

How many dancers

does it take to change a light bulb?

Well none actually, it's Stage Management's job but do you know how to behave back stage?

The Grand Opera House in Cumberland Street is Yorkshire's largest, fully operational theatre and regularly plays host to top entertainers. We are lucky enough to have the opportunity to perform there and it is important to know what you can expect and what is expected of you. Performing in a real theatre space is great fun and great experience, so make the most of it and to help you here are some top tips:

ALWAYS arrive promptly, so that dress runs, technical rehearsals or the show (!) aren't held up - give yourself plenty of time to get there, especially on the day of performance. Performers are traditionally '**called**' to be at the theatre **35 minutes before the curtain rises**, however, as dancers you should be there earlier to warm up properly and get into costume.

The **Stage Door** is the performers entrance and this is located at the side of the theatre building. *When you arrive find out the security code, you'll need to this to enter the building if the door is unmanned.*

The **dressing rooms** are arranged on several floors –you will be allocated dressing rooms when you arrive. *Keep all your belongings in your dressing room, except props and costume that you will need by the side of the stage. Speakers relay what is happening on stage to the dressing rooms so you'll know where the show is up to – think about when you need to be ready and your cues.*

Look after your costumes – don't leave them on the floor or in the loo or corridor - hang them up in the dressing rooms or where you're shown – it shows respect for yourself as a performer and the person who spent time making the costumes for you.

Light snacks are great to keep energy levels up. **Do eat bananas. Don't eat chocolate** – *it's messy and stains costumes. Bottled water is better than fizzy drinks – no blackcurrant or orange juice please!*

Stage access is through double doors that lead from the first corridor of dressing rooms. You can only access the stage from stage right. *To get to the other side of the stage (stage left) you will need to cross behind curtains at the very back of the stage – it will be dimly lit so TAKE CARE and DON'T be tempted to push, even if you are in a hurry.*

This traditional theatre has **wings** at each side of the stage. The space in the wings is unseen by the audience and you'll wait here before going on. *No one, apart from performers and back stage assistants, can be in the wings at any time for safety reasons.*

Silence should be observed at all times in the wings. *This is so performers who are on stage and/or preparing for an entrance are not distracted. You should also be as quiet as possible in the dressing room corridors.*

Be aware of the front of the stage - directly below this is the orchestra pit, and it is quite a drop! **Listen** to all the safety advice that you are given.

There are some weird and wonderful **theatre superstitions**.

- It is considered bad luck to whistle on stage. *This comes from a time when sailors used to man the fly floors, flying stage scenery in and out on ropes. The sailors used whistles as their signals, so if a performer inadvertently whistled they might get a large piece of scenery on their head!*
- A greater crime than whistling is saying “Macbeth” in a theatre building. *Years ago if a theatre was doing badly they would be forced to stage a performance of Macbeth as it was the only play sure to pull in audiences. Ever since it has been REALLY bad luck to say it, not sure why you’d want to but if you do feel the urge to discuss Shakespeare, say “the Scottish play” instead...*
- If you want to wish someone good luck say, “*break a leg*” – probably to ensure they won’t!

Be focussed and attentive, learn a lot and have a great time!

If you have any queries about the show please check with Lesley Ann or Val.

Please note: Performances require standard dress for all pupils: **black** socks, dance Shoes and leotards (footless tights if required). Hair should be off the face in a low ponytail or plait.

Can you or do you know a mum/dad or carer who may be free to help with chaperoning the younger dancers for part of the dress rehearsals and main performances? The little ones need the extra support and assistance - please can you let **Val Hart** know so we can ensure there are enough adults to help with make-up, costume and loo runs! Thank you.