

Presents

A Trip to the Theatre:

A Preparation Guide for student's first trip to the theatre.

For many students, a trip to our theatre may be their first experience in seeing a live performance, so it is important to prepare them for:

- What they should expect.
- What is expected of them.
- What the performance is about.

Students will be more interested and have a greater understanding of the performance if they are prepared ahead of time!

We have also included an Audience Guide with background information about the show to share with your class.



HMS Pinafore 2010-2011 season
Photo taken by Mark Frohna

Our Theatre:

The Broadway Theatre Center

The Skylight owns and operates the Broadway Theatre Center in Milwaukee's Historic Third Ward. The Broadway Theatre Center houses two unique theatres: the 360-seat Cabot Theatre; a replication of an 18th-century European opera house and the 90-seat Studio Theatre, a versatile black box space.



A view of the Cabot Theatre stage.

Tour Our Theatres:

If you're interested in more details about our theatre, come take a tour either before or after seeing a student matinee, or on a different date.

In the tour you will see and learn about:

- Cabot Theatre
- Studio Theatre
- Scene Shop
- Prop shop
- Costume Shop
- Our founder, Claire Richardson's ashes under the stage!

Audience Etiquette

Here are some things all students should know before coming to a performance:

- **Respect**

Being a great audience member requires respect— respect for the theatre space, the performers, your teacher, your fellow classmates, other patrons and yourself.

- **No Food, Drink or Gum**

Part of respecting our theatre is keeping it clean. Do not bring any food, drinks or gum into the theatre- not only does this create a mess when you are finished eating, but the crinkling of wrappers is distracting to the rest of the audience and the performers.



- **Listening**

One of the basic elements of being a great audience member is **listening**. The audience is an important part of the show. The people on stage can see and hear you, so your reactions and behavior affects the performance.

When you are watching a live performance, it's important not to talk during the performance. Although talking during the show is not appreciated, laughing and applauding at appropriate times is encouraged!

That is how you help create a supportive and focused atmosphere, making the best experience possible for everyone involved.

- **Stay seated**

Once you are seated you should avoid standing or getting out of your seat because this distracts others and can block their view.

- **Electronic devices**

Please turn off all cell phones! It is rude to talk on your cell phone or send text messages during a performance. Also, there is no photography or recording devices allowed during the performance.

- **What to Wear?**

It is not *REQUIRED* that you dress up to attend the theatre, however, our patrons often do since they consider going to the theatre a special occasion.

- **The End**

The curtain call is when the performers come out for a final bow and the audience thanks them for a job well done.

At the end of the performance, it is important that you stay in your seats until your teachers guide you to the exit.



- **Above all, enjoy yourself!**

Important words to know

Listed below are some important words that will help you understand things you'll see and experience at our theatre:

Opera- An opera is a play in which all the words are sung rather than spoken.

Musical Theatre- Musicals are usually much more light hearted than operas, they incorporate more dance and there is typically dialogue, actors talking to each other, between songs.

Usher- Helps the audience find their seats, and gives them a program.



Program- The program, also called a "playbill," gives information about the cast and crew of the show and what you are about to see.

Lighting- Lighting helps the audience see the action on stage and plays an important part in creating the mood or setting for each scene.

Costume- This is what the actors wear during a performance. Costumes play an important role in telling us about the character and when the play takes place. (Left- From *THE MIKADO*, is a costume rendering, which is a drawing by the costume designer of what they want the costume to look like.)



Props- Props are usually defined as anything the performer handles onstage. Here at The Skylight, a prop is anything that isn't a floor, wall or ceiling, including furniture, set dressing, etc. Props are made to look real from a distance, but are actually fake.

Set- This is the physical setting of the show. The set shows the audience where and when the play take place and may change during the course of a show. (Right- Part of a large airplane set piece for *THE LITTLE PRINCE*, which was moved on and off stage during the show.)



Intermission- This is generally a 15-20 minute break about halfway through a performance. It allows the audience time to stretch, get a drink of water or use the restrooms. Usually something very exciting and dramatic happens right before intermission which makes the audience eager to see the second act. A few minutes before intermission ends, the lights in the lobby will flash a few times, which is a signal for the audience to return to their seats.

Curtain Call- At the end of the show, the performers will come out for a final bow so that the audience can applaud and thank them for their hard work.

Talkback- After our student matinees, audience members stay in their seats and the performers return to the stage to answer questions and discuss the production.



For Teachers



Acting it all out

Below is a short lesson plan to help prepare younger students on exhibiting appropriate audience behavior at a live performance.

Objective

Students will demonstrate an understanding of appropriate audience behavior in a variety of settings.

Activity

1. Ask students to describe places where they were members of an audience. Answers might include attending a movie, a theater, a sports arena, at home watching television, a concert hall, etc. List the answers on the chalkboard.
2. Discuss the appropriate audience behavior for each of the settings listed above. For example, how would audience behavior at a golf tournament be different from a football game? How would the audience behave at a rock concert compared with a classical concert or a recital by a single person?
3. Choose students to act as performers in at least three of the settings listed above. For example, they may pretend to be playing golf or tennis; or they could pretend to be playing instruments in an orchestra or a rock band. Allow the students to perform while the rest of the class is the audience.

After each performance, review with the class where they are pretending to be and help the class evaluate the appropriate audience behavior for each location. Point out that some behaviors that are fine in one setting are inappropriate in another. Ask performers if they felt that the audience's behavior was appropriate for their performance, and why.

If you have any questions, concerns or would like to schedule a tour of the Broadway Theatre Center please contact:

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For more copies of *A Trip to the Theatre*, Audience Guides or 2011-2012 Student Matinee brochures and order forms visit: www.skylightmusictheatre.org.

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