

THEATER ETIQUETTE

Live theater is not a TV show or a video you can rewind if you miss something. It is not computer generated. It is not a recording of something that happened some other time. It really happens - right now - and it is an art form that depends on both artists and audience. The quality of a single performance depends partly on the audience, on how the people respond and how they behave. When you are there, it depends on **YOU!**

When you walk into a theater, you can feel that something is about to happen. It is exciting just to be in the room. The stage holds the secret of what is about to come to life, as you find your seats for a performance that is being presented just for you! Sometimes it is so thrilling you want to get goofy, laugh and shout. But remember that when the play begins, everyone in the audience has a responsibility. You are part of the play. You are connected with the other people in the audience and the ones on stage. They can SEE you, HEAR you, and FEEL you, just as you can see, hear and feel them. If you are talking about what you did yesterday or opening a candy wrapper, you will miss something. And, it will miss you. Your laughter, your responses, your attention, your imagination, and most especially your energy, are part of the experience. In short, the play can be better because of YOU!

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- ❖ **Arriving on time** is the first important action you can perform. At an IN THE WINGS performance, since it is General Admission/Open Seating, **NO ONE will be admitted after the curtain has gone up.** It is too difficult to find an empty seat in the dark and causes too much disturbance to those who arrived on time and are now enjoying the show.
- ❖ When the performance is about to begin, the lights will dim. This is a signal for the actors and the audience to put aside concerns and conversation and settle into the world of the play.
- ❖ The performers expect the audience's full attention and focus. **Performance is a time to think inwardly, not a time to share your thoughts aloud.** Talking to neighbors (even in whispers) carries easily to others in the audience and to the actors on-stage. It is disruptive and distracting.
- ❖ **There is no food in the auditorium:** soda, candy, and other snacks are noisy and, therefore, distracting. Please throw them away before you enter the audience area.
- ❖ **Walking through the aisles during the performance is extremely disruptive.** Actors occasionally use aisles and stairways as exits and entrances. The actors will notice any movement in the performance space. Please use the restroom and take care of all other concerns outside before the show or at intermission.
- ❖ **Cell phones, watch alarms and other electronic devices should be turned off before the performance begins.** When watch alarms, cell phones, and pagers go off it is very distracting for the actors and the audience. Text messaging or using laptops is also very distracting because the bright light emitted from the devices shines right in your neighbors' eyes and is very annoying.
- ❖ Please be courteous and show respect to your theater neighbors by removing a crying or disruptive child. Nothing ruins a performance faster than trying to hear dialogue or music over the strains of a screaming child.