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AN EDUCATIONAL THEATRE ASSOCIATION AFFILIATE

*August 2020*

# Welcome Back!

BACK TO  
SCHOOL

*For many thespians*, the month of August and even early September means back-to-school season. However, this year back-to-school season looks much different than it has in the past. With schools opting for all different kinds of learning models, theatre in our schools looks much different this year than it has in the past. This said, Iowa Thespians have already developed many innovative solutions to ensure that shows and club gatherings can still happen safely. Additionally, your STOs have provided many tips and tricks that they use to make sure that theatre can still happen safely this back-to-school season!

# Back to School We Go...

*As many of us head back* to school and get into theatre again, we have to remember some things so we can continue to move forward...

- 1.) Keep your mask on at all times! Believe me, I have only been in school for two days and I am dying. Maybe it is just because I need to get into shape but even walking up the stairs makes me tired. Although it can be tough, do not take it off. Let's keep everyone safe!
- 2.) Stay positive. Going back to school in these conditions are not ideal by any means but that doesn't mean we can't make the best out of it. I don't think anyone wants to be online half the time or not be able to do a show like normal but for now, let's be thankful we get something.
- 3.) Stay hydrated. For some schools, there is no air conditioning and with covid, drinking fountains may be turned off. That makes it difficult for days that are scorching hot. So, bring a water bottle to school.
- 4.) Wash your hands A LOT. Between every class try to put hand sanitizer on to keep those germs away. You wouldn't want to miss out on the opportunity to start theatre again but have to stop because you are not taking the proper precautions.
- 5.) Check your temperature frequently. Checking every morning before heading to school is a great idea. It is such an easy way to make sure you don't spread it to you classmates, teachers, and troupes.
- 6.) Get on a schedule. Even if you are doing online learning or a Hybrid model, it is a great idea to get in a schedule for the days you will be home. This will not only help you become more productive, but your mental health can be improved.
- 7.) Social distance. By maintaining 6 feet, you are helping yourself and your peers.

Good luck to everyone who will be starting up auditions and don't forget to have so much fun doing what you love! Have a wonderful school year!

-Maria Markus, STO Junior Thespians

## The Safest and Most FUN Warmup

*The craziness in the world right now* forces us to become even more creative! Finding safe and fun ways to continue theatre in schools has been a challenge for troupe directors all

over the nation, so here's a fun, safe, warm-up game to supplement your collection of safe games!

1. Spread students out throughout the auditorium at least 6 foot apart (the farther the better for increasing the difficulty of this game!)
2. Assign every student a number.
3. Tell students to practice loudly saying "Prince Philip has lost his hat, and number 1 knows where it's at!"
4. Starting with number 1, the student should yell out "Prince Philip has lost his hat, and number (insert one of the numbers) knows where it's at!" The student whose number was called will then say, "Prince Philip has lost his hat, and number (insert one of the numbers) knows where it's at" and so on.
5. Any students who are not projecting loud enough for the whole auditorium to hear are out and must sit down where they are placed until the end of the game. If a student hesitates to begin saying the phrase or picking a number, they are also out (no um or uh!). If a student repeats the number who called on them, they are out. For example, if 1 calls on 7, 7 cannot call on 1. Lastly, if a number is out, that number cannot be called. So if 8 is sitting, and 10 calls on 8, 10 is also out.
6. This game goes on until only 2 people are left. Those two are the winners!

I hope you all have fun trying this safe game with your drama departments! We love you, Iowa Thespians!

-Madeline Murphy, STO Special Projects

## In Other News...

*Hey Iowa Thespians!* This is Barrett, your Communications STO!! It's no secret that 2020 has proven to be a very bumpy ride. From Covid-19, to a racial reckoning, and the derecho storms that have devastated much of our state -- sooooo much has been happening. Additionally, many of us are heading back to school after months of being out of the classroom. With all that is going on in the world, life can feel overwhelming. I've had my fair share of doubts and lulls throughout the past year, but I know that it is EXTREMELY important to relax, de-stress, and find time to reflect on what the past few months have taught us.

Take a Break!! Remove yourself from all of the chaos, and just be. I'm not asking you to ignore the world, because yes, we are still in a pandemic, systemic racism is real, and we still have a lot of important work to do. However, reflection is also very important. Relaxing is important. Taking time to check in with yourself and your mental health is important! Your feelings are

valid, so please be kind to yourself and take a moment to detach. Then, when you're rested and ready, put your foot on the gas and get back to work.

Now ...let's talk going back to school. I have many emotions!!! I'm sooo excited to see my friends, teachers, and acquaintances (many of whom I haven't seen in months). I'm also happy to finally have some semblance of normalcy and routine back in my life. And (I don't think I'm alone in this) I'm really excited to learn!

... but, I also feel worried, scared, and uncomfortable. I am concerned about the pandemic and how returning to school may negatively impact public health. Since Iowa is a leader in cases per capita, I'm also frightened of the possibility that I might contract the virus. Classes and activities will also look very different, so I'm heading into my final year of high school with a great deal of uncertainty.

I feel a sense of cognitive dissonance and I know that I'm not alone in that. So I remind myself that it is ok. It's ok to feel happy and it's ok to feel worried. Regardless of how you're feeling, it's important to recognize your emotions, and take time to reflect.

