

Frequently Asked Questions about WCT's Black Box Play Series

What is the Dorothy and Charles Mosesian Center for the Arts?

The Mosesian Center for the Arts (MCA) is a multidisciplinary arts venue on the Charles River in Watertown, Massachusetts. The 30,000 square foot center, located in an historic 1894 manufacturing shop on a former U.S. Army arsenal, houses a 339-seat main stage theater, a 100-seat black box theater, exhibition galleries, art classrooms, and a rehearsal studio. Mosesian Arts is located six miles from downtown Boston, borders Brighton and the Charles, and is easily accessible from surrounding suburbs and MetroWest.

Programs include professional theater and musical performances, comedy, gallery exhibitions, literary and art discussions, and performing and visual arts classes and workshops for all ages. Watertown Children's Theatre, Mosesian Arts' performing arts education program, provides exceptional classes and performances for youth and families. The venue also hosts celebrated and cutting-edge performing arts companies from throughout the Greater Boston region.

Being a part of MCA gives us an opportunity to interact with many other people engaged in the business of making or enjoying art. Sometimes there will be a performance going on in one of the theaters while we are having rehearsal. We want to be respectful of the other users of the building by talking quietly when outside our own room, particularly in the front entrance lobby, hallways, and directly outside the theater doors.

What is the Black Box Play Series?

WCT's Black Box Play Series provides student performers the opportunity to collaborate with a director and a small cast to develop a fully-staged production for the public in the Dinah Lane Theater.

Will participants and caregivers have a good time?

The goal of the staff and WCT in general is that all families enjoy themselves in the process of creating a show together. Every participant who auditions will receive a role and each caregiver plays a role as well. We have found that the more that participants and families are willing and able to commit themselves to working together to accomplish a great show, the better experience they will have. Even participants who may be initially disappointed in their role end up having an invaluable, unforgettable group experience.

Why are there auditions?

We hold individual auditions in order for participants to gain audition experience and for the artistic staff to determine the best casting for each participant in consideration of the production as a whole.

How does casting work?

Our casting process is holistic; this means that all casting decisions are informed by what will work best for the ensemble as a whole to put on the show together. While an individual performer may be considered for many roles, the role they receive is based not only on their individual skills and talents, but also on how they fit together as a group. The goal is for each performer to learn and grow from their role, as well as support each other and create the best possible experience for all performers, staff, and audience members. In making these decisions, staff take into consideration the audition itself (monologues, scenes, improv/movement), as well as the information provided by the performer on the audition form, as well as the dynamics of the group as a whole, the show itself, and how all of those pieces fit together.

Do I have to attend all the rehearsals and performances?

You must attend all rehearsals that you are scheduled for. Rehearsals take place on Tuesdays and Thursdays (and some scheduled Saturdays), and all actors will receive a schedule with the times that they are expected to attend on these days. During tech week (the final week of rehearsals before show weekend) rehearsals are every day, and the hours of rehearsal are extended during this busy week to ensure enough rehearsal time. Participants need to come to all the rehearsals and performances during this final week, and it is important to arrive on time so that we will be able to make best use of the rehearsal time.

What should I bring/not bring to rehearsal?

It is important to come to rehearsal prepared with a script, pencil, water bottle, and are welcome to bring homework or a book for times when not actively rehearsing. Participants should NOT bring additional toys, games, or electronics, since these can be distracting, and may be valuable if lost or damaged. Participants should turn off and put away all mobile phones during rehearsal, and parents needing to contact their children in case of emergency should do so by calling **617-926-2787 ext. 8332**.

What should I wear to rehearsal?

For the sake of safety and comfort for all, participants must wear clothing which will enable them to work positively in their lessons and rehearsals. Clothing which is unsafe for movement and physical activity is not allowed. Shoes must be worn at all times. Students should wear appropriate footwear (closed toe shoes, sneakers, dance shoes) for protection. Please NO snow boots, rain boots, Uggs or flip-flops.

What type of behavior is expected from each participant during rehearsals and performances?

WCT expects each production to be a positive and rewarding experience for everyone involved. Each participant is expected to behave in a way that benefits the entire production, including all cast members and staff. WCT will communicate directly with the participant first, and if behavior that is harmful to any individual, group, or property continues, the participant's caregivers will be brought into the discussion. It is possible that persistent harmful behavior could lead to a participant's removal from the production, but this would be a decision that would be made with all participants, staff and caregivers in communication.

Will a rehearsal ever be canceled?

Due to the challenges of New England weather, there may be a time when a session is canceled due to snow or ice. In addition, it is possible that a rehearsal might need to be canceled due to staff illness. If this is the case, an email will be sent to all participants in advance regarding the status of rehearsal. WCT does not follow the public school closing system, so please contact us to find out about the status of rehearsal, even if your school is closed.

What happens if a participant has to miss a rehearsal?

