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THESPIANS™

AN EDUCATIONAL THEATRE ASSOCIATION AFFILIATE

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# Theatre on Quarantine: The Arts D the Reign of COVID



Photo: Des Moines Register

<https://www.desmoinesregister.com/story/news/health/2020/03/17/coronavirus-iowa-reynolds-state-public-health-emergency-covid-19-social-distancing/5067571002/>

## In the News...

The Coronavirus (COVID) has dominated the news recently, but the Iowa STOs are here to remind you that no matter the circumstance, there is always a place for you in theatre!

# Make Sure to Check up on Yourself

In the midst of all things ~~crazy~~ ~~sped~~ for show choir season, productions, school work, and more, you need to remember to take a look at how you are truly doing. Staying mentally healthy is so important. Being constantly stressed or anxious can really affect your performance. When I am ~~stressed~~, I normally take a night to myself where I put my work aside for a bit and do something for me, take a bath, watch a movie, go to the gym, etc. Once I have taken that time, I feel as if I can conquer all of my work. Taking a minute away from ~~the~~ of stress that is high school for even just a couple hours can really change your outlook, and productivity from that point on.

Sometimes the stress lies in a person or situation rather than a test or performance coming up, and you're unsure what to do ~~how~~ to handle it. If there are things that you need to talk through/get advice on, always know there are many people to go to! Trusted counselors/teachers, friends, parents, and my fellow STOs and I are always here to talk through issues with you, no ~~matter~~ what they are.

Overall, taking the time to reflect on your mental health is so important in times of stress and anxiety (like what's going on right now). also in these next few weeks that we have off of school due to Covid19, make sure and advocate ~~for~~ your troupe and the arts! Do your best to stay positive through all the cancelations and changes, best of luck to all. Please stay safe and healthy.

-Hannah Wilson, STO Special Projects

## Overcoming Stage Fright & Performance

When you search ~~for~~ the definition of stage fright" on the internet, the first answer that pops up is "anxiety and panic caused by the thought of performing." This can be because of a traumatic experience on stage or simply because a person has never spoken in front of people. While people experience performance anxiety differently, there are quite a few tips to reduce the fear.

First of all, you need to recognize that you are not alone! Even the biggest and most experienced performers have admitted to having nerves any ~~time~~ they get on a stage.

Understanding that it is alright to have performance anxiety helps because it eases your thoughts. You realize that you won't be the only one who has nerves!

Next, make sure you BREATHE! I realize that everyone says this, but there is a reason for that. Taking the time to recollect my thoughts alone and giving myself the time to just take a deep breath has helped me more than anything else before going on stage. Put yourself in a room by yourself or simply go outside; anywhere to stop yourself from getting buried in your own thoughts. Along with breathing, give yourself a boost of confidence by telling yourself motivating thoughts. For example, "You got this and you are going to do amazing!" or "Today I will perform 100%!" Giving yourself and others encouragement might relax the tension that you have.

One last tip is to have your own ritual that you do before every performance. I know this seems very superstitious of me to say, but honestly this has helped me a ton through the years! After putting on my costume and makeup before a show, I will go outside and talk to myself for a few minutes. I tell myself that everything will go well and I make sure to give a "break a leg" to everyone on opening night! Our troupe also has this llama called the "Drama Llama" that we all make sure to touch at least one night of our show for good luck. Not only do these rituals help calm me down, but they also provide something else for me to focus on.

Performance anxiety is tremendously common among people, performers and non-performers. REMEMBER that you are not alone, take the time to BREATHE and RECOLLECT your thoughts, and ENCOURAGE yourself and others. Take these tips with you and have an amazing, non-stressful performance! :) YOU ARE AWESOME!

-Luis Avalos, STO Advocacy

## Coping with Coronavirus Closures

**Many schools, business, and other facilities have closed**

due to the coronavirus pandemic. Most schools and local theatres have cancelled or postponed shows in order to ensure the safety of the actors, techies, and audience members. When I first heard this, I was devastated. To me, a world without the arts is like a world without color or life. I immediately tried to find solutions and realized there are plenty of ways to keep the arts flourishing during this time. If you want to stay active in the arts while staying safe in your home, here are some suggestions for you!

Take time to prepare audition material: During the school year, finding time to memorize a new monologue or rehearse a new audition song seems impossible. All the hours you spend ensuring your safety can also be spent ensuring a killer next audition!

Practice different skills: if you're a techie (or even an actor), you can spend this time to gain some skills! YouTube has plenty of videos with detailed instructions on how to sew, how to apply stage makeup, how to do special effects, etc. Type a skill you want to learn into the search bar and BAM!

Read some plays: Many play leasing sites have some plays that are able to be read for free. Just last week I received an email with the subject, "More Free Reads for March", and it contained links to 20 plays that were all written by women!

Write a play: Some of the greatest plays, poems, and other pieces of literature were written during periods of isolation. Shakespeare had to shut down The Globe Theatre when the Bubonic Plague infected the area, and he spent his unemployed time writing wonderful works. You could be the next Shakespeare!

Watch a musical you are not familiar with: This will help you disconnect from the real world's issues, relax from the stress of online classes, and distract you from the cancellations of activities. By watching a musical such as *The Light in the Piazza*, *She Loves Me*, or *The Pajama Game*, your theatrical knowledge will be much greater.

Act out short scenes or monologues: By familiarizing yourself with new material, it will be much easier when it comes time to select certain audition pieces. By reading, acting, or even skimming a play, you are preparing yourself to be a better performer.

