



OTTAWA STORYTELLERS SIGNATURE SERIES PROGRAMMING AND HIRING POLICY

Considerations for Signature Series programming:

- Diversity. We seek to represent a wide range of ages, backgrounds, beliefs, cultures, and demographics with our programming. That being said, we are increasingly sensitive to the problem of cultural appropriation, and do not wish to engage in it with our programs.
- Saleability. Many people surveyed responded that they attend storytelling because of the subject of the show. It must be a subject with wide appeal or appeal to a very specific, marketable demographic. OST is occasionally able to take risks on not easily marketable but artistically interesting programs, but is increasingly able to accommodate fewer shows of this kind.
- Performance telling. The Ottawa StoryTellers' Signature Series (formerly called *Speaking Out*) is the longest running series of its kind in Canada. OST considers it to be a showcase of the best performance storytelling that our local (and sometimes visiting) tellers can produce. The aim is for the programs to be of a high quality in order to promote storytelling as an art form that can stand alongside the more recognized fields of music, dance, and theatre.
- Cohesion. The strength that makes this series unusual in the storytelling scene is that it offers cohesive programs with some element of overall emotional or narrative arc rather than presenting a string of loosely connected stories.
- Copyright clearance. We are unable to produce shows that infringe on copyright. Storytellers wishing to use material under copyright, including translations and retellings, must have permission.

Signature Series Storyteller Hiring Parameters

OST recognizes that there are different kinds of storytelling. While OST has made the decision to present performance storytelling, it also values community storytelling. Some tellers within the community are very strong community storytellers but not as strong performance tellers, and vice versa. A storyteller might be at a very advanced level, but if his or her strength is not the performance aspect of storytelling, he or she would not be considered for the Signature Series. The qualities and abilities required in Signature Series tellers are:

- Stage presence. In order to offer a program that is dynamic to consumers of theatre and other professional performance arts, a teller must have, in addition to strong telling skills, a certain amount of charisma and presence, as well as being comfortable taking the stage in front of a large group.

- Professionalism. This includes reliability and interpersonal conduct. A teller must respond promptly to requests made by the Artistic Manager (AM) and provide all required materials, including professional headshots and information for publicity. A teller must take responsibility for finding or creating the material for a given program and learning it. If the teller is having difficulties with a program, he or she must let the AM know in a timely fashion. If there are interpersonal issues between tellers in a set, they must deal with them in a professional manner.
- Ability to accept artistic criticism. In order to grow and improve as an artist, a teller must be willing to listen to and consider constructive suggestions and critique from the AM and other tellers involved in a program.
- Ability to accept rejection. In the arts world, rejection is a reality. A teller must be able to understand that rejection is not personal, but is rather an invitation to work harder to perfect his or her art and try again.

OST offers opportunities for tellers to advance the level of their storytelling ability through professional development and experience. Only tellers with advanced abilities will be asked to perform as a part of the Signature Series. It is important for tellers who wish to be considered for Signature Series to recognize that they may require more training and experience than OST is able to offer in order to reach this level, and as such should also seek outside training and opportunities, as would any artist seeking to improve his or her craft.

Fourth Stage Hiring Process

Each season the AM solicits program ideas from the established group of Signature Series tellers. The AM may also consider proposals from tellers who have not performed as a part of the Signature Series before, depending on the level and abilities of the tellers and the strength of the proposals. The season is constructed using a combination of these ideas and those that the AM has developed, which sometimes includes inviting new tellers to participate for the first time. New tellers wishing to be considered for Signature Series should keep in mind the following:

- The AM needs to be aware of a new teller's abilities. The AM attends many events that feature tellers of different levels, but is not able to be at every OST event. Tellers wishing to be considered should ensure that the AM has been invited to a performance that features their talents.
- There are more tellers who want to perform in the Signature Series than there are spaces available in any given season. There are also many considerations that must be taken into account when programming the season, as are laid out above.

Tellers who submit program ideas which are not successful or new tellers who ask to be considered and are not hired are welcome to ask the AM for feedback. It is assumed that if a teller asks for feedback, he or she is seeking genuine critique.

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