



TIM BRAY THEATRE COMPANY

Administered by The Operating Theatre Trust

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Sensory Relaxed Performance

Frequently Asked Questions

What is a sensory relaxed performance, and who is it for?

A sensory relaxed performance is for anyone who would benefit from a supportive, less formal theatre show, or who finds it difficult to follow the usual rules of theatre etiquette. The welcoming atmosphere may be especially beneficial to children and their family members with sensory, movement, communication, and learning needs, and other neurodiversities such as autism spectrum