

CELLULAR 'CENES

THEATRE IDEAS FOR A SOCIALLY DISTANT or VIRTUAL SETTING

An idea from Ben Martin - brmbj3@gmail.com

1. **Cellular 'Cenes School Edition**—This is a version of the original Cellular 'Cenes which I wrote back in 2012. The concept behind the show was that instead of gathering people to sit for a long time in a dark room and be forced to turn off their electronic devices, this production would get them walking to see a 5 scene play take place in actual locations around our downtown in Lee's Summit. The trick is that the audience is REQUIRED to keep their cellphones on because the only way they know to go to the next scene location is to receive a text from the organizers telling them when it will be. Because of space limitations on sidewalks or in stores, audiences had to be small, usually 25 persons max. We produced it on summer evenings for about 6 years before we put it on hiatus. However, I wrote a school edition that did the same thing but just placed all the scenes within a school building. It is actually being performed in November at St. Francis Borgia HS in Washington, MO. We will see how it works as a response to keeping audiences distanced and safe.
2. **Cellular 'Cenes Augmented Reality Version**—Using the same original show we decided to increase the social distancing even further for audience members. Our plan was to film the various scenes on location and edit those together as separate videos. Then once we uploaded the edited videos online on a streaming service such as Youtube, we would gather and post the links to the appropriate scenes at the appropriate locations either through a shortened url or QR code. Content within the scene itself or a message at the end of each scene would direct the audience to the next location to progress through the story. Audience members would receive the first location and link following the purchase of their tickets. Then they would then move, at their own pace at any time of day, location to location for each subsequent scene following the instructions at the end of each video. At each new location, they would find the link or QR code to pull up the next scene once they are there. That would reduce the density of the audience, assuming that not everyone would want to see the show at the same time, and create a complete separation between actor and audience. This is called augmented reality because the audience members would be in the same location where the scene was filmed, but only able to view the scene acted out there on their phones. They are in the location in reality, but the reality is augmented by the scene they discover and watch on their phones.

If anyone is interested in producing the show in either a live or augmented reality version, they can contact me for rights information. I also think there might be a number of possibilities for this to turn into a student playwriting challenge that would be specific to your own town's and cities.

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