

# **Regional Touring Theatre Company**

## **Tour Handbook 2007-2008**

**Department of Theatre and Dance  
Western Illinois University**

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## **I. PURPOSE AND IMPORTANCE OF THE REGIONAL TOURING THEATRE COMPANY**

The Regional Touring Theatre exists to provide low cost, high quality theatrical entertainment to the West Central Illinois Region; and to provide practical experience for students working towards their MFA Degree in the Department of Theatre & Dance by providing them with a variety of production experiences (including size of audience, performance spaces, and theatrical forms), in addition to providing them with the practical experience in the rigors of touring.

The RTTC is a vital part of the entire graduate program at Western Illinois University. The graduate programs in design, directing, and acting are all dependent upon the RTTC. All graduate assistantship stipends depend directly or indirectly upon the success of the bookings of the RTTC.

Graduate assistantship stipends are funded from three separate sources:

- 1) Office of Graduate Studies
- 2) College of Fine Arts & Communication, in support of the RTTC
- 3) Income generated from the RTTC

When all these separate funds are put together, the department is able to offer the assistantship stipends that it does. If any of the sources of income are not there, it will affect every graduate student in the Department of Theatre & Dance. As a result, even though a graduate student may not be directly connected with the touring program, it is that program which enables everyone to receive their stipend.

For example, if the RTTC needs 150 bookings for the year and it makes only 100, the graduate program will be short funds by approximately 50 bookings at \$200 per booking, or \$10,000. This is the equivalent of over two full graduate assistantship stipends. If such a disaster would happen (not enough RTTC bookings) and if the Department of Theatre & Dance or the COFAC could not make up the loss elsewhere, the amount of money would be pro-rated over ALL assistantship stipends – whether directly connected with the RTTC or not – and the final May paycheck would show the appropriate reduction. This has never happened in the history of the RTTC, but it is a possibility.

To insure continuous bookings of the RTTC, quality must be maintained. The actors must give their best performance every day to every group to which they play. The design and construction of the scenery must be eye-catching, durable, and light-weight. Most of the bookings come from repeat clients. They will not book us a second time if the quality of the show is not high, or if we fail to meet our commitments.

## II. DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF MANAGEMENT AND STAFF

The Artistic Director Ray Gabica (Fall '07) and Carolyn Blackinton (Spring '08)

The artistic director will be responsible for the following:

1. Seeing that the shows are ready to be performed by the advertised date.
2. Rehearsing all shows.
3. Holding at least two understudy rehearsals or making sure that the stage manager holds at least two understudy rehearsals. Three rehearsals would be preferable.
4. Informing the understudies when the show is in dress rehearsal so that the understudies can watch the show at least twice before going into their rehearsals.
5. In consultation with the stage manager and the Managing Director choosing the season for the coming year.
6. Providing all information (including title, description and graphics) for the upcoming season brochure by the date set by the Managing Director.
7. Monitoring the quality of the productions while the RTTC is on the road. The artistic director should visit production sites at various stages of the run.
8. The overall quality of the productions.
9. Internal problems of personality, discipline, commitment, being on time for calls, and being on time for rehearsals.

The Managing Director (Jeannie M. Woods)

The managing director (chairperson for the Department of Theatre & Dance) will be responsible for the following:

1. Decisions regarding cancellations or rescheduling of bookings.
2. Makes decisions regarding pre-arranged use of understudies.
3. Handling all logistics problems between the tour company and the dean's office, including booking the appropriate number of days in a row, allowing enough travel and setup time, or vacation days.
4. Decisions regarding the initial approval of per diem or reimbursement for meals or hotel expenses.
- 5 Initial approval of all travel expenses (meals, per diem, use of credit card, motels, etc.).
6. Approval of all out-of-the-ordinary expenses such as major equipment, gasoline purchases for vehicles other than the van, above average meal expense, etc.
7. Applying for funds from the dean's office in support of the RTTC.
8. Developing an operating budget for the RTTC.
9. Recruiting actors and actresses for the acting program, in consultation with the Department Graduate Committee and heads of the Acting and Directing Program.

