

STORY THEATRE CO

JIM LEARD, ARTISTIC DIRECTOR
presents

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For reservations and info
contact Patricia O'Brien,
General Manager

1291 Gladstone Avenue
Victoria, BC V8T 1G5
Tel 250-383-4140
Fax 250-385-6336

Toll free 1-800-353-0001
info@storytheatre.ca
www.storytheatre.ca

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A TEACHER'S GUIDE



How to be an Audience Member:

Teacher talking points and activity by Michelle Buck

For many students this play may be their first time at a live theatrical performance. Even if it is not their first time, live theatre is a unique and engaging experience worthy of preparing students to be the best audience members they can be.

To Prepare Students for the Play:

Discuss with your students how different a live performance is from watching a movie or television show. Let them know that live presentations can often be more challenging for performers, because anything could happen and affect their performance. Unlike movie and television, mistakes cannot be edited out! This makes for a more dynamic experience for both performers and the audience.

The Audience Etiquette Checklist is a useful way to talk about the range of acceptable behaviours at different events. You may only have time to go over School Performances but it would be worth while to do them all to compare and contrast. This exercise would be most appropriate for intermediate grades.

Before leaving your classroom:

It may save time to remind students of the following before heading to the gym/theatre: It is disruptive (to the actors and fellow audience members) to talk, eat or drink during the play, visit the washroom and water fountain beforehand.

- * Photos or recordings are not allowed.
- * Excessive movement can be distracting to others watching the play.

To make the most out of watching this live performance, please encourage your students to not only watch the play for the story, but to also to notice the set, costumes, music and lighting. These aspects are an important part of the performance and will enhance later discussions about the play and the students experience watching it.

What does it mean when someone says: “Be a good audience member”?

The following list outlines the etiquette to be followed while attending live performances, whether in your school, at a theatre or on the street. It's easy once you know the rules...

During the performance:

* Listen. This is important because you will be hearing actors perform live for you. It's important that you listen very well so that you don't miss anything and so that you don't disturb others around you. Remember, there is no volume, rewind or replay.

* Respond! As an audience member you have been cast in a very important role, which is to let the actors know that you appreciate the show. That means laughing at funny parts, cheering when it's called for, applauding when you like something, and perhaps even shrieking when you are scared. Remember to always respond respectfully and appropriately. These are live actors and their performance will be affected by your reactions.

* Be quiet when needed. Often actors pretend the audience is not there. That's why the audience is often (but not always) put in the dark. You have to be quiet and play along. Sometimes you need to pretend you are listening in but not letting anyone know you are there.

* Be considerate of those around you. Don't kick the back of the seat in front of you, wiggle around or talk during the performance, because it might disturb those around you.

After the performance has ended:

* Applaud. When the performance is over, it's important to show your appreciation by applauding (another word for clapping) for the performers. When you do applaud, respond enthusiastically, those actors and the stage manager have worked hard to and this is your opportunity to say "Thank you".

* Stay seated, it is question time. At the end of the performance the actors will come out for a curtain call. This is when the actors come on stage to receive your appreciation. At Story Theatre the actors also ask the audience members if they have any questions they would like to ask, so be thinking and put your hand up when they ask.

Audiences have different traditions in the ways they enjoy different kinds of events. We eat, talk, or cheer loudly at some events but not at others. Fill out the following table showing the different kinds of audience traditions.

Is the behavior listed in the left column:

- * always acceptable? (A)
- * sometimes acceptable? (S)
- * never acceptable? (N)

When discussing this with a partner, are there any cases when you disagree? If so, bring these different answers to the class as a whole and see what your classmates have to say.

Behavior	School Performance	Movie	Live Theatre	Music Concert	School Concert	Sporting Event	Ballet	Opera
Eat								
Talk								
Cheer during action or performance								
Standup or walk around during action or performance								
Give a standing ovation								
Applaud at the end								
Clap along in time with music								

CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS

From the B.C. Ministry of Education's 2010 [Overview of ARTS EDUCATION K-7](#)

Pg. 11 Responding to Performances and Exhibitions

The following steps can help teachers to structure formal response activities. These steps may be combined or rearranged as appropriate to each situation (e.g., students responding to their own work, to the work of their peers, or to community and professional performances and exhibitions).

- Preparation — establish the focus for viewing or listening to the work.
- First impression — encourage students to respond spontaneously (no wrong answers).
- Description — ask students to describe what they saw.
- Analysis of content and effect — encourage students to: examine how the components (e.g., performers, music, conductor, choreography, production elements, visual elements, principles of design) worked together to achieve certain effects identify evidence of particular cultures, styles, or time periods represented in the work use appropriate, subject-specific terminology to describe skills, techniques, elements, form, and design consider the expectations for the given context (e.g., Is this a final production or a work-in-progress? Student or professional? What level of performance or skill should be expected for the particular situation?)
- Interpretation — encourage students to: reflect on and discuss what the work means to each of them, analyse how their responses are influenced by their own experiences and perceptions of the world

Please write to us!

We love to receive letters and pictures from the many schools that we visit and we hope to keep getting those letters.

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