

Helpful Hints

Accessories

Please do not wear jewelry including earrings, necklaces, watches, bracelets or rings. For your costume accessories, use a Ziploc bag to hold accessories (hairpiece, gloves, etc.). Use a different accessory bag for each costume. Label the bag with the name of the dance and its contents. This will help keep everything in its place!

Blocking Rehearsals

All scheduled blocking rehearsals are mandatory. Be sure to wear dance attire and bring the appropriate shoes for all rehearsals. This is your first opportunity to practice your dance on the stage where you will perform.

Call Board

All production information will be available online at www.metrofinearts.com on the "Call Board" portion of the site. Please check back often, as all important information and any last-minute updates will be posted online as soon as they are available.

Calm, Cool and Collected

Remaining calm is the first step to success. If we all make an effort to keep the level of urgency and tension low, we will continue to provide a positive and educational experience for our children. Unexpected events will take place. Remaining flexible is imperative. The show will go on!

Cameras

Remember, for the safety of our performers, that the use of cameras is absolutely prohibited during the performance. Bring a camera during rehearsal week and get all the stage and candid shots you'd like. Since these are dress rehearsals, your pictures should look like you took them during the show. Leave your camera at home on the day of the show. When you distribute tickets to your family and friends, please remind them to do the same.

Clothing Rack

If your child has more than one costume, it may benefit you to purchase a portable clothing rack. Reasonably durable clothing racks with wheels can be purchased at stores such as Wal-Mart or Target. If your child is in several dances and/or plans to dance again next year, it's a smart investment that keeps you organized, prevents wrinkles, and provides a little dressing privacy. Hang costumes on the rack in the order they will be needed in the show.

Costumes

Students will begin to receive their costumes in June. With each costume you will receive a costume information sheet. The costume information sheet details all necessary information such as tights and shoes, hair accessories, etc. This helps to ensure uniformity within each class. Please wait until after the performance to play in your costumes as they are difficult to clean. Do not iron or attempt to launder costumes as you may damage them. Costumes should be hung up and any loose pieces should be placed in a zip-lock bag and attached to the hanger for safe keeping. Any costume issues or questions should be directed to the front desk staff.

NOTE: Do not wear your costume prior to the dress rehearsal date. Also, do not leave the dressing area wearing your costume. If you must leave, you must wear a cover-up.

Dressing Rooms

Dressing room assignments will be listed in the lobby at Blocking Rehearsal. All students will be provided with a dressing room. Students will have the opportunity to view the production in the audience during dress rehearsal. On the day of the performance however, students will remain in designated backstage areas after being signed-in. Just like most dance concerts, our show runs approximately 3 hours in length. We can assure you that your children will be engaged in fun and exciting activities while they wait backstage for their performance. We will attempt to air the performance via closed-circuit television in each dressing room. Activity boxes, snacks and games will be available to keep our youngest students occupied while they are waiting for their performance. Class parents for young students will be trained in stage make-up and hair so that the children can feel free to play while they wait backstage. If you have any concerns regarding the backstage procedures, please check at the front desk.

Drinks

Water, water, water! Colored sodas and Gatorade do not mix well with costumes! If you feel the need to replenish your electrolytes, please cover your costume with an oversized shirt or cover-up before taking the first sip. Costumes are difficult and expensive to clean, so please take special care of them.

DVD Orders

One DVD is provided per paid Production Fee. If you wish to purchase additional copies for family or friends, please fill out the DVD Order Form attached to this packet. Our production DVDs are professionally recorded and produced and make for a great keepsake of the event. DVDs may be ordered up to the day of the show and will be available for pickup after August 1st.

Extra Everything

Production week is the time to have extra everything! A sample checklist has been attached for your convenience. Be sure to have at least one extra pair of tights in each color that you need.

Additional extras should include:

- Hair gel
- Hair nets
- Bobby pins
- Hair spray
- Make-up brushes
- Paper towels and tissues
- Water
- Non-messy snacks
- A small sewing kit to repair ripped costumes or shoe elastics (also see Safety pins)
- Baby wipes/Shout wipes (to fix makeup mistakes or dirty hands)
- Baby powder
- Safety pins (for emergency costume repairs)
- Clear nail Polish (for minor holes in tights)
- Tylenol, Advil, Motrin or your pain reliever of choice
- Invisible Band-Aids

Fan Clubs

Family members and friends are not allowed backstage or in the dressing rooms during rehearsals or performances. The same applies during intermission and after the show. There is a lot of backstage activity in a limited space, and dressing rooms are a private area. Please remind your family and guests to be respectful of these areas. If they wish to greet a performer after the show or present flowers, they should do so in the lobby.

