

How to fail Theatre Etiquette 101

Over the years, I've attended more concerts and live theatre openings that I can even come close to recalling.

And for the most part, I really enjoy covering entertainment happenings around town.

I like to think nearly two decades of attending the shows and writing reviews have given me a certain insight about stage productions.

And I've also come to realize some people don't really know how to act in a theatre.

So in response to that lack of... er, ah, knowledge, I've come up with a selection of the more subtle ways of making your presence known at a live theatre presentation.

I've called it 10 Ways to Fail Theatre Etiquette 101.

1. When you arrive at the theatre, and are shown to your seat, make sure you get up to go pee about five minutes before the show starts—the people seated on the outside of the row will love you.

2. And when you do exit to go to the little girls'/boys' room, be sure to announce it—we all want to know. Also make sure you step on at least one set of toes. If you're carrying a handbag, be sure to let it nail at least one person in the face as you squeeze by. (Apologies are NOT necessary—people love to be abused like that.)

3. When the lights dim, that's the signal to start up a conversation with the person three seats down. Don't hesitate to talk loud and be obnoxious. We all know you wanna be noticed.

4. Be sure to have your cell phone or pager turned on, with the ringer on the highest volume. People love to hear it ring out through the most important part of the dialogue. Besides, letting it ring brings attention to the fact you're a very important person, expecting a call from the U.S. president, the prime minister or God.

5. Be sure to offer a running commentary on the play, so all those seated around you can catch your slant on the plot. Statements like

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Ted Brown

"What the hell is she doing now?" or "Doesn't he look like your sister's kid?" are the exact words all theatregoers paid money to hear.

6. Also make certain you point out when the play has familiar dialogue. Loud exclamations like "That line is right out of the damn movie!" is that great revelation we've all been waiting for, especially when the play has the exact same title as the aforementioned movie.

7. Make sure you press your knees against the back of the seat in front of you, so the person occupying that seat knows you're there. He needs that constant jiggling so he won't doze off.

8. If you know one of the actors on stage personally, be sure to call out 'Way to go Bob, ol' buddy!' He'll be so pleased you showed up.

9. Make absolutely certain you insert a nervous, awkward laugh at the most poignant moment of that dramatic play. It adds atmosphere, and yes, people will notice you're there.

10. Finally, after the show, be sure to leave your seat and stop right in front of the doors, to start up a full scale conversation with another individual beside you. The people standing behind have nowhere to go, and they're only too happy to hear you talk about the weather.

There they are folks, the 10 Ways to Fail Theatre Etiquette 101. Study 'em and learn 'em.

And when we see you at the local theatre, be ready for the test at the end of the night.

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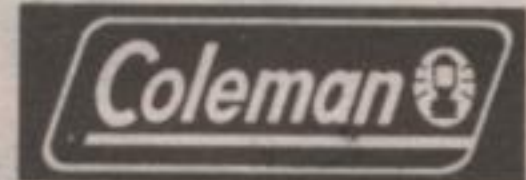


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