

# Theatre Etiquette

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As you enter the theatre you are greeted by an usher who provides you with a program, checks your ticket and helps you find your seat. Most theatres where opera, plays, and musical theater are performed forbid food and drink in the auditorium.

It is important to remember to arrive at the theater before the announced **curtain time**. When you enter, the curtain is down and the **house lights** are up. The dimming of the house lights is the signal that the show is about to begin. As the house darkens, the conductor enters the pit. Arriving at the **podium**, the conductor is outlined by a spotlight and he or she turns to greet the audience, which returns the greeting with applause.

Many operas begin with an orchestral piece, known as an **overture**, a non-sung musical introduction to the opera, before the curtain rises. Most operas have intermissions that provide the audience a chance to use the restrooms, have a drink, get some fresh air and talk while the stagehands change the set. However, since the performance of *The Magic Flute* that you will be seeing is only one hour in length, **there is no intermission**. Therefore, it is very important that before the show begins you get your drink of water or make that trip to the restroom. It is very disruptive to other audience members, not to mention to the performers, when you leave your seat during a performance.

Show your enthusiasm by applause. It is important that you enjoy the show – laugh and cry as you like, but **please do not talk**, because that disturbs others who are trying to hear the words and music.

Remember also that the entire company is trying to give you their best performance. Unnecessary noise from the audience makes it difficult for them to concentrate and **it is absolutely forbidden to take pictures or try to record what is going on**.

At the end of the show the performers, conductor and director come back out for **curtain calls**, giving an opportunity for the audience to show their appreciation through applause. People who are particularly enthusiastic shout “**Bravo.**” When the house lights come up, it is a signal for the audience to leave and let the tired performers go home.



## Etiquette in a Nutshell



Show your enthusiasm by applause, but only at the appropriate times – at the end of arias or songs or at the end of the show.

**BE RESPECTFUL OF OTHERS AND REFRAIN FROM TAKING ANY PICTURES DURING THE PERFORMANCE.**

Talking during a performance interferes with other students hearing the words and the music of the opera.