

Rehearsal and Production Guidelines and Contract

The Department of Theatre and Dance at Florida Atlantic University (“the department”) conducts annual productions in which a limited number of students get to participate. Participation in these productions is a privilege that carries with it certain responsibilities. The way in which actors and crew members respond to these responsibilities often determine their success in future professional, educational, or community theatre.

Participating in a production is one of the most time consuming and satisfying activities within the department. It is a unique activity that requires the investment of time and energy of many individuals to create a work of performance art. In order to engage in a successful production there are certain expectations of all those involved. These expectations are a matter of consideration for others and the development of good work habits. It may be possible that future employers in the industry will ask about how these expectations were met when requesting recommendations. As such, the following is a list of guidelines for participation in rehearsals and performances of a department production

Theatre is an Ensemble Art. The actions (or lack of actions) of any individual can affect the success or failure of an activity that requires months of preparation. It is unfair to others involved in a production to give less than full attention to the production.

Availability. When an actor auditions for a show or crew members commit to a production position, they are assumed to be available for normal rehearsal periods through the closing of the show. Rehearsals may occur any night between auditions and opening night; technical rehearsals are normally held on the full week prior to opening. If an individual has any doubts about when they will be required to be at rehearsal, they should check with the director or stage manager at auditions.

Acceptance of a Role or Position. When an individual accepts participation in a play or dance concert, it is considered by the department as a contract. The only acceptable excuse for dropping out of a production is an emergency. It is also assumed that those who accept roles or positions accept the responsibility of devoting the energy and time necessary to present their best work.

Safety. Safety is of utmost importance in any production. During the rehearsal process and production adhering to the following guidelines will ensure a safe environment for all involved. Please report all safety concerns to the stage manager, director and/or specific discipline department: technical director, costume shop manager, etc.

Rehearsal Discipline.

- **Attendance.** A rehearsal requires the active participation of many individuals. The absence of anyone can waste the time of all the others. If an emergency requires an absence, it is the responsibility of the actor or crew member to notify the stage manager as soon as possible. No one should leave a rehearsal until dismissed by the stage manager.
- **Promptness.** It is expected that everyone involved in the rehearsal or performance will be on time and ready to begin the activity at the scheduled time. This includes any production related task, such as fittings, as scheduled by the director or stage manager. A rule-of-thumb is to arrive 15 minutes prior to the start time especially if warmups are required.
- **Use of Time.** Although there is a social aspect to participation in theatre, rehearsals and work calls are not the proper time for socializing. If an individual's participation is not required for a while, the time should be used for line study or blocking/choreography review.
- **Meeting Deadlines.** When the cast is scheduled to be off-book, it is expected that each cast member will know their lines.

- **Quiet.** There is seldom any excuse for any talking (or other noise) in the rehearsal area by those not involved in the scene. Any unnecessary noise adversely affects an individual's concentration and, therefore, the rehearsal or performance.
- **Guests.** Individuals not connected with the rehearsal should not attend rehearsals unless it is arranged through the director or stage manager. Students interested in observing rehearsal as a learning experience may obtain permission from the director.
- **Rehearsal Props and Performance Props.** Rehearsal props and performance props are there for one reason only—to be used in rehearsal or performance by the actor to whom they are assigned. Props are often borrowed and/or irreplaceable and should not be used by anyone other than the designated actor.
- **Phones.** Phones are not allowed in the rehearsal room unless approved by the artistic team. The first instance of phone usage the offending phone will be taken away. The second instance of a phone usage the offending phone will be removed. The third instance of phone usage all cast and crew phones will be collected at that time and for all rehearsals moving forward.
- **Prompting.** When actors require assistance with a line in rehearsal, they should remain in character and say "line." The stage manager will read out the line until the actor resumes speaking.
- **Direction.** Don't give unsolicited advice or notes to others. Remember, only the director is responsible for orchestrating the ensemble effort. Actors should not hesitate to discuss questions of interpretation with the director. Stage managers or designated dance, fight or vocal captains should be the only persons giving notes after opening.
- **Technical Rehearsals.** These are often the longest rehearsals of the entire process. It is the first time that most of the technical elements are joined with the production. Patience is required of all involved. Actors are normally asked to wear rehearsal clothing similar in color to their costumes. Remember that the technical crew has only this limited time to complete their part of the production while the cast has been working for several weeks. **From the technical rehearsals onward, the stage manager assumes control of the production.** It is imperative that performers and crew give this individual strict attention, since they are the one link between cast, crew, and house activities. Observation of rehearsals, an understanding of performance intent, and intense attention to production concerns will have occupied the stage manager's time for the past several weeks. Hypothetically, no one knows the production better than this individual.