10. Selecting which actors will serve as understudies for each individual show.

The Booking Agent (Louise Reynolds)

The booking agent, secretary in the dean's office for COFAC, will be responsible for the following:

1. Handling all booking telephone calls and confirming reservations according to prescribed booking guidelines.
2. Contacting the RTTC stage manager either through the RTTC call board (bulletin board), or preferably in person, regarding any changes in the monthly schedules. Follow-up must be made, if not contacted personally.
3. Distributing copies of the monthly schedule to the artistic director, managing director, stage manager, each actor on tour and the understudies.
4. Bookkeeping, requisitioning, warrants, and other duties associated with payment of bills for the RTTC.

The Stage Manager Emily Cherry (fall '07) and Carl Lindberg (Spring '08)

The stage manager for tour will be responsible for the following:

1. Determination of traveling time from campus to the city of performance.
2. Determination of all calls based upon driving time, set-up time, unloading and actor preparation time.
3. Performs "regular" duties of a stage manager in rehearsal of all RTTC Shows. (i.e. set-up rehearsal, furniture and space, cuing actors, keeping a prompt book, etc.).
4. Manages the show and runs the sound for all performances.
5. May be asked to perform if necessary.
6. Determination of who drives the van. The stage manager should do MOST of the driving.
7. Meet and greet the hosts.
8. Inventory all set pieces, costumes, and props while loading the van.
9. Make scenery decisions for each specific performance space.
10. Report all maintenance problems for costumes, props and scenery to the appropriate technical person and see that repairs are made.
11. Confirm all bookings with the booking agent in the dean's office, daily before leaving.
12. Help conduct understudy rehearsals.
13. Communicate costume fitting times to cast.
14. Check the RTTC call board daily for scheduling changes.
15. Pick up and fuel the van every day before call or upon return to campus if the garage is open.

16. Upon arrival at performance site, contact appropriate person for information regarding performance space, unloading area and parking space.
17. Introduce all performances.
18. Handle all emergencies on the road.
19. Help technical area with purchase and construction of props if requested.
20. Take van to the garage for all regular maintenance work.
21. Perform all duties requested by the artistic director or the managing director regarding performances or rehearsals.
22. Serve as assistant director while show is on the road. This includes approval or rejection of any suggested changes in the show made by the actors.

### **III. CHAIN OF COMMAND: ADMINISTRATIVE RESPONSIBILITIES**

1. The dean of COFAC and the chairperson for the department of Theatre & Dance will make all final decisions dealing with problems that cannot be solved at a lower level, more direct, grass-roots level.
2. The managing director will report directly to the dean when necessary.
3. The artistic director will make all final decisions regarding the artistic integrity of the shows.
4. All routine bookings will be handled by the booking agent; procedures to be developed in the dean's office. In cases of bookings falling outside the "Booking Guidelines" the booking agent will report to the stage manager, if possible, and will make the final determination.
5. Actors and the stage manager will report to the artistic director regarding all internal problems.
6. Actors and the stage manager will report to the artistic director regarding booking problems. If necessary, the artistic director will report to the stage manager who will handle the problem through the appropriate channels (see #4).
7. The stage manager will determine what time calls will be, who will drive the van, and how to set up the show for each specific space.
8. The stage manager and the booking agent will keep in touch with each other every day to handle the day-to-day operation of tour as a matter of routine.
9. For procedures used in cancellation and rescheduling of bookings see the appropriate section of this Handbook.

### **IV. BOOKING GUIDELINES**

1. Before the season begins, the chairperson for the Department of Theatre & Dance, the stage manager and the artistic director will meet to determine dates which will not be booked.
2. The artistic director and/or the stage manager have the authority to request additional "no book" days by contacting the booking agent at least one month in

advance, (30 days). The booking agent will cross out those dates if no booking has been previously made for those dates. If a booking has been made, the booking agent will attempt to contact the client and reschedule. If re-scheduling is not possible, the booking will be made as originally planned.