Stay Safe, and Mask-Up Iowa Thesians!! :)

-Barrett Edwards, STO Communications

## Tips and Tricks for Back to School!

*Hello, Iowa Thesians!* I hope that you all have a great start to your school year! Going back to school might look different than it ever has, but you're not alone in this! Here are some tips to help keep you organized between school, theatre, and all of your other activities:

- Take advantage of a planner! When I have a lot going on after school, I write out hour by hour notes of what events I have.
- Check your calendar! Make sure to fill out all events on there as well. Put the calendar somewhere that you will look at each day... maybe by your bedroom door or by your bathroom mirror!
- Create a priority list! I always keep track of what I need to get done with first. I usually weigh how long the assignment takes to do, when the assignment is due, and how hard the assignment is for me.
- Bring a snack! Going between school and extracurricular activities is exhausting, make sure to eat and keep yourself hydrated!
- Ask for help! If you are feeling overwhelmed by everything going on, never feel afraid to reach out to another person for a study session, audition tips, or help with a project.

Have a great year, Iowa Thespians! I know that you'll do great!

-Erica Heiselman, STO Secretary

## My Go-To Theatre Songs Right Now

*Recently,* I have been discovering/rediscoversome of my new favorite musical songs that I've been listening to on repeat, and I want to share them with you! One of the musicals that I have been listening to a lot is The Last Five Years, specifically See I'm Smiling, I Can Do Better Than That, and If I Didn't Believe In You. I have always loved and will always love the musical Waitress. I did She Used to Be Mine as an individual event my sophomore year, which advanced to Internationals! That song and show will always have a special place in my heart. A musical that I was listening to a lot during the first month or two of quarantine was Hadestown! I had to take a break from listening to it, but I'm finally getting back in! My favorite song on that soundtrack is Our Lady of The Underground. (Persephone may or may not be one of my dream roles, hehe.) A musical that I was introduced to recently and love is We Are The Tigers! Some songs in specific that I have been jamming to are Forever, and Before the Breakdown. I hope that through this letter I have inspired you to listen to some new musicals, and get out of your comfort zone a bit! Please stay safe and healthy with the start of the school year coming up!

P.S., please wear your mask in public <3.

-Hannah Wilson, STO Membership

## Virtual Takeaways: V-ITF

*Saying that* the first ever Virtual International Thespian Festival surpassed my expectations is an understatement! I was extremely impressed with how the whole event worked, and the fact that it was created in such a short time due to certain circumstances, makes the whole festival so much more impressive. VITF contained almost everything a physical festival typically has, all on one virtual platform.

Festival had Opening Ceremony, Thespy's, Dramatic Discussions, Workshops, Main Stage Performances, College Auditions, and so much more! I attended five workshops ranging from

characterization and dance to leadership building! Every workshop was run by a professional in the theatre industry. My personal favorite of the workshops was the Swing Dance Choreography. I loved this because I had the comfort of dancing in my own home, and it was an extra bonus that my siblings got to experience a small amount of ITF through dancing along. The smiles on their faces while we were learning together made it all that much better. I also enjoyed the fact that there was a variety between pre-recorded and live workshops, because it gave everyone the ability to fix schedules around ITF. To cap it all off, everything at ITF will be available for three more months! Every workshop and show that was missed during the week can continue to be viewed.

Having a virtual platform has so many benefits. I made connections with Thespians from all across the nation. Many of them said that if this festival would have been physical, they would not have been able to make it. Virtual Festival made it accessible for those theatre students who cannot afford to make it to an in-person event. I believe that the future of the festival should include the alternative of a virtual platform for those who do not have the option to attend physically. Along with accessibility, through a virtual event, there was the opportunity to watch and talk with celebrities. These celebrities all have experiences in the industry and their opinions and stories are so important for theatre youth to hear. It was an incredible experience to be on the same call as Alton Fitzgerald White and to listen to his struggles and triumphs as a person of color on Broadway. Many celebrities shared their stories, and without the virtual festival, we most likely would not have heard them.

I genuinely enjoyed the overall experience of the Virtual Thespian Festival. It was not what I expected to happen when I became an STO and I was devastated when I found out that I was not going to go to Indiana this summer. Attending this event was an amazing experience and at the end of the day, it will undoubtedly go down in Thespian History. I want to extend a special thank you to every person who was involved in the process of creating this event, but I especially want to thank the ITOs! The leadership and dedication of the Thespian Society does not go unnoticed and I am extremely thankful for your passion and hardwork throughout this past year!

-Luis Avalos, STO Advocacy

# STO Update

*Never a dull moment* with the Iowa State Thespian Officers! After Virtual Leadership Day came to a close, the STOs met with International Thespian Officer (ITO) Maura Toole for a quick Q&A about the event. We learned that Iowa was the first state to host an event like Leadership Day Entirely Online—truly an amazing feat! And we couldn't have done it without you thespians, so give yourselves a round of applause—or as keynotes speaker Gai Lang Jones would say—sparkle fingers!

Moving on, the State Thespian Officers discussed the next wave of State Thespian Officers. This year, the selection process will look a little different than it normally does, with details on festival still being a little fuzzy. If you are interested in being a 2021 State Thespian Officer, contact [iastochair@gmail.com](mailto:iastochair@gmail.com) for more details including candidacy tips and tricks, what the selection process entails this year, and more!

The STOs hope that the back-to-school season goes well for all of you this year and that you can bring that same theatre magic into your departments that you do everywhere. Remember: “Act well your part, there all the honor lies” -Alexander Pope

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