the added bonus of having them understand more of what a festival is about and why they want to participate.

The coming together for the awards was a very important part of this as they felt the comraderie which was missing from being at the festival and watching all the plays. They understand that they can have either in the future and not lose all their connection.

I think this is an interesting idea when companies cannot get together. The Army is doing taped shows for adjudication to finish this round of plays for their OPPERS festival. I have a couple of concerns.

First is that theatre is by definition a live experience. If we want to watch "film" then there are lots of movies to see but the taping of theatre always results in a lot being lost of the impact of the medium.

What is the role of the audience in an event like this? The audience, to me, is such an integral part of a festival. I, as an adjudicator, want to watch like the audience and be swept up in the moment. That would be a loss for me.

So much of festival life is the interactions with one another and watching and learning together. If it is just about the competition than this might work but for me it is so much more. Even film festivals have everyone gathered together to watch the work.

Certainly festivals are becoming more difficult to stage for all the reasons you note but I think next year more than ever we will want to be together.

The format you laid out is a good one for doing what you are talking about. Someone you may want to consult is Rose Bonzeck as she does her one minute festival by video in venues all over the world. I am sure she has it down pat.