3. The booking agent will schedule all RTTC bookings.

4. The following guidelines will be followed when booking a performance:

Routine Operations:

- a. All efforts will be made to book no more than six consecutive days.
- b. No more than two shows per day will be booked.
- c. Two performances on the same day must have at least 45 minutes between shows - NOT COUNTING TRAVEL AND SET-UP TIME. It is the responsibility of the booking agent to have a map and plan travel time from city to city considering an average speed of 45 miles per hour.
- d. Forty-five minutes must be reserved for striking and set-up and an appropriate amount of time must be allowed for travel.
- e. When booking shows for the morning, the booking agent must estimate the time of the last show on the preceding day, and allow for travel back to Macomb and allow approximately ten hours before the next CALL. If, for example, the RTTC did a show in Quincy at 8:00 P.M. on Thursday and the show ran for two hours, the earliest CALL for Friday morning would be 10:45 - example:

8:00 - 10:00 - running time of show  
10:00 - 10:45 - strike time and load van  
10:45 - 12:45 - travel from Quincy to Macomb  
12:45 - 10:45 - TEN HOURS OFF TOUR

- f. The booking agent will provide the stage manager and all the actors, in addition to the stage manager and the artistic director with a monthly calendar of all shows, performance dates, times, places, phone numbers and directions on how to get there, in addition to the name of the authorized person to contact upon arrival. (All of the above information is included in the tour contract).
- g. If there are two bookings on the same day in the same city or town but at different locations a total of one and one-half hours must be allowed between the end of one show and the beginning of another show (45 minutes to strike; 30 minutes to travel; 45 minutes to set-up).
- h. If the RTTC stays overnight, ten and one half hours must exist between the closing of the show on one night and the CALL for the next morning (ten hours off and one-half hour travel time in that city).
- i. All attempts will be made to keep the maximum travel time in the van for any one day to approximately five to six hours. This means that a round trip of approximately 300 miles is the maximum without an overnight.

- j. The RTTC will stay overnight only when the mileage dictates such a stay. A per diem rate will be paid. For details see section VIII of this handbook.
- k. The stage manager will check the tour call board for daily updates.
- l. Bookings can be added to the monthly schedule only if the change is made at least two full days in advance. Notification of changes in the monthly schedule must be made in writing and confirmation from the stage manager must be obtained. If a client chooses to cancel a show at the last minute (without 48 hours notice) we will honor that cancellation. It will then be the booking agent's immediate responsibility to contact the stage manager so that the tour company does not show up at the booking. The stage manager must check the call board daily.

#### Scheduling, Cancellation and Re-Scheduling Procedures

- a. The scheduling of shows will be done in accordance with the "Booking Guidelines" outlined earlier in this handbook.
- b. Procedures for routine scheduling:
  - All scheduling will be made in the dean's office, COFAC.
  - When a request for a booking is received either by mail, e-mail, fax or phone the booking agent will book the performance on the requested date at the requested time providing it fits into the booking guidelines.
  - A yearly calendar will be kept in the dean's office, COFAC.
  - The booking agent will provide monthly calendars for all concerned.
  - No changes will be made in the monthly schedule by the dean's office, COFAC without at least two days notice and notification of the stage manager, who must confirm the cancellation within 24 hours of notification.
  - The dean's office, COFAC will be responsible for obtaining confirmed contracts on all bookings and will pass on that information to the stage manager: location, date, time, contact person, telephone number of contact person and travel directions.
  - Travel directions for the booking are requested on contract and will be as complete as possible.

#### Procedures to follow in emergencies:

Emergency cancellations (those involving impassable roads, highway accidents, or on-the-road mishaps) will be made by the stage manager by calling the dean's office and informing the office of the problem. The booking agent will then notify the stage manager of the action to be taken. The booking agent will contact the managing director who will take the appropriate action and advise the stage manager and the secretary of that action. If the emergency happens after office hours the stage manager will call the managing director at home. If the managing director cannot be contacted, the stage manager will contact the artistic director who will make a determination about the situation and handle all notifications. If the artistic director cannot be notified, the stage manager will make the determination to cancel and will contact the booked location and inform them of

the situation and tell them that the dean's office will be in touch with them to arrange a possible re-scheduling.