Dress Rehearsals and Performances. These final rehearsals require the total concentration of the performers and crew, but new elements will still be integrated into the production.

- Arrive at the theatre **no later than the call time.** Sign-in on the call sheet upon arrival. Do not leave the building under any circumstances without permission from the Stage Manager.
- **Costume.** Usually many hours have gone into the creation of each costume for the production. The director and the costume designer have determined the proper costumes for each character for this production. It is the responsibility of the actor to care for the costume and wear it appropriately. Jokes or complaints about the appearance of oneself or other actors are inappropriate and unconstructive. Eating or drinking in costume is strictly prohibited. No actor should go to the front of house areas or leave the theatre in costume or makeup. Before leaving the theater, report any costume repairs needed.
- **Phones.** All cast and crew phones are collected during technical rehearsals, dress rehearsals, and performances unless otherwise directed by the artistic team.

- **Makeup.** Actors are responsible for their own makeup. During the dress rehearsal period, assistance in the design and technique appropriate to each character will be provided, but normally each actor should be able to apply their own makeup following the final dress rehearsal. Assistance will be provided for special makeup applications.
- Apart from preparations of **costuming and make-up**, actors must **check hand properties (props)** for placement and availability. This must be done before the half-hour call, since the house will open after that time.

Green Room Conduct. During final rehearsals and performances the Green Room is a place for the participants in the production to wait for and prepare for their entrance or activity. It is necessary for those involved to concentrate upon their function in the production—other activities should be avoided. Keeping the Green Room clean is the responsibility of those using the Green Room.

Content, Intimacy, and Touch.

- **Content within the production.** The department makes an effort to grant equal access and opportunity in casting and in assembling production and design teams. In particular, when producing culturally specific work the department will seek production personnel who can speak to that cultural experience. During the rehearsal process, participants should voice concern if they feel uncomfortable with the use of their cultural personhood, which may include:
 - Costume pieces that can reasonably be understood as culturally demeaning, which were not disclosed at audition/casting, and could not have been expected by a reading of the script or otherwise available materials
 - Staging (culturally based violence or abuse, for example), which was not disclosed at the time of audition/casting
 - Accents or dialects to underscore a cultural representation not disclosed at the time of auditions/casting
 - When staging scenes of cultural violence, or other culturally charged narratives and language, we will follow the following practices:
 - Before work starts the actors, director, and stage manager should agree to the requirements of the planned activity. Participants are then responsible for staying within those agreed upon boundaries
 - Actors should communicate any injury, discomfort, or fatigue experienced before, during, and after rehearsals
 - Adequate time should be allocated at the end of rehearsal for cooling down, asking questions, and voicing concerns
 - The emotional risk associated will be recognized throughout the process when working with charged materials
 - When staging scenes of violence and intimacy, we will follow the following practices:
 - Adequate time should be allocated for stretching and warming up before all choreography rehearsals
 - Adequate time should be given to teach, rehearse, and adjust all choreography or movement techniques
 - Adequate time should be allocated at the end of rehearsal for cooling down, asking questions, and voicing concerns
 - Before work starts the actors, director, choreographer, and stage manager should agree to the requirements of the planned activity (kiss, slap, dance,

etc.). Participants are then responsible for staying within those agreed---upon boundaries

