

# MCA Theater Etiquette

Attending a theater performance is a privilege many people do not experience often. Whether you attend a show at Carnegie Hall, or a local community theater show, theater etiquette is part of the experience. Practicing good audience etiquette is considerate to all who attend the show. Below is a list of theater etiquette rules to practice:

## Before the Show:

- **Arrive at the theater on time.** The time on your ticket is the time the show starts. MCA opens the lobby and box office one hour before showtime and the house (audience seating) opens ~30 minutes before showtime. Use that time to grab concessions, visit the restroom, socialize in the lobby, open and read your program book and find your seat while the lights are still on.
- **Locate the restrooms.** The restrooms are located just inside the portals (Women's Portal 1, Men's Portal 2, Family restroom both portals).
- **Leave large bags at home.** The space between seats is limited and may cause a tripping hazard in the aisles. All bags over 12" X 12" will be turned away at the door. This includes drink containers as well.
- **Dress nicely/accordingly.** There is no dress code at the theater, and you won't be turned away for dressing down. However, going to a theater venue is a special occasion for the artists and patrons. Theaters are also notoriously cold, so bring a jacket or sweater, just in case.
- **Avoid wearing excessive scented products.** Perfumes, colognes, and hair sprays should be used sparingly for the comfort of the rest of the audience and staff.

## During the Show:

- **Turn your phone to 'Do Not Disturb' or 'Silent' mode.** You may also want to lower your brightness and silence any alarms you may have set. Since we utilize digital programs, we ask that you limit your cell phone usage during the show and lower your brightness to better minimize distracting your neighbors. If you must take a call, please be courteous and exit the theater.
- **Pay attention to announcements made prior to the show.** These announcements will explain protocols and rules of the theater and any important information about the show that may not be available in your program.
- **Quickly find your seat during "House to Half".** The lights in the theater will dim to let you know the show is starting (House to Half). Wrap up your conversation and return to your seat so the show may begin.
- **Remain seated for the duration of the performance.** Any show that is longer than an hour will have a 15 minute intermission. If you must leave in the middle of a performance, wait for lights to go out or go during an applause.

- **Sit properly in the seats.** Theater chairs are designed so the person behind you can see between the seats. Try not to cuddle up to the person next to you or slouch sideways, you may be blocking someone's view.
- **Do not talk during the show. (including whispering)** Nothing is more distracting than not being able to hear the artists on stage performing or hearing loud shushes throughout the theater. Be respectful and don't talk, whisper or sing-a-long. Hold your questions until intermission or the end of the show, they may be answered in the next scene.
- **Be mindful of the photo policy.** Some shows allow photos and video to be taken, while many licensed shows have copyright laws against photography and videography. Flash photography is never allowed, as it distracts the performers on stage and can ruin lighting effects as well.
- **React to the show appropriately.** When watching a comedic scene laughter is often what drives the actor on stage to give their best performance. Applaud to show the performers your appreciation for their craft. Whistling, cat calling, hollering and other obnoxious noises are only appropriate for specific shows and are generally frowned upon in most theater settings. Familiarize yourself with the decorum for the type of show you are attending and act accordingly.

After the Show:

- **Exit the theater in an organized fashion.** Let people in the back of the audience out first. Try not to linger in the audience once it is cleared.
- **Regroup with your family/group on the promenade.** The stage door gets very crowded and the performers are encouraged to walk out into the promenade. Make a clear path so every performer can get out of the theater and reunite with their family. If you must, send one friend or family member to the stage door to meet your performer.
- **Make sure to grab everything on your way out.** Most of the staff leaves very shortly after a show ends or they are doing important work to get the theater ready for the next performance. They will most likely not have time to help you find items you left behind in the audience. If it can wait, contact the box office the next morning. If you left keys or a phone, find the nearest staff member and they will let you back in to find your keys or phone.