Procedures to follow for Cancellations or Re-scheduling: Non-emergencies:

Other than emergencies as described above, no cancellations or re-scheduling will be made without the approval of the artistic director, the booking agent and the stage manager. Hopefully determination will be made by consensus. If consensus is not reached, the dean will make the final determination.

**V. POLICIES FOR USING THE UNIVERSITY VAN (V63)**

1. All rules and regulations applying to the use of a university vehicle will apply to the use of the van.
2. The stage manager will determine who will drive. In most cases the stage manager should be the driver to allow the actors time to rest. **ALL DRIVERS MUST PASS THE ALERT DRIVING TEST BEFORE DRIVING THE VAN.**
3. There will be no alcoholic beverages, marijuana, cannabis, or any other substance that may be construed as a narcotic or "dope" used in the van. There is also no smoking allowed in the van. Violation of these rules will result in serious consequences.
4. The van will be reserved through the dean's office. The stage manager will get the vehicle requisition slips from the College of Fine Arts & Communication Office and will be responsible for having the van at the proper place for calls.
5. It is the stage manager's responsibility to have the gas tank filled every day at the University Garage. This can be done at the beginning of the day or at the end of the day if the garage is open. The use of the credit card should be kept to a minimum. No personal credit cards will be honored by the COFAC, the Department of Theatre & Dance or WIU.
6. The van may be parked overnight on campus in either the parking lot on the south side of Browne Hall, or in the parking lot at the University Garage. The van cannot be parked off campus overnight.
7. The van can only be used for official RTTC business. It may not be used for personal use.
8. The driver of the van is responsible for obeying all traffic laws. All traffic citations (including on and off campus parking tickets) will be paid by the driver of the van.
9. If a second vehicle is needed on occasion, it will be responsibility of the dean's office, COFAC to make the necessary arrangements. The stage manager should remind the dean's office at least two to three weeks in advance to make

arrangements. Ultimately, the responsibility lies with the dean's office.

## **VI. THE USE OF UNDERSTUDIES**

1. It should be remembered that understudies for tour are enrolled in regular class work and, therefore, must miss classes if they are called to go out on tour. Consequently, understudies should be used only in extreme emergencies.
2. When an understudy is called, Department of Theatre & Dance faculty will make arrangements to allow the understudy to make up work that is missed. The understudy is not excused from work missed because of tour.
3. A student who is assigned as understudy for tour will be on twenty-four hour call. Going out as an understudy takes precedence over all other commitments including rehearsals and performances of shows other than tour.
4. Understudies must view two of the final rehearsals for the show they are understudying before going to understudy rehearsals.
5. Understudies will be given a minimum of two rehearsals conducted by the director of the show or the stage manager, and guided by the actors and actresses they are understudying. Three rehearsals would be preferable.
6. After the second understudy rehearsal, the understudy will be on 24-hour call and is responsible for his or her role.
7. If an actor is ill and needs an understudy, the ill actor will contact the stage manager immediately. The stage manager will contact the understudy immediately. The stage manager will also inform the artistic director as well as the stage manager.
8. Understudies should not be called out to perform for a tour actor because that actor is rehearsing or performing in another production and simply wants to rest for rehearsals or performances.
9. If at all possible, the stage manager will call a rehearsal before the performance if it is the understudy's first time out. The entire tour company is expected to attend and participate in this rehearsal and run through the appropriate portions of the play involving the understudy. If a rehearsal is impossible (due to severe time limitations) an earlier call should be made to at least run lines.
10. If an understudy is called out, the stage manager will also contact the person in charge of costumes for the show and arrange a time to meet and pull a costume or alter the existing one for the understudy.

## **VII. ROUTINE PROCEDURES TO FOLLOW WHILE ON TOUR**

1. The stage manager will receive contracts from the booking agent in the dean's office including time, place, date, telephone number and contact person and travel

directions for each day's booking.