First Aid

MFAC will provide an on site medical professional at all times during rehearsals and performances. Accidents may happen and we strive to be prepared for the unexpected. If an injury does occur, please see any member of our production team. They will immediately find help.

Flowers

A great way to honor and praise your child is with a beautiful flower bouquet. Flowers will be for sale by pre-order at MFAC beginning in May. You may purchase flowers from MFAC which will be delivered to the theater on the day of the performance. Parents fill out a card at the studio and the florist attaches the card to the flowers. We will have a limited number of extra bouquets at the theater for purchase; therefore if you plan to use this service, please pre-order.

Fun

You've worked all year in class and during rehearsals. Your costumes are ready and you have your shoes, tights and accessories in line. Live this experience to its fullest and have fun!

Hair and Makeup:

You will receive a handout detailing your hair and make-up requirements with your costume. All students must wear their hair in a low classical ballet bun at the nape of the neck. Please pin all bangs away from the face. Secure your bun with a hair net, extra strength gel and lots of hairpins and bobby pins. If you need assistance, please see the "How-to" book located at the front desk. MFAC will also have a hands-on makeup and hair demonstration class in early June. A "How-to" for buns is also available at MFAC Online.

Students must wear FULL STAGE MAKEUP to ensure a dynamic performance. Without stage makeup performers become "washed out" and facial features and expressions are not visible from the audience. If you need assistance, please see the "How to" book at the front desk. No glitter, please.

Please note: Students in PPI, PPII, Combo I, and Pre-Primary Ballet are NOT required to wear full stage makeup. Please see the "How to" book at the front desk for additional information.

Due to the hot and humid weather, you may prefer to wait until you get to the dressing room to apply your stage makeup. You can save time by doing the hair at home, but may wish to leave the makeup until you arrive.

Practice, practice, practice! Remember that stage makeup and classical ballet buns take professional artists years to perfect. Please practice your techniques at home before the week of the production.

Individual Pictures

Each studio location will have a dedicated Picture Day. Sign-up sheets will be posted in the lobby at both studios. Please sign up for one time slot per each costume in which you wish to be photographed. If you wish to be photographed in more than one costume, be sure to allow a minimum of 5 minutes in between so you can change costumes. MFAC will not schedule group or class pictures but if one is desired please consult with the other parents in your child's class.

Keeping Your Cool

It's HOT in June and July! Please remember to stay hydrated and avoid the sun whenever possible.

Label Everything

Shoes, accessories, tights, dance bags, hairpieces, etc. should all be labeled with your child's name. AS SOON AS YOU GET YOUR COSTUMES, LABEL EACH PIECE IN AN INCONSPICUOUS PLACE! Some parents find it helpful to label a small piece of material with the child's name and then sew it in a concealed location inside of the article. Lost and found will be collected after the production and brought back to the studio. If your name is listed on an article, it is much easier to return it to you.

No Nail Polish

Cast members may not wear nail polish on fingers or toes.

No Underwear

Students may not wear underwear under their costumes or tights. Panty lines are much more apparent under stage lights than in street clothes. Also remember to be careful of bra lines. Students in more than one dance may wish to purchase a flesh-toned leotard to wear under their costumes. MFAC is dedicated to producing quality productions; therefore, any student wearing underwear under their costume will kindly be asked to remove it prior to performing.

Parking

Parking at Bishop Ireton is limited. Please plan to carpool with other MFAC families if at all possible! Bishop Ireton will tow any cars parked in areas not designated as public parking. (i.e. Faculty/Staff lots, Handicapped Spaces)

Passing the Time

Rehearsals and productions bring very long days. Room parents in each dressing room will be equipped with activity boxes including cards, games, books and movies. Each dressing room is equipped with a TV and VCR. Since dressing rooms should remain low stress, quiet and organized, activities will help keep children occupied. Please avoid markers, glitter and glue, as they will ruin costumes. Older children may bring Walkmans, iPods Game Boys or other electronic devices. Remember to label all personal belongings. MFAC IS NOT RESPONSIBLE FOR LOST OR STOLEN ITEMS.

Patience

In order to make this experience as enjoyable as possible, please be sure to bring plenty of patience. You will need every ounce!

Performance List Planning

A production is just that: a production! Assemble your costumes, accessories, shoes and makeup several days in advance. Make a checklist of your dances, listing their costume, tights, shoes, and any additional accessories. This checklist will help ensure that you have everything with you before you leave for the theater. .

Before dress rehearsal, make a list of your child's dances in order. List the costume, type of shoe, color of tights and accessories needed for each piece. Remember that each show may be slightly different. Older student should bring three or more copies for each performance.

You may want to use the show line-up, provided by MFAC in June, and highlight each dance your child will participate in. Gauge how much time is in between each piece for changing purposes. If you have a quick change, you will need to arrange to have a quick changer assist you. Please contact the front desk for assistance.

