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POLICY TITLE: Actor's Rules and Etiquette	

Actor's Rules and Etiquette

This document outlines the expected standards of behaviour that make a production go smoothly and produce a quality show. It is recommended that each cast member be given a copy of this document and asked to sign it.

In this document "backstage" refers to any part of the stage not visible to the audience. It does not refer to the dressing room.

Punctuality: "On time" means you are warmed up and ready to go at the designated time. If you are going to be late, let the stage manager know right away. There is a saying in theatre, "If you are not ten minutes early, you are ten minutes late."

"Down Time" in Rehearsals: When you are not on stage, there are a few options. The best is to give the actors who are on stage your undivided attention—you are their practice audience! In addition, if you listen to the direction given to other actors, the director/conductor, choreographer will not have to repeat themselves for your benefit. Other acceptable behaviours include silently looking over your music and/or lines or quietly doing any other production related activities. Loud conversation and texting are not acceptable.

Cell Phones: Cell phones can be indispensable - but they can also interrupt focus and concentration. For this reason, turn your cell phones to silent while in the theatre and during rehearsals. Give other performers your full attention. Cell phones should never come with you on stage. Take them out of your pockets and leave them in your bag or jacket. During the run, make sure your cell phones are turned off when backstage. Not only could you miss a cue if you were on your phone, but it can distract your fellow actors in the dressing room who are trying to focus. Finally, as cell phones have cameras, there are privacy issues with phones in the dressing room. If you absolutely need to have your phone available (for childcare or other emergencies), have a discussion with the stage manager.

Director's Notes—Getting them: Always be open and gracious, even if you disagree. Say "Thank you" after the director gives you the note, or "May we speak about this later?" if you don't understand or disagree. The note session is not therapy for your character, but rather a session of quick fixes for many elements of the show. Find time for you and the director to solve issues that affect you or your character only.

Director's Notes—Giving Them: Never give another actor notes (i.e. direction) and never allow yourself to receive notes from another actor or someone who has seen the show and has a few suggestions. A response could be, "Thanks for that, but I think it's best we do this kind of thing through the director or stage manager." There is no room for flexibility here.

Quiet: Keep the noise down during rehearsals and when you are backstage. Avoid all talking and/or whispering while others are working. Respect that some actors have to intensely focus on their lines and character during rehearsal and performance and do not need to be distracted.

Tech Rehearsals: This is the only time the designers get to fine tune their work with you there. This can be a long and tedious process, so please be patient. Don't disrupt their rehearsal and stay close to the stage, because they are always going to go back a few scenes when they resume. Also, respect that all members of the crew are an integral and important part of the show. Introduce yourself and learn their names.

Small or Unresponsive Audiences: The lone audience member today paid the same ticket price as the full house that loved your performance last night. A quiet audience may be enjoying the play as much as the louder one. You have a responsibility to perform the show the best you can no matter the audience size or behaviour.

Public: When you are out and about town and someone asks you how the show is going, always be positive. You might say, "Show's going great. You'd better get your tickets early."

Rehearsal Rules and Guidelines

1. A positive attitude is everything! Treat your fellow actors and director with respect.
2. Don't create problems—create solutions.
3. Be ready to rehearse on time; get to the theatre before rehearsal start time and warm yourself up.
4. Listen to your stage manager and assistant stage manager. They are giving you direction directly from the director.
5. Check your email every day for important information and updates.
6. Always bring a pencil and your script to rehearsal and write down the notes the director gives you, every time.
7. Pay attention during rehearsal. Know when it is your time on stage. Do not have the director or stage manager have to come and find you.
8. Be direct-able. That means try the things asked of you, even if you disagree. If you continue to disagree, speak to the director but only after you've tried it a few times.
9. No fooling around or talking backstage during rehearsal.
10. Your creative ideas are always welcome and encouraged—but remember the director has the final say.
11. Our dressing room is small. If the cast is large, put your street clothes neatly in a bag, hung by the door or wherever you are directed. Do not leave them in a heap or on a chair.

12. Always hang up your costume and place props back in their proper place after rehearsal.
13. Do not handle other people's props.
14. Actors and crew are equals. Theatre would not happen without both working together to create art. Show appreciation for crew members.
15. Learn your lines by the "off book" deadline. Real character development begins after you know your lines.
16. Do not break character if something goes wrong on stage.
17. Be willing to help in any way you can to make this a successful production. Theatre is a collaborative creation.

Backstage Performance Etiquette

1. No smoking or drinking backstage or in the dressing room.
2. Do not leave the premises in costume.
3. Do not ever go into front of house in costume before a performance.
4. All actors and crew members must sign in at the call board when they arrive.
5. Do not drink or eat anything other than water in your costume without covering it.
6. Do not leave the backstage or dressing room area (including the outside area) during a performance.
7. Do not go on stage cold. Prior to each entrance prepare by thinking about where you (as your character), have just come from and what you want as you enter each scene.
8. You are responsible for your own property; it is best to leave all jewelry or valuables at home.
9. No talking backstage during a performance. Conversation in the dressing room should be a whisper or very quiet. The dressing room door may open at any time.
10. Please stay away from your cell phone while backstage.
11. Absolutely no visitors backstage during the performance, after the half-hour call, or immediately after the show. Remember backstage is a private area, and fellow actors may be changing. Strangers can feel like an intrusion to the trusted space you and your fellow actors have created together.

Signature of Actor