In order to have an **excused absence** from a rehearsal, you must email production.wct@mosesianarts.org in advance of the missed rehearsal. It is best for everyone if you can notify us as soon as you are aware that there will be an absence.

Should I come to rehearsal if I am sick?

All participants should stay home if they are experiencing symptoms of illness. (This includes but is not limited to sore throat, congestion, fever, cough, nausea, conjunctivitis, diarrhea, vomiting.) If participants or anyone in their house has potential COVID or other communicable illnesses, please test before returning to programming. This policy applies to program teaching artists and staff as well. Masks will still be provided for any participants and staff who wish to wear them. Certain programs may require masks and/or testing at the discretion of MCA's Education & WCT Production team. There is no penalty for absence, we prefer you prioritize health and safety. In the event of an extended absence, refunds are available.

What if I leave something behind at rehearsal?

Check with rehearsal staff to see if anything was turned in. At the end of the production, unclaimed lost and found items are donated to charity within two weeks after each program concludes.

How many rehearsals may a participant miss and still be in the show?

Absences from the rehearsal process have an impact on both the collaborative nature of the process and the outcome of the production. However, especially in cases of illness, we would much rather participants stay home and get well, as long as they communicate with us about the absence. In the case of extended absences, staff and family may need to discuss adjustments to roles in order to help participants catch up and not feel overwhelmed. **Absences, late arrivals, or early pickups must be communicated in advance except in emergencies.**

During the production's final two weeks we request that participants avoid any absences/early dismissals/late arrivals unless they are ill, as these final rehearsals are essential to the success of the production.

Will snacks be provided for my child at any time during this production?

Please encourage your child to eat a snack before rehearsal. Due to the health risks of accidental exposure to allergens, **WCT requests that no snacks be eaten in our rehearsal spaces.** As the rehearsal spaces can be somewhat warm, **please send your child with a water bottle**, clearly labeled with his/her name, to each rehearsal. Only water should be consumed during rehearsals for hydration and vocal health. During tech week, snacks may be provided if needed for longer rehearsals.

Please note that the Panera Bread next door to MCA has closed and there is not currently a replacement option.

What materials are participants expected to have/provide?

In most cases, participants will be expected to provide their own shoes, hosiery and undergarments for their costume. Most often, this includes character shoes or jazz/ballet shoes, socks or tights as directed by the costume staff, and neutral colored shorts, tank tops or camisoles that are close fitting and can be worn underneath costumes for ease and modesty during costume changes. Students should also plan to wear and bring deodorant to avoid any sweat staining of garments, and for their own comfort. In addition, students may be asked to do basic hair and/or makeup for dress rehearsals and performances.

What happens on performance days?

Participants will be called about an hour before the show, unless makeup is very complex, which might lead to an earlier call. They will warm up as a group and go over any notes/questions with the staff, and then they will be in the dressing rooms and backstage at any time when they are not on stage, with backstage volunteers helping to supervise and support them. The theater will open about 15 minutes before show time for audience members, but before the show, there will be theategrams for sale, so friends and family can purchase and send messages with candy or flowers to cast members if they'd like to do so.

On Saturdays with two performances, participants must leave the building between performances, and must not remove their hair/makeup styling between shows, so that we can give them a longer break between performances and they can return ready to perform again.

At the end of the performance, there is no formal check out process. Please plan ahead for a lobby or outdoor location to meet your participant - family members should not plan to come to the stage or dressing room to meet their performer.

Often, there is another performance happening concurrently with our production. It is important for family members and friends to keep the volume level in the lobby and bathroom areas quiet in order to respect our performing arts colleagues from other production companies.

Where does our registration fee go?

To pay for costumes, props, lights, sets, show royalties, and staff salaries. WCT is part of the non-profit organization, the Dorothy and Charles Mosesian Center for the Arts, which puts any money raised directly back into programming to benefit the community.

Can caregivers attend auditions/rehearsals?

We ask that family members not attend programs with their children, as all programs are participatory and observation by non-participants can be inhibiting.

Why are caregivers asked to participate on committees?

In order to keep our registration fees as low as possible, and therefore accessible to all children, we require family members to participate in our productions to supplement the work of the staff. Over many years we have found it a wonderful way to include family members and build a strong community. For the Black Box Plays, we ask parents to participate in one production committee and also assist in the lobby for one performance.

What happens after the final performance?

After participants have taken all of their personal belongings out of the dressing room, they are invited to an informal cast party where we will celebrate a job well done. Participants can leave at any time, and the cast party is generally fairly brief. For high school black box productions, cast members are required to participate in strike, and their cast party will commence once their strike responsibilities have been completed.

What if I have questions about my role, committee assignment, rehearsal schedule or anything else?

You may leave a message at 617-926-2787 x8332 or production.wct@mosesianarts.org, and either we will return your call or pass on the message to the appropriate person who will respond to you. Please note that email will always be the fastest way to get a response.