

Basic Rules of Theater Etiquette - Theater Etiquette Begins Before You Arrive

Do you understand and realize how important it is for an audience to know and practice these rules?

Remember, a live theater performance can be very exciting. All of the people involved in the production, both cast and crew, work very hard to be sure they give a great performance. It is the job of the audience members to help the performers give their best performance possible. The audience can do this by practicing the rules of theater etiquette.

- Arrive to the theater on time.
- Visit the restroom before the performance begins.
- Turn off your cell phone or, if it must be on, put it on vibrate. Do not speak on the phone during the performance. If you must call the person back, do it outside during intermission or after the show has finished.
- Pay attention to announcements that are made prior to many shows about the rules of the theater you are attending and the location of the fire exits.
- Don't speak during the performance...whispering is still speaking, so only in an emergency.
- Remember that the Overture (introductory music) in Musical Theater is part of the performance, so be quiet when it begins.
- Do not take pictures during the performance. It can be very distracting to the actors and can cause a mishap.
- Remain in your seat for the entire performance. If you must leave, exit during intermission. In an emergency, wait for an appropriate break in the show. It is rude to get up in the middle of a quiet moment...rude to the actors and your fellow audience members.
- Do not eat or drink in the theater. If you must have a cough drop, or something of that nature, do not make noise with the wrapper.
- Do not put your feet up on the seats or balcony and do not kick the seat in front of you.
- Do not angle your head together with your "special someone" as you obstruct the view of the people behind you.
- Don't put or throw anything on the stage.
- Do laugh when the performance is funny.
- Do applaud when it is appropriate during the performance.
- Do applaud when the performance is over...this tells the performers and crew that you appreciate their work.
- Stand and applaud if you really thought the show was great.
- Do not whistle or scream out to the performers except for a Bravo or Brava.

Just as rehearsal is important to the success of a show so is the "practice" of good manners at the theater. Make each and every show you attend the best it can be, by doing your best to be a great audience member. Start with the next show you see, and spread the word to your family and friends