Layering tights always allows for faster costume changes. Skin colored tights should always go on the bottom. Do not wear black tights over pink or skin colored tights over pink.

Program

Each year, MFAC prints a production program. The program lists students' names with their class dances. The program also includes an area for dedications. Parents and friends can submit Program Dedications by filling out the order form included in this packet. Each dedication message will be printed in the program. This makes a great keepsake! Photo entries are also available. Students sometimes use programs like a yearbook or to receive autographs from the main characters during the meet and greet after the show.

Security

Our production team consists of a security director and security personnel. Hired police officers will be present during all productions to assist with traffic and parking issues as well as to maintain security for our students backstage. For this reason, any parent who IS NOT volunteering during the production WILL NOT be permitted backstage during the production or during intermission.

Shoes

Please be sure to have the correct shoes for all your dances. A list of required shoes will be posted in the front lobby at both studios. If you have additional questions regarding shoes, please see the front desk. Remember to write your name inside each shoe. **All ribbon laced tap shoes should be replaced with elastic prior to dress rehearsal.**

Snacks

All students are asked to bring a non-messy snack on dress rehearsal and for the performance to share with 6 friends. Backstage Moms will assist in organizing the snacks. Water will be provided for all students ***Due to the nature of nut allergies, please bring snacks that do not contain traces of any nuts, peanuts, etc.** If your child has a food allergy, please notify the backstage volunteers and room parents immediately. Additionally, you may want to pack a specialized snack for your child.

Stretch (Before and After)

Remember to warm-up and stretch before and after your performance. Some students will perform in all four performances and dress rehearsals. Your muscles will be sore after the first dress rehearsal. Please remember to stretch when you arrive home for at least 20-minutes before you go to bed. A warm bath will also relieve muscle tension and pain. Older students will be given a warm-up on the stage prior to the performances to prevent injury and ensure that they are properly warmed-up.

Tap Shoes

No Tap Shoes may be worn in the auditorium. In addition, all ribbon laced tap shoes should be replaced with elastic prior to dress rehearsal.

Tights

All students should purchase **Capezio Hold and Stretch Tights**. This maintains uniformity throughout the production. No pantyhose please! A list of all tight requirements will be posted in the front lobby at both studios. You may wish to order your tights from MFAC. We will place the order for you and verify that you are ordering the correct tights. Tights are payable only by check. Please make checks out to MFAC. Remember, layering tights always allows for more changing time. Skin colored tights should always go on the bottom. Do not wear black tights over pink or skin colored tights over pink.

Timing

Be sure to arrive at the rehearsals and the performance at the time when you're instructed to do so. Bishop Ireton is located in a congested area near Old Town Alexandria. Be sure to allow ample travel time to arrive at the theater. Some families arrive before rush hour to avoid the traffic.

T-Shirts and Apparel

T-shirts and apparel will be available on a first come first serve basis at each studio location.

Video Taping

Please instruct your family and friends to leave their video cameras at home on the day of the performance. Remind them that the show is being professionally video taped. You and your family members are welcome to bring your video cameras and still cameras to rehearsals, but not to the production itself. For the safety of our performers, flash photography is prohibited at dress rehearsal.

Volunteers

MFAC relies on many parent volunteers to assist in creating fluidity in the performance. Because the MFAC staff will be busy with the production aspects of the performance, we have a variety of roles to fill. Ideally, we will have four sets of volunteers so parents will have a chance to sit in the audience and watch their child perform. If your child is only performing in one show, you may wish to consider volunteering for another show. If your child is performing in all four shows, you may wish to volunteer for only one show so that you may watch the others. Some volunteers will only be needed before the performances, during intermission, or after the performance. These volunteers will have the opportunity to view the performances. Volunteers will receive a free Wizard of Oz Production T-Shirt. If you are interested in filling one of these volunteer positions, please sign your name on the appropriate sign-up poster or speak to a member of the MFAC administrative staff.

Watching the Show

Students will have an opportunity to watch the production during dress rehearsal. Class Parents and additional volunteers will escort classes to the theater in groups. Students who have many changes will not watch the dress rehearsal. During the performance, most dressing rooms will televise the production via closed-circuit cabling. Students will not be permitted in the auditorium during the production. Remember, no tap shoes in the auditorium!

Zzzzzz

Since production season generally lends itself to late nights at the theater, please remember to rest as much as you can during the days prior to the performance. If possible, young children should take naps during the day, especially before their performance. Please remember not to spend the day before at Kings Dominion or running a marathon. Rest, rest, rest! The experience at the theater is highly stimulating and invigorating. Resting and proper nutrition are absolutely crucial to a fun and safe experience.