



## Attending a Performance at the Columbia Theatre

### THE COLUMBIA THEATRE

Welcome to the Columbia Theatre! We are pleased to have you here as our guest. As a student, your visit to this Education Outreach performance is appreciated.

Columbia Theatre was built in 1928 as a place to see movies and funny plays known as *vaudeville*. It was closed for a long time, but was restored and reopened as a *performing arts* theatre in 2002. A *performing arts* theatre is a theatre that presents plays, music, dance, and many other types of performances for people to enjoy.

### YOUR ROLE

Attending a production at Columbia Theatre is special because you are witnessing a live-action, happening-at-the-moment event. Never again will there be an identical performance of that particular play or concert.

The reason there will never be another presentation exactly the same is because of you, the audience. Although the performers on the stage know exactly what to do when the curtain goes up, feedback from the people watching always influences the final presentation. Did you applaud or gasp at the surprise turn of events or did you fidget in your chair?

At the same time, members of the audience are affected by each other's actions. It is easy to get involved in what is happening on stage when everybody around you is focusing on the production. On the other hand, it is hard to keep up with the story line or follow the music if people are talking or leaving during the performance.

Every time you act or react in a theatre you are communicating something that can influence the audience's enjoyment of the show and can affect the performance. That is why your role is so important.

### BEFORE YOU ARRIVE AT THE THEATRE

Usually a musical performance or a play is easier to understand and therefore more fun if you have learned a little about it beforehand. Do you know who the author is and what inspired the creation of the piece? Are you familiar with the era and the setting? Have you read about this particular production?

Of course, you do not have to do research to come to a theatrical event, but a few minutes reading a newspaper review or time spent at the library looking up background material can add to the pleasure of being a spectator.

## **THE DAY OF THE SHOW**

When you arrive at the theatre with your classmates, enter quietly in a single file line. An *usher* will show you to your seats in the performance hall. An *usher* is a person who helps audience members find their seats and keeps everything running smoothly. Remember that you have a responsibility to keep the Columbia Theatre clean and unharmed so that it can be enjoyed by many more students like yourself. Don't bounce up and down in your seat or put your feet on your seat or the back of the seat in front of you. Also remember that candy, gum, food, and drinks are not allowed in the performance hall.

Do not wait until the show has begun to decide that you require a drink of water or a visit to the restroom. Spectators who get up and leave an auditorium distract everyone around them, so try to stay in your seat until the performance is complete.

Also keep in mind that you are not the only one who is aware of every sound; the performers can hear too. And while you are not expected to stay completely still during a performance, being attentive throughout the performance will contribute to the atmosphere that the actors are attempting to create and to the enjoyment of your fellow theatregoers.

## **APPLAUSE**

When should you applaud? Well, there are specific moments during a performance when applause is appropriate: when the conductor comes on the stage; at the end of each act in a play; at the end of a complete section in a musical concert (if you are not positive about when a section ends, following your program will help); and at the end of a curtain call. Of course, there are instances when an outstanding performance will generate spontaneous applause from an audience. If you are still not sure, just take your cue from the rest of the audience.

When the show is over, the performers will take their bows at *curtain call*. This is your chance to thank them for the performance they have just given you. When the quality of a performance has been really excellent, audience members may stand when applauding, giving the cast a *standing ovation*.

Following the final curtain, make your way out of the theatre slowly and quietly. With everyone leaving at the same time, you may have to be patient - especially with older audience members who take a little longer to get up the aisles.

Take a few minutes after the show to think about what you saw and heard. Was it good? Did you enjoy it? Why? A good performance really isn't over when the curtain goes down. You can remember and enjoy it for a lifetime.