

# THEATRE TRADITIONS & ETIQUETTE

When we know and follow the traditions and etiquette of the theatre, we become linked to a community of artists and crafts-people that extends from the beginnings of theatre to include ourselves and every other theatre-producing organization today.

The traditions of theatre are more than pleasantries and empty sayings. They are guidelines for the collaborative process of theatre. When practiced, these guidelines are often referred to as “being professional.”

The term “professionalism” acknowledges the concept that our work as theatre artists depends upon each of us treating our fellow artists and crafts-people with simple courtesy and respect.

Respect the work of your fellow company members. Appreciate what each collaborator brings to the production.

We depend upon each other to create good theatre. Accepting and acknowledging everyone’s contributions signals to ourselves and to our collaborators that what each of us we does as a theatre artist is not only “fun” and personally fulfilling but is also important, meaningful, and valuable to our society.

Among the specific traditions and guidelines/code of behavior we follow in the High Point University Department of Theatre:

- Arrive early to all rehearsals, production meetings, work calls, and performances.
- Come to each rehearsal and work call prepared and focused on the task at hand.
- Be courteous. Say “Please” before requests and “thank you” after.
- All personnel should acknowledge the stage managers calls with a polite “thank you.”
- Conscientiously meet all production deadlines.
- When creating a role, know your lines thoroughly when you are supposed to be “off book.”

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- When arriving at the theatre for performances, actors and crew members should sign themselves in ON TIME. Never ask others to sign in for you.
- Actors should be unfailingly courteous to ALL production personnel. Crew members are colleagues and collaborators, not “assistants.”
- Allow for quiet time before the performance and rehearsal. This helps us prepare and focus for the work ahead.
- Limit your socializing to appropriate times - prior to and after rehearsals and during rehearsal breaks. Talking and horseplay during can be disruptive, distracting, and, at times, dangerous.
- Practical jokes have no place in performance - ever.
- An actor never gives another actor an unsolicited note on performances.
- Actors should arrive at costume fittings on time. In addition:
  - Take a shower or bath before your fitting.
  - Use deodorant.
  - Wear proper, clean underwear.
- In the dressing room, actors should:
  - Keep your things to your allotted counter space.
  - Never borrow another actor’s makeup (or anything) without permission.
  - Use deodorant, but not perfume - others may be more sensitive to scents.
  - Be modest - others may be less comfortable with nudity than you.
- Always hang up your costume - unless it is a crew-assisted quick-change.
- Do not eat or drink in costume. In some cases water may be permitted.
- When cast in a role, an actor should not alter hairstyle (including facial hair) in any way until first consulting the costume designer.

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- Communicate any costume damage to the costume supervisor or wardrobe head.
- If you make a mess in your dressing area, clean it up.
- Do not move, borrow or play with props - especially if they are not your own.
- Let the stage manager know if a prop or scenic element is broken.
- Honor stage traditions - even superstitions - to maintain esprit de corps.
  - Do not whistle backstage.
  - Do not say “Macbeth” in the theatre.
  - Say “break a leg” not “good luck.”
- Crewmembers: you should wear appropriate, clean clothing for your call.
- Do not eat or drink backstage.
- Cast and crew should not talk backstage except for show related business.
- Crew members should not talk to actors except for show related business - it may break their concentration.
- Headsets are used only for communication required during production such as calls, warnings, and cues. Technicians, stage managers, and assistant stage manager should not chat while on head-set.
- Crew members: do not perform tasks that are not assigned to you.
- Do not move, borrow, or play with the props.
- Report broken props or scenic elements to the stage manager.

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