About the Festival

Premiere Stages is committed to supporting emerging and regional playwrights by developing and producing new plays. Since 2005, Premiere Stages’ Play Festival has offered playwrights the opportunity to develop their work in an encouraging, focused environment through discussions, rehearsals, readings, and full Equity productions. Through our Play Festival script competition, Premiere Stages offers four playwrights public Equity readings each year. Following the readings, two plays are selected to enter an intensive development phase, where writers work with a director, dramaturg, and design team to develop the script for a staged workshop or full Equity production only a few months later. Our uniquely accelerated process enables writers to have previously unproduced plays developed and fully produced within one year of submission. When we find a writer we believe in, our Play Festival allows us to fully commit the time, talent and resources necessary to share their work with a broad regional audience.

Play Festival Details

From October 1, 2016 through January 1, 2017, Premiere Stages will accept submissions of unproduced plays (previous readings, workshops, and showcases are acceptable) written by playwrights affiliated with the greater metropolitan area (New York, New Jersey, Connecticut, and Pennsylvania). All plays submitted to the festival are evaluated by a professional panel of theatre producers, dramaturgs, playwrights, scholars, and publishers. Our panel selects four finalists who will be given public readings with Equity casts in March 2017. Following the March readings, the panel selects the festival winner, who will receive a full Equity production in the Premiere Stages 2017 Mainstage Season and an award of $2000. The runner-up receives a 29-hour staged reading and $750. The two other finalists will be awarded $500.

We also strive to facilitate relationships between writers and theater professionals who we think will respond to their work, in hopes that plays developed at Premiere will go on to subsequent productions throughout the country. All of the plays we produce retain the coveted “World Premiere” brand on their plays. Additionally, Premiere’s productions are consistently reviewed by the New York Times and scouted by major publishing houses, and multiple Festival plays have been honored by the American Theatre Critics Association. Our 2015 Play Festival winner was featured in American Theatre Magazine and on NPR’s “All Things Considered.”

About Premiere Stages

Premiere Stages is a professional theater company in residence at Kean University in Union, NJ (30 minutes from New York City and an hour from Philadelphia). Through the Premiere Play Festival, Premiere Stages has developed many new plays that have gone on to have successful productions in New York and regional theaters throughout the country. Some of the writers whose work we have developed include: Keith Josef Adkins, George Brant, David Caudle, Hal Corley, Kate Cortesi, Vincent Delaney, Lindsey Ferrentino, Kathryn Grant, Erik Gernand, Michael Hollinger, Willy Holtzman, Kimber Lee, Rogelio Martinez, Dominique Morisseau, Guillermo Reyes, Tammy Ryan, and Jeff Talbott. Premiere Stages has also produced many critically acclaimed New Jersey Premieres, bringing exciting contemporary plays to our local audiences in Union County. For more information about the Premiere Play Festival, please visit: www.kean.edu/premierestages.

For full submission guidelines, see reverse.
Submission Guidelines
Premiere Stages is committed to supporting a diverse group of writers; playwrights of all backgrounds, ages, and experience levels are encouraged to apply. We are particularly interested in scripts that explore or address contemporary issues and tackle topics that challenge and connect with our audience. We encourage writers to view our production history: http://www.kean.edu/premierestages/past15.php for a better understanding of the type of scripts that we have produced in the past.

Agent/Theatre Professional Submissions
Premiere Stages will accept full scripts from literary agents or theatre professionals affiliated with Premiere Stages. All other writers are required to submit a 10-page script sample and synopsis.

- Plays must be full-length and have a cast size of no more than eight.
- Plays submitted must be unpublished and must be works that have not been previously produced (readings, workshops, and showcases are okay).
- Plays must be written by playwrights who have strong affiliations with the greater metropolitan area (New York, New Jersey, Connecticut, and Pennsylvania).
- Musical submissions, adaptations, and solo shows will not be considered at this time.
- Submissions are limited to one script per playwright.
- Playwrights must be available to be on-site at Premiere for the development of their script (see Play Festival schedule on following page).
- Submissions are due by 11:59pm on January 1, 2017. All plays must be submitted electronically, attached as a PDF. Hard copies will not be accepted.

Non-agent submissions
Playwrights submitting without an agent/theatre professional must include:
- A brief synopsis of the play (no more than half a page).
- A character breakdown.
- A history of the play’s development (if any) and a brief statement of your goals for development.
- The playwright’s bio or resume.
- A script sample from the play (no more than 10 pages).

Plays and synopses will be evaluated by a panel of arts professionals. The panel will submit their recommendations to the Producing Artistic Director and Literary staff. The panel will request full scripts from synopses of interest.

For any questions regarding the submission guidelines, please email us at pfssubmit@kean.edu.

Submissions should be sent via email to: pfssubmit@kean.edu.
All materials should be attached as PDF.
2017 Premiere Play Festival Schedule:

October 1, 2016: Premiere Stages begins accepting submissions

January 1, 2017: Deadline for submissions to Festival.

Early March 2017: Four finalists are selected.

March 9-12, 2017: Play Festival readings.

April 2017: Festival winner and runner-up are selected for expanded development.

April-September 2017: Continued script development.


September 2017: Full production of festival winner.