- A choreography captain who is typically a cast member with experience in the form of physical theatre being used should be chosen to ensure that the choreography is rehearsed and doesn't change unintentionally. The captain is empowered to notify the stage manager or designer/choreographer of any issues with the choreography.
- Time should be set aside at the beginning of rehearsal to run through choreography. These calls are particularly important before running the show. Calls should be conducted in a distraction---free, appropriately lit space.
- Actors should communicate any injury, discomfort, or fatigue experienced before, during, and after rehearsals.
- The director/choreographer and actors should agree on a vocabulary of safety (i.e., the word "bail" could be used to abandon a movement mid-execution)

Intimacy. Expectations for roles are disclosed in the audition sheets. An artist has the opportunity to object prior to casting of the role. By accepting the offered role, it is understood that parties consent to the activities posted in the audition notice. When a script or directorial decision calls for intimate acts, this will be disclosed on the audition notice along with if an intimacy coordinator will be involved in the production. During the course of rehearsals, artists may find that person-to-person contact has grown and evolved due to acting choices. The artists and director have the right to change and revoke the additional contact added beyond the disclosed expectations during auditions. If there is a disagreement between the director and actor concerning the physical contact agreed upon when accepting the role or modifications that have occurred since agreeing to the role, the matter will be resolved by the department chair and department faculty. Determinations by the department may include replacing the actor with the understudy or other results deemed relevant by the department.

Touching.

- **Director, Choreographer/Student interaction.** Physical contact in the production between the director/choreographer and the student as well as between the students is never intended to be sexual in nature nor demean the student and is used solely for the purpose of clarity and physical understanding in dance and acting for a production. On the first day of rehearsal, there will be brief discussion on physical boundaries and consent. All parties involved will be asked to grant consent before continuing with physical contact. Touch will never be in the groin or chest area and it is the responsibility of each participant to inform the director/choreographer if physical boundaries have changed prior to the start of that rehearsal. Some rehearsals may have a more detailed touch policy.
- **Student/Student interactions.** Within the storytelling disciplines, touch happens between student performers and this touch must also be established with consent between the students prior to the engagement of the scene, dance, or movement composition. The students first establish the physical boundaries of the type of touch that will be permitted between each other. This touch is for the specific scene, and it is understood that consent prior to the touch must be reestablished each time.

Understudies. Being an understudy is a difficult job, which can be made more difficult if the understudy is not kept in the loop throughout the production process. This standard seeks to provide ways to prepare, include, and inform understudies so they are ready to save the day. The department sees the role of an understudy as an opportunity to participate in the training that

happens in the rehearsal room and as an opportunity to prepare for professional opportunities as understudies and swings. Understudies will be engaged in all aspects of the production. Directors may choose to engage more understudies or require attendance at more rehearsals at their discretion. Understudy responsibilities beyond those listed below must be communicated clearly to the students prior to auditions. The following are the basic understudy requirements.

- For non-musicals, a minimum of 2 understudies will be used. One person will cover all male-presenting characters, and the other will cover all female-presenting characters. All gender non-specific roles will be assigned by the director. For musicals, a minimum of 2-4 understudies will be used (depending on the vocal demands of the score). Understudies will be assigned characters to cover based on vocal requirements.
- Understudies are expected for the first week of rehearsals and to attend all music and table work rehearsals, and all run-thrus (entire show or individual acts).
- Understudies are expected to attend all tech rehearsals.
- Understudies are expected to be in town and within 15 minutes of the theatre during the run of the show.
- Understudies are expected to be able to perform with book in hand, implementing all blocking (fight direction and intimacy notwithstanding) and major acting choices as directed.
- Understudies will perform in black clothing (ideally provided by the actor).
- Any changes to this policy must be in writing and agreed upon by both understudy and director prior to the start of rehearsal.
- All understudies are welcome at every rehearsal including combat and intimacy rehearsals.

I have read all the above guidelines and will abide by them during the rehearsal and production.

Participant Name: _____

Participant Signature: _____

Date: _____

Name of Production: _____