

Live Entertainment Excellence Criteria

The Live Entertainment Excellence Awards honor productions that push boundaries in live entertainment—through unique staging, cutting-edge technical achievement, and deeply integrated storytelling. Whether inspired by iconic IP, park history, or original creative worlds, these shows transform everyday spaces into immersive experiences.

Quick Decision Guide:

If your Production Is...	Choose...
A scripted or narrative-driven theatrical production (including daytime parades) that debuted within the eligibility period and is holiday themed to any holiday, including, but not limited to: Halloween, Christmas, Chinese New Year, Diwali, Easter, etc.	Most Creative New Holiday Production
A walk-through haunt experience that includes more than three (3) live actors. Can include, but isn't limited to: haunted houses, mazes, scare zones, hay rides, etc.	Most Creative New Haunt Production
A production that takes place in a non-traditional stage setting (including daytime parades). Examples include: sidewalk/street pop-ups, roving performers, musicians, living statues, plaza/staircase performers, etc.	Most Creative New Atmosphere Production
A scripted or narrative-driven theatrical production that debuted within the eligibility period and is intended to run for six (6) months or less.	Most Creative New Theatrical Production: Limited Run
A scripted or narrative-driven theatrical production that debuted within the eligibility period and is intended to run for more than six (6) months.	Most Creative New Theatrical Production: Extended Run
A large-scale production that takes place once/twice per day or season, that is meant to keep attendees in the park. Examples 7parades, fountain shows, projection mapping, etc.	Most Creative New Spectacle





Eligibility:

To qualify for this award, the theatrical production must meet all the following criteria:

- Be included in the general admission ticket to the attraction (no separate show fee)
- Be presented as part of the attraction's guest experience (indoor or outdoor)
- All types of venues welcome (Parks, Attractions, Cruise Lines, Zoo, Aquarium, Museum, Classic Theater)
- **New or Revamped by at Least 50%**
 - All productions submitted in 2026 and beyond must be fully new or revamped by 50% or more. A production is considered revamped when half or more of its creative, technical, or experiential components have been substantially updated, replaced, or re-imagined. Examples include:
 - Story & Script (new storyline, major rewrite, new scenes, new character arcs)
 - Cast, Choreography, or Performance Elements (new cast, new choreography, new performance style, new staging)
 - Technical Design (new lighting design, sound design, projections, media, effects)
 - Scenic, Costume, or Prop Design (new sets, new costumes, new props, major re-theming)
 - Guest Experience & Show Delivery (new pre-show/post-show, new staging format, new interactive elements)
- Minor updates do not qualify, such as changing cast members, small line edits, equipment swaps, or adding a single prop.

Application Materials:

- Family signature image and logo, and production logo
- Hi-Res video of the **FULL SHOW**. You may upload it to the application portal, or provide a link to the show
- A 3-minute sizzle reel of the show's highlights.
- Any additional Supporting materials

Applicants should be prepared to answer questions about:

- The production's storyline and theming, tell the story of the show
- The production's technical design quality and overall production value, what not to miss while viewing the show, or anything else not obvious to the audience's eye





Full Category Descriptions:

Category: Most Creative New Holiday Production

This award honors excellence and innovation in a holiday-themed production presented within an attraction. Eligible productions deliver exceptional entertainment value through creative storytelling, performance quality, thematic integration, technical execution, and guest engagement.

Examples include: Halloween, Chinese New Year, Christmas, Independence Days, Mother's Day, Valentine's Day, Diwali, Chanukah, and other culturally significant celebrations.

Category: Most Creative New Haunt Production

This award honors excellence and innovation in a walk-through production that features exceptional entertainment value with a Halloween or haunt theme. Eligible productions demonstrate creative storytelling, atmospheric immersion, performance quality, technical design, and guest impact. Note that walk-through experiences must have at least three (3) live actors.

Examples include: Haunted houses, mazes, atmospheric or interactive entertainment, scare zones, haunting grounds, and more.

Note: Halloween stage shows and/or parades should be submitted in the "Most Creative New Holiday Production" category.

Category: Most Creative New Atmosphere Production

This award honors excellence and innovation in an atmospheric production that delivers exceptional entertainment value in a non-traditional performance environment. Eligible productions captivate guests through creativity, spontaneity, performance quality, and immersive engagement.

Examples include: *Daytime* parades, musicians, character interactions, pop-up performances, roving entertainers, living statues, comedic acts, cultural demonstrations, and more.





Category: Most Creative New Theatrical Production: Limited Run or Extended Run

These awards honor excellence and innovation in a theatrical production presented within an attraction or member facility. Eligible productions deliver exceptional entertainment value through creative storytelling, performance quality, technical execution, and guest engagement.

- Limited Run: Productions opening within the eligibility period that are intended to run for six (6) months or less.
- Extended Run: Productions opening within the eligibility period that are intended to run for more than six (6) months.

Category: Most Creative New Spectacle

This award honors excellence and innovation in a spectacle production that delivers exceptional entertainment value on a grand scale. Eligible productions create memorable, high-impact moments that celebrate the day, encourage guests to stay in the park, and elevate the attraction or member facility's overall experience.

Examples include: *Nighttime* parades, drone shows, multimedia shows, fountain/water shows, projection mapping shows, fireworks, and other large-format presentations, and more.