2. The stage manager will inform the cast on the preceding day of the call time for the next day.
3. All actors and actresses as well as the stage manager will meet on time to load the van. If the van is loaded from the day before, all members of the tour company will meet at a previously designated location. It is not the duty of the stage manager to pick up any actor at his or her resident.
4. If the van needs to be loaded, all members of the tour company will help load.
5. The stage manager will inventory all costumes, props and scenery pieces for the specific show; or will assign specific actors the responsibility of inventory. (i.e., actor #1 is responsible for props, etc.)
6. The stage manager will drive the van unless he or she specifically requests someone else to drive.
7. The tour company will arrive at the performance site at least forty-five (45) minutes before the scheduled time of the performance.
8. Upon arrival at the site, the stage manager will leave the van and contact the appropriate contact person and find out where the performance space is, where to unload the van and also where to park the van.
9. All members of the tour company will help unload the van and set up the scenery.
10. All members of the tour company will strike the set and load the van.
11. The stage manager will introduce the show to the audience informing them of what show they will see and where we are from.
12. The stage manager will check the RTTC contract to see if a free lunch is provided for the tour company.
13. If a free lunch is provided, the tour members follow the rules of each individual school and cafeteria. Actors should make an effort to mingle with the students. Remember: This is a free lunch. If you receive one hundred lunches in a season it will save you the price of 100 hamburgers, 100 orders of fries and 100 cokes. If the food is terrible, save your complaining until you are in the van.
14. While performing at schools/libraries, do not smoke (wait until you are away from the performance site).
15. While at performance sites, the use of profanity will not be tolerated. Save it for the van.
16. All tour members will help load the van.

### **VIII. PER DIEM, TRAVEL AND ACCOMMODATIONS FOR OVERNIGHT**

1. If a booking is approximately 150 miles from Macomb an overnight schedule will be initiated.
2. There will be a per diem rate provided and no reimbursement for meals or accommodations.

3. If a lunch is not provided by a school, actors will know this in advance, as it will be indicated on the performance contract, otherwise, the tour members should “brown bag it” or stop elsewhere for meals (at their own expense).
4. When staying overnight each tour member will receive an overnight allowance from WIU (maximum of \$60). This amount must cover meals and the shared cost of a motel room.
5. It is tour’s responsibility to find a motel in the area of the performance. Check online. The cast makes their own overnight reservations.
6. Typically, the travel allowance is paid to actors before the overnight performance. In rare instances it may be necessary for the tour company to pay their bill and receive the reimbursement later. Tour will be informed in advance should that be the case.

## **IX. TIPS ON MAKING THE RTTC EXPERIENCE COMFORTABLE AND ENJOYABLE**

The Regional Touring Theatre Company was created in the Fall of 1974. If the importance of the Tour is not yet evident to you, let us reiterate it again: the Tour is vital to the MFA academic program and graduate assistantships. Over time, the better Tour goes, the better the graduate program. Over time, the worse the Tour goes, the worse the graduate program. Tour is vital to the University for several reasons: institutional, college, and departmental prestige, financial support, and curriculum. The following pages were developed to help you understand your importance to Tour.

Each group of actors and actresses over the years has developed its own “system of survival” while on tour for Western Illinois University. I am sure that this year’s group will find shortcuts and little conveniences that make life more bearable while traveling. Much of it will be learned through trial and error (i.e., the best way to load the van for a particular show; where to keep the spare tire; how to move and carry the curtain standards; how much time to allow for stopping for coffee and donuts in the morning; etc.) We, in the Department of Theatre & Dance, are interested in these tips so that we can pass them on to future groups. If you are curious about how other groups did things, ask us. We might have an answer or suggestion. We are also interested in knowing about the things that don’t work – the things that need improving from an administrative point of view – the irritations – the hassles – the problems. We are constantly trying to improve your working conditions while at the same time trying to meet a demanding schedule and fulfill our commitments, while maintaining the quality of production that the RTTC has developed over the years. We have a good reputation. Approximately 85% of the bookings come from customers who have seen our shows before. Customers know we are dependable – we are on time and we don’t cancel – and we offer high quality theatrical entertainment at a reasonable price.