Listen to music: Having listened to the *Dear Evan Hansen*, *Newsies*, *Heathers*, and *Bring It On* soundtracks, I can say listening to music will put you in a better mood. Listen to a song on repeat to nail that certain note, to belt your heart out, or even to just improve your mentality.

Throughout this time of crisis, keep your head up. Although thespians' shows have been cancelled or postponed, speech seasons have been abruptly ended, show choir seasons have been cut short, and kids have been disappointed, there are still so many activities to stay creative and theatrical. Prepare for your next audition, practice a new skill, read or write a play, watch a new musical, act out a short scene, or listen to a Broadway soundtrack to keep your mind on theatre and off Covid-19.

Stay Safe,

-Madeline Murphy, STO Special Projects & Maria Markus, STO Junior Thespians

## The Arts Find A Way

Over the past month, a lot has happened. As I reflect on this theater in our school month I have many mixed emotions. I started the month performing in my school's musical which was one of the greatest experiences of my life, and I got to see some amazing shows from troupes across Iowa, but with the spread of COVID it felt like the world turned upside down with Broadway going dark, schools having to cancel productions they had worked on for months, I can't imagine the disappointment that many thespians throughout the world have felt. However, this crisis has the potential to teach us a valuable lesson about the importance of the arts in our society. The arts offer an outlet for creativity, joy, and connection, during challenging times.

No matter what happens the arts will prevail. The overwhelming amount of livestreamed concerts and shows from Thespians and Broadway stars has warmed my heart. Seeing people spread positivity through social media, and share their art has been truly uplifting. Artists from every walk of life have been lifting up and supporting others. While Theater in our Schools month didn't exactly go as I thought it would, it has inspired me to see thespians around the globe celebrating theater and arts education.

Throughout history, the arts have reflected society, and now more than ever they are acting as a healing force. A break from a world of worry and chaos. I urge you all to continue to share your talents and spread the love. Theater is all about creativity, so I challenge you to keep finding new creative ways to incorporate theater into your life. Please tag or DM the @ia\_thespians account on Instagram so we can see what you're up to and share it!!

Much Love

-Barrett Edwards, STO Communications

## 🎵 Looking for some tunes? 🎵

Hello, everyone! With the vast majority of schools being closed for the rest of March and some of April, I decided that you may want some music to listen to. I hope you all find a bit of

humor in the titles of these songs, and don't necessarily relate the themes of the songs with being in quarantine. If you follow @ia\_thespiansto on Instagram, you can find the STOs' Showtune Sunday suggestions every Sunday for more content like this. Broadway may be closed for a while, but here are some Broadway tunes to listen to while you spend your time at home!

Trapped - The Addams Family

When You're Home - In the Heights

Take a Break - Hamilton

Voices in My Head - Be More Chill

Agony - Into the Woods

Don't Rain on My Parade - Funny Girl

Something to Believe In - Newsies

And I Am Telling You I'm Not Going - Dreamgirls

Waving Through a Window - Dear Evan Hansen

Day by Day - Godspell

Watch What Happens - Newsies

Waiting for Life - Once On This Island

Times Are Hard for Dreamers - Amélie the Musical

Me And The Sky - Come From Away

What Is This Feeling? - Wicked

On My Own - Les Misérables

Home - Beetlejuice

Stay safe and enjoy listening,

-Erica Heiselman, STO Secretary



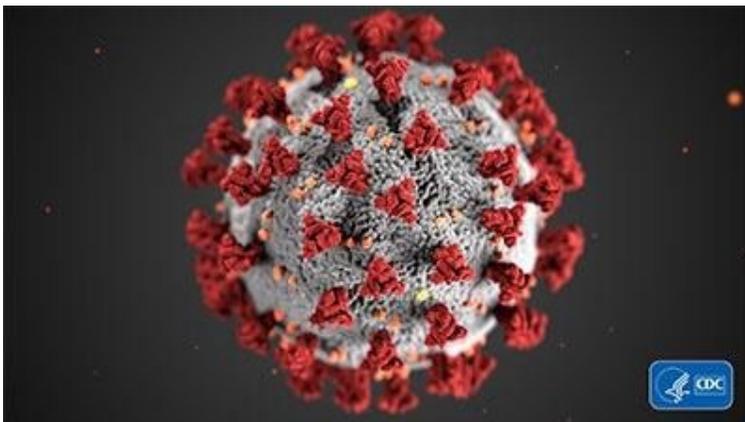
**Tell us about your shows!** We have a new form where anyone can send us information and posters for their troupe's productions. Find it at <https://tinyurl.com/iashowform> or posted to our Twitter and Instagram. Of course, you can still Direct Message us on social media about your shows or for any other information you need!

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## STO Update

**Woah!** Lots has happened with the STOs, and in general, in the past few weeks. We're back with another STO update to provide a voice of clarity. Unfortunately many events have been cancelled or postponed in high schools across the nation due to the COVID pandemic. Iowa Thespians and the STOs appreciate the hard work that all Iowa Thespians have been doing despite this. We also deeply enjoy seeing all the Theatre In Our Schools Month posts and are glad to see such strong voices in our theatre community!



Oftentimes on television or in news broadcasts, you will read that this is an “uncertain time” but the STOs would argue that this may be the most certain time we may ever experience. Certainly we are loving, certainly we are supporting, and certainly we are caring for one another (even if it isn’t in-person)! So please- spread love, not germs!

-Casey Scott, STO Chair