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## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT SENSORY-FRIENDLY PERFORMANCES

### WHAT IS A SENSORY-FRIENDLY PERFORMANCE?

Wharton Center is proud to offer [Sensory-Friendly Performances \(SFPs\)](#) for children and adults with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) and other sensory sensitivities. These are supportive and welcoming performances for all audience members.

#### ➤ What makes it sensory-friendly?

- SFPs feature a welcoming, supportive environment for people with sensory sensitivities and their families or caregivers. Adaptations to the performance include:
  - lower sound and light levels onstage;
  - house lights on at a low level throughout the performance;
  - the elimination of potentially startling special effects and lighting.
- Trained staff, volunteers, and ASD specialists will be on hand to assist and direct audience members as needed.
- Sensory supports will be available (fidgets, earplugs).
- Quiet areas will be designated in the lobby.
- We will provide appropriate crafts and activities one-and-a-half hours prior to and throughout the performance.
- Video monitors will broadcast the performance in the lobby and activity areas for those who need a break from the theatre but still want to watch the performance.
- Typical theatre house rules are relaxed:
  - Audience members may get up, move around, and leave whenever they need.
  - We welcome the audience to bring devices for therapeutic uses, including iPads and smart phones.
  - Audience members may bring their own manipulatives, comfort objects, seat cushions, headphones, electronics, and other supports.
- [A Social Story is available on our website, explaining what attendees can expect during the theatre experience via pictures and text.](#)
- Character description cards with photos identifying each character in the performance will be available on our website.

#### ➤ Which performances are sensory-friendly?

- *ROSIE REVERE, ENGINEER...*; Sunday, December 9, 2018 at 2:30 p.m.
- *JUNIE B. JONES*, Sunday, April 28, 2019 at 1 p.m.

#### ➤ How much are the tickets?

- Tickets for *ROSIE REVERE, ENGINEER...* and *JUNIE B. JONES* are discounted to \$10.00 per person (including fees) If you would like to receive an email with the SFP onsale information, please sign up for our email list at <http://www.whartoncenter.com/sfp>.

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- **How can I purchase tickets?**
  - Tickets can be purchased [online by following this link](#) or at the Ticket Office by calling 1-800-WHARTON (1-800-942-7866).
- **How long are the performances?**
  - *ROSIE REVERE, ENGINEER...* and *JUNIE B. JONES* will run about one hour with no intermission.
- **For what age or developmental level are these performances appropriate?**
  - We recommend *ROSIE REVERE, ENGINEER...* and *JUNIE B. JONES* for developmental level of kindergarten and above.
- **What if we purchase tickets but cannot use some or all of them?**
  - If you or any member of your party are not able to attend the performance and you notify the Ticket Office within five days following the performance, you are eligible to obtain a refund for the unused tickets.
- **Can we purchase tickets at the theatre the day of the performance?**
  - If the performance is not sold out, you may purchase tickets in person at the Ticket Office the same day as the performance, beginning 2 hours prior to the performance. However, we highly recommend that you purchase your tickets in advance.
- **Will seats be assigned/reserved?**
  - Yes; there will be assigned/reserved seats for all SFPs. If you need recommendations in regard to seating, please contact the Ticket Office at 1-800-WHARTON. If you are uncomfortable in your seat, please ask an usher if you can be moved to a different location.
- **What can I do if sitting through the performance is difficult?**
  - Areas are available in the lobby to take a break, including a dark and quiet space as well as an area for quiet activities and a larger activity/craft room.
  - Guests are welcome to go in and out of the theatre as needed.
  - Moving within the theatre is allowed.
- **What can I do to help my child/family member/client prepare for this new experience?**
  - [A Social Story about coming to Wharton Center is available on our website](#) along with other resources.

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- **What is the seating area like?**
  - This season's SFP's are in the Pasant Theatre, a small, intimate theatre. You can see the stage clearly from any seat location. The seats rise like in a stadium, but there are only 11 rows. You enter from the top and walk down some stairs. There are multiple aisles to allow guests to easily enter/exit the theatre. There will be low ambient lighting throughout the performance so patrons are able to see should they need to move around or exit the theater.
- **At least one of my party uses a wheelchair. Can you accommodate us?**
  - Yes; a limited number of accessible seats are available. Please inform the Ticket Office of any mobility issues or other seating requirements when purchasing your tickets.
- **Are ushers and ticket staff trained to assist individuals with sensory sensitivities?**
  - Yes; our staff and volunteers have been trained to welcome and assist persons with ASD and other sensory sensitivities. In addition, we will have ASD specialists on hand.
- **What kind of activities will be available?**
  - We will provide age-appropriate crafts and games led by our volunteers. Volunteers are well-trained former teachers as well as trained students from MSU's theatre program for children with intellectual disabilities.
- **When will the theatre open/how early can I arrive?**
  - Wharton Center's lobby and activity areas will be open one-and-a-half hours prior to the performance. The Pasant Theatre/seating area will open one hour prior to the performance.
- **How do I get to Wharton Center? Where do I park?**
  - Please visit our website for directions and parking information, [www.whartoncenter.com/directions-parking](http://www.whartoncenter.com/directions-parking).
- **Will food and drink be available?**
  - Yes; our concession stand will be open and selling candy, cookies, snacks, and bottled water.
  - We welcome patrons to bring their own food and drink to Sensory-Friendly Performances.
- **Is photography or videography allowed in the theatre?**
  - No photography or videography is permitted inside the theatre.
  - It is okay to take pictures in the lobbies or the activity room.

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## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT SENSORY-FRIENDLY PERFORMANCES

- At some performances, there may be professionals taking photographs and video of the audience in various spaces, as well as the performance itself. These images will be used for historical documentation of the event, as well as on our website, in presentations and on social media for promotion of the program moving forward. There will be printed signs alerting the audience if professional photo/video is being taken at a performance.
- **Will it be dark inside the theatre?**
  - During the performance, the lights in the theatre will remain on at a low level. The sound level will also be reduced.
- **What if the sound is too loud?**
  - Patrons are invited to use sound-cancelling headphones and earplugs in case the reduced sound levels are still too high for comfort.
- **Who can answer my questions at the theatre?**
  - Ushers wearing black pants and shirts with colored ties will be available to answer questions, as will trained volunteers wearing t-shirts that say "HELPER" on them.
- **May we bring our own snacks, fidget toys, headphones, or other items that help my family member stay calm?**
  - We encourage you to bring any items that might make the experience more comfortable and enjoyable. A variety of sensory supports (weighted blankets, fidgets, etc.) will also be available at the theatre.
- **What if I have additional questions?**
  - If you have ticket questions, please call 1-800-WHARTON (1-800-942-7866).
  - If you have questions about donating to help support Wharton Center Sensory-Friendly Performances, please call Kristen Calabrese at 517-884-3140.
  - If you have other questions regarding these performances, please call Kelly Stuitable-Clark at 517-884-3166.
  - Sign up for our email list at [www.whartoncenter.com/sfp](http://www.whartoncenter.com/sfp) to keep informed.