The fact of the matter is that when a small group of people work closely together for an extended period of time, problems can arise. The key to a successful tour – an experience that you will remember as being a good one – is to try to understand the other person’s point of view. The RTTC is a communal effort. There really isn’t any place for a “me first” attitude. Sometimes it is better to count to ten and bite

your lip rather than blow up at someone. If a problem arises – one dealing with personalities of the individuals in the tour company – try to let it slide. It might go away in a week or two. If the problem persists, talk to the person about it; call a meeting of the entire tour company; discuss it amongst yourselves in the van while traveling; try to work it out internally. Often, things will work out better if the faculty or administration is not dragged into it. “Keep your cool.”

Allow us the luxury of a few “pearls of wisdom” regarding touring. Some are so obvious and simple that they may seem to be ridiculous to mention. Nevertheless, we mention them because they have come up with almost every group through the years.

1. Remember that little things turn into big things over a period of time. Four examples:
  - a. If there is one piece of heavy scenery in a show and one of the Tour members always manages to avoid having to carry it, the other members of the tour company will start to resent it.
  - b. Constant moodiness can drive people crazy.
  - c. A person who never wants to stay after a show and chat with the public and is always in a hurry to “get the-hell-out-of-here” can become an aggravation over a period of time.
  - d. A constant negative attitude can irritate people.
2. Consider your colleagues’ comfort. Some people like to sleep while traveling. Some like to listen to the radio. People sleeping should not demand that the radio not be played. People playing the radio should play it quietly so as not to disturb the sleeping people. Some people like hard rock music and some people hate it. Because you happen to like country-western, doesn’t mean the person sharing space in the van with you necessarily wants a steady diet of it.
3. Share the load. Switch tasks occasionally. Make it efficient but try to avoid boring routines.
4. Travel time is sometimes well spent discussing the MFA examination. Pick a play a week – talk about it on a given day. You could get through half the list in 15 weeks. You all have to take it – why not use tour as a study group?
5. Constant complaining about food at the schools, or the early calls, or the fact that the set is too heavy doesn’t accomplish a thing and, in fact, becomes counter-productive after a while. The fact is: institutional food is institutional food – but it’s free. Fifty free lunches can save you \$150. One hundred free lunches can save you a month’s pay. There are going to be early calls – complaining won’t change that fact. The designers try to design the scenery to be light and durable. If there are some heavy pieces to a set, just deal with it. Once a set is built, it’s built.
6. **BEING ON TIME FOR CALLS IS CRITICAL.** Your best friends will begin to dislike you if they have to get up at six o’clock in the morning and then have to sit around and wait for you because you didn’t get up on time. If you want to make enemies, if you want the people you work with to talk behind your back about

how undependable you are, if you want to be on everyone's "you-know-what" list, all it takes is constant tardiness. Excuses don't help. They don't care that you have always had a hard time getting up. They don't care if you didn't hear the alarm. They don't care if you're sorry you're late. They don't care if you stayed up too late the night before. They don't care if your car didn't start. They don't care if you thought you were supposed to meet somewhere else. They don't care if you thought call was at a different time. What they do care about is the fact that they all know what time call was, and they all knew where to meet, and that they all got up at 5:30 so that they would be on time and you didn't. Occasionally, someone is going to be late – that is forgivable. If it happens often, it is inexcusable.

7. Remember that the stage manager is not allowed to pick you up at home.
8. Rotate seating arrangements while in the van. It doesn't have to be a tight schedule, but the bucket seat next to the driver is the most comfortable. No one person should get to sit in it all the time. If you want to stretch out in a back seat and go to sleep, remember that another member of the tour company may sometime want to do the same thing. Share the space.
9. Some people are chipper in the morning -- others are walking zombies. Respect each person's life style.
10. During the winter months a pair of boots is helpful. Loading and unloading the van in the snow can be messy and sitting in the van on the way home with wet shoes can be uncomfortable. A pair of warm work gloves is also helpful.
11. The organizations that book us are the people who pay your salaries. To insure a continuing program, always try to be courteous to the people; many times it is your cordial and friendly behavior that impresses people.
12. You are official representatives of WIU, the College of Fine Arts & Communication and the Department of Theatre & Dance. Since you will be getting your degree from Western Illinois University, it wouldn't hurt to build our reputation – it will help your career in the long run.
13. The best impression to make as a tour company is a professional one – friendly, interested, efficient and talented.
14. The idea that "the cops won't stop us for speeding, booze or dope -- we're in a state vehicle" IS NOT TRUE. They WILL stop you. They WILL give you a ticket. The University, Department or College can NOT pay those tickets. You must pay them yourself. Possession of alcohol or narcotics will be grounds for dismissal and possibly criminal charges.
15. Finding a place to change into costumes is sometimes a minor problem - a men's or women's restroom, a janitor's closet, etc. Remember that you are working around young children. A relaxed and uninhibited dressing arrangement may be acceptable in some theatre situations, but not on a school tour. Superintendents, principals and teachers frown on "half-dressed" adults walking around. Each member of the tour company is going to have their own sense of modesty and privacy. Simply because you don't mind it if your friends see you in your underwear, does not necessarily mean that someone else in the tour company feels the same way. Actors and actresses should wear underwear: Men, a tee-

shirt will help protect your costumes; women, your costume will look better with a bra.

16. Regarding what you wear while on tour. There is no official “dress code” or anything like that. Wear clothes that you can travel in comfortably and that won’t be ruined while loading and unloading. Don’t wear pajamas. It would be better, however, if the clothes didn’t look as though you slept in them for the past month. You form an instant impression the moment you walk in. You can look like a vagrant, or you can look like a professional who has pride in what you are.
17. Occasionally, you may play at a Country Club or a Dinner Theatre. Sometimes you will be invited to have dinner with the people. In these situations it would be better to have clothes that are appropriate rather than “grubbies.” Standing in a cocktail lounge after a show in a torn tee shirt and grubby jeans while your hosts are in formal wear and cocktail dresses won’t make a good impression.
18. Respect each other’s preparation techniques, routines or rituals. Some actors want to be alone before a show; some want to go through physical and vocal warm-ups; some want to go over lines; some want to grab a cat-nap. Sometimes the space to prepare is very cramped. Try not to violate another person’s space.
19. Sometimes kids want to help you load and unload the van. This is acceptable, but make sure they are carrying things that they can handle.
20. When loading and unloading it will sometimes be necessary to carry the scenery through the halls or a school. Remember that classes are in session – try not to disturb them.
21. Members of the tour company are going to have good days and bad days. Don’t blow a relationship because you or another member of the tour company is having a bad day. Just get through it. The other person will get over it. You will too.
22. This is not an Equity tour, therefore, Equity rules and regulations do not apply. Don’t get yourself all bothered over the fact that Equity would do things differently. Do let us know if you have suggestions for policies that would make tour work better.
23. The tour schedule can be grueling. After a while you will become very tired. You will begin to feel that nobody is aware that you are alive, let alone working your head off. Don’t feel as though you are going insane if you get these feelings. They are normal – everyone on tour gets them. Because you are going to be “on the road” so much of the time, it is only natural that you will not get to know other Theatre students as well as you would like. The Department supports you, WIU supports you and, whether you are aware of it or not, the graduate students support you. We are always amazed with the stamina that tour companies have displayed in the past. We respect you. We know you are working hard. Feel free to stop by and talk with the faculty if you want. We are interested in how things are going – We like to hear about your successes. Your schedule will be busier than ours.
24. After a while the fun and excitement of doing a performance is going to wear off - especially after you’ve done the same show over fifty times. Part of the training

program at Western Illinois University is to provide you with this experience of the long run. Hopefully you will develop ways to “get up” for a show when you don’t want to do it. This is a typical feeling that many professionals have in the process of the long run. It may be tiresome, it may make you want to scream, but it is good practical experience. We feel that you need the extended period of time to truly experience it. Do the job. Get it done. Stick with it. Do the best you can. After this tour is over you will be ready for just about anything. Very few experiences in Theatre & Dance are going to be as hectic as this one.

25. There probably are going to be administrative foul-ups from time to time. This can happen in our offices or the College Office or through the organization that booked us. Everyone in the College Office and in the Department of Theatre & Dance will try to do everything it can to make your life run smoothly. We are certainly not infallible. Mistakes will happen - they are not done on purpose. Try to understand that we are all doing our best to make tour a positive experience.
26. Although there are a set of guidelines regarding bookings set down in this handbook, remember that THESE ARE GUIDELINES. They are not hard and fast rules. All attempts will be made to follow the guidelines. If, however, you don’t get your full ten hours between calls, we’re sure there will be times when you get eleven or twelve hours between calls. Sometimes the booking agent may estimate travel time to be five hours round trip and it will take five and one-half hours. Do stay flexible and your tour will be more enjoyable.
27. Your health is not only important to the touring program but it is important to you. Don’t let things get out of hand. Go to the Health Center at the first sign of a sore throat or a cough or any other symptom. You are covered by the student health insurance program - use it. Do not go to the hospital or out-patient clinic before you go to the Health Center. Your insurance covers only if you go to the Health Center first. If they refer you to the hospital, then you will be covered. Take care of yourself - it is very easy to get run-down on tour.
28. Every once in a while it helps to clean the van. If you have a couple of days off, the stage manager should take the van to the garage for servicing and cleaning. If it is impossible, taking a broom to the inside and hosing it down helps change the mental attitude. It gives a feeling of a fresh start.
29. You will be at the garage almost every day getting gas. The employees at the physical plant do not like smart-alecks or wise guys. Try to develop a friendly rapport with them. It can make the difference of getting something fixed on the spare of the moment.
30. In the winter months it is a good idea to cool down after a performance before loading the van. Sweat and freezing air do not mix well. Take the time before starting to load - relax. It will be better for your health.
31. Respect each other’s eating habits. This may sound petty but it is one of those things that can become a major irritant after a long period of time. For example: suppose one of the tour company members is a vegetarian. The first couple of times you are eating lunch and you “kid” that person about eating rabbit food it may be funny. After a few months - day after day - it becomes very tiring to that person. On the other hand, the vegetarian should not dwell on the fact that the others are eating meat and go into long descriptions about how it’s going to kill

them. Respect each other's way of life. No smoking in the van.

32. It is helpful to keep the following things in the van:

- A couple boxes of Kleenex and moist wipes. They will come in handy for removing make-up in the van and an abundance of other uses.
- In the winter months it is helpful to have an extra window scraper. This will allow more than one person to help clean off the windows.
- A well-equipped first aid kit with plenty of bandages, disinfectant and latex gloves. (Everyone should be informed about dealing with blood-borne pathogens in the event that someone is injured and bleeding.)
- A bottle of aspirin.
- Some kind of box or garbage bag for disposable coffee cups, candy wrappers and other forms of litter.

33. Kids like to talk to you after the show. They are genuinely interested and fascinated with you. You are professional actors - you have a mystique about you. It is important that you spend the time. Kids have an innate ability to sense hostility. If you are having a bad day, or perhaps you just don't like kids, try to "act" your way around it. The show will go better and your life will be easier if you do. You're going to be dealing with kids - you might as well accept that fact and deal with it.

34. Always try to take the time to talk to the kids afterwards in an informal format and especially thank the principal or whoever is in charge for the opportunity to perform for them. Thank them for inviting us to their place. If people seem to have especially enjoyed the show, never hesitate to inform them of future shows. Carry some brochures with you.

35. Happy, smiling faces in the schools make all the difference. If you charge in with a frown, mad at the world, it puts a damper on the whole occasion. A smile will make you feel better and it will transfer to the audience. The shows we do are very special occasions for those schools - they look forward to us coming for months. You may have done the show 50 times and loaded and unloaded the van 100 times, but it is a first for them. Share the occasion with them.

Finally, enjoy your tour experience. Tour is a great opportunity to gain experience and expertise in performing for young audiences.

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