

LEARNING MODULE #1

Theatre Arts 101 – Introduction To
Theatre, Television and Motion
Pictures



What is the minimum that is needed on order for a theatrical event to happen?

- We experience theatrical events in every day life.
- When we observe others (people watching) we are experiencing a theatrical event.
- When we change our *persona* (*Latin for 'mask'*) in situations, we are in a sense a part of a theatrical event.
- All we need is a place to act and a place to watch.
- All theatre needs essentially is **ACTOR** and **AUDIENCE**.

Theatre comes from the Greek word, "*theatron*" meaning "seeing place".





PETER BROOK, The Empty Space

“I can take any empty space and call it a bare stage. A man walks across this empty space whilst someone else is watching him, and this is all that is needed for an act of theatre to be engaged.”

Differences Between Theatre, Film, and Television

One of the differences between Theatre and Film is the *immediacy* of Theatre.

Although a production is rehearsed many times, performing in front of a **LIVE AUDIENCE** makes each performance different.

There are no “do overs” or “takes” in theatre.

Anything can happen – each audience/performance makes theatre unique.

What are some other differences between Theatre, Television and Film?

(Reflect, then advance the slide)

- Actors rehearse for many weeks before a performance in front of a live audience.
- There are no additional takes if an actor does not say a line correctly or forgets a line.
- Theatre comes from a long-standing tradition (5th Century B.C. Greece.) Film dates back to late 1800's, Television: 1940's
- Financially, Films and Television cost more to produce. With Theatre – well, we know what Peter Brook has to say on the matter.. 😊

ATTENDING THEATRE PERFORMANCES

Getting you ready to see a theatrical
performance and THEATRE
ETIQUETTE

THEATRE ETIQUETTE

What does “**etiquette**” mean?

Well for some, it’s a stuffy way of saying “be polite” but moreover it will help you and other fellow audience members to enjoy the play.

If you have never seen a play before, the following will be helpful and make you more comfortable about your experience.

How Do I Know What Play I Should Watch?

There are many plays to watch. www.goldstarevents.com is one link. LASTAGETIX.com is another that will offer discounted tickets.

Look for plays through search engines and/or newspaper reviews (local examples are in LA Weekly, LA Times, Pasadena Weekly, Burbank Leader, and the Toluca Times.)

Read the play synopsis (a brief summary of what the play is about). Some plays are for mature audiences (much like films – but plays don't usually have rating systems.) When in doubt, call the theatre and ask.

You can see plays or musicals, but for your assignment, it must be theatre (no stand up comedy shows or dance concerts, please.)

SOME GUIDELINES FOR GOING TO THE THEATRE

Dress Appropriately – as though you are going out to dinner at a nice restaurant. No torn jeans, flip-flops, baseball caps, hooded sweatshirts, etc.

Arrive promptly – this means 20 – 30 minutes before to pick up your tickets, use the restroom, and enjoy concessions (food or drink is not permitted in the theatre).

Turn off all cell phones and electronic devices – this means no text messaging, no vibrating phones. **TURN OFF THOSE PHONES!**

Leave your camera at home – copyright laws prohibit photographing and/or recoding a performance.





Pick up a program – and take the time to read the Director’s Notes and any other background information about the play.

No Talking during the performance – if you do anything that is disruptive to the actors or your fellow audience members, you will be removed from the theatre.

No Food or Drink Allowed in the Theatre – unwrap noisy cough drops before the show starts.

Do not leave in the middle of a performance

Please do not talk during a performance – laughing at jokes and applauding the actors is encouraged, but do not repeat the dialogue or explain the plot to others during the show. (Here is another difference between being at home watching television...)

Please respect the space – no feet on the seats or draping your legs over the seat in front of you – do not walk on seats to get to yours (yes, some have done this very disrespectful move!)

Please remain in your seat until the end of the performance. This is usually signaled with a “curtain call” or actor’s giving the audience a bow. The “house lights” will resume and you will be free to exit the theatre.

FINALLY – enter the world of the play! Relax and Watch! The Play is being done for YOU!



WHY ALL THE “RULES”?

True – there are a lot of things to remember and consider for the first time theatre-goer.

But why? What’s the big deal?

Tradition and Live Theatre

First – you are watching as an audience member in front of actors who have a big job to do with remembering lines and giving you the best performance possible. Anything disruptive can distract the actors. (Believe me – they can hear and notice EVERYTHING including your response. It is what “feeds” them to do the best job. A great audience means a great performance!

RITUAL and THEATRE

What is ritual?

Something that involves long standing traditions.

Something that we repeat or do over and over again.

Something we do in hopes that the result will be good.

Examples of RITUALS

- Weddings
- Funerals
- Graduations
- We have daily rituals – things we do when we get up in the morning (reading the paper, coffee, etc.)
- Prayer
- Dancing

All of these are have some ceremonial aspects that are based in tradition.



Tradition and Live Theatre

The origins of Theatre are deeply rooted in ritual – all the way back to Ancient Greece. (5th Century B.C.)

Theatre is rooted in religion and many of the customs and conventions that remain are out of respect and traditions. For many, the theatre space is still very sacred and should be respected.

Imagine being disruptive in a church or during a wedding ceremony or funeral – that probably would not go over very well.

AUDIENCE and “Suspension of Disbelief”

To “suspend your disbelief” means that you are so engrossed in the play that you actually can believe that what is happening onstage is true.

For example: you might believe that a red fabric or ribbon serves as blood from a wound, or that paper falling from the sky is really snow. This is difficult to do if there are other distractions.

Enjoy the play and CATHARSIS

CATHARSIS is a term that means “**purging of emotions**”.

The Greeks believed that **catharsis** was important in order to be healthy and have a good life.

More about The Greeks and The Origins of Theatre in **LEARNING MODULE #2**.

www.goldstarevents.com

Don't forget to purchase your tickets for your plays as soon as possible. A lot of plays are sold out quickly.

It's easy and FREE to become a member of this site that offers $\frac{1}{2}$ price tickets.

You can also go to the theatre websites directly.

END OF LEARNING MODULE #1

Enjoy Your Play Going Experience!