

Opera Room Guidelines and Tips

(Dutch Dairy, Mice, Soldiers, Party Boys)

Welcome to Tech Week in the Opera Room. To optimize our youngest dancers' enjoyment and safety backstage during *The Nutcracker*, we have compiled some guidelines and tips from experienced families to share. Apprentice and Junior Company dancers have different guidelines for check in and check out, photos, etc. This tip-sheet is intended for the Dutch Dairy, Mice, Soldier and any other non-apprentice children. The "What to Expect" document provides additional detail.

Guidelines

- **Hug spot** at the opera room door: after signing your child in at the front table; they will go into the room without you and set up their stuff with a wrangler.
- **During intermission**: please refrain from visiting the Opera room to say "hi." Keep your dancer focused on their amazing performance. If you wish, bring them a cupcake *after* the performance when you sign them out.
- **Pictures** with family and friends can be taken once your dancer is signed out; the hallways are congested, but happy places for photos out of costume.
- No **screen-based electronics** in the Wrangling room for children; so many devices have a camera option and this is a concern. We want children focused on the performance and quiet socializing, rather than their screen. Wranglers may put on a community DVD of *The Nutcracker*, depending on the mood of the Opera room. (See tips for more info)
- Please bring your child a non-nut **snack and water** in a container that is forgiving of spills. No chocolate, no popcorn, no colored candy (blue/purple tongues, ahh!) should be eaten in the Opera room. Children can have these treats, but save them for after they leave the room.

Tips

- Your child will be asked to **tidy** their area and things before they leave; please pack them things they know how to tidy.
- A **blanket, sleeping bag, or towel** to denote a child's "space" is often helpful in keeping track of belongings.
- **Activities**: Simple board or card games, colored pencils and coloring books, homework, books, simple crafts for individuals (or to share) are great activities. A quiet activity that is battery powered is okay; just not electronic gaming devices. Pack loose parts in baggies so kids can keep track of things.
- Some children bring **little gifts** (like candy canes, flowers, small sentiments) to the other dancers in their cast's role. If you are going to pass out gifts in the Opera room, please pack enough for all the dancers in your casts "role" (you can look at a program cast list that Kay sent over email). If you only pass out gifts to some children and not others, please do this outside of the Opera room to avoid hurt feelings. *This is not a necessary tradition to participate in...but if you are new, now you know!*
- The older dancers usually pass around an envelope for donations toward a **gift for our production staff**. If you bring some cash, you may contribute once the envelope makes it to the Opera room. (We will have it at the sign in table sometime later in the week.)
- Pack a **zippered sweatshirt and sweatpants** or leggings as the room can get chilly and tights need to be covered up to stay clean!
- Late night sleepy kids might want to put **pajamas** on after they change out of their costumes.

if you have further ideas to share with next year's families please email Ali: alilewis@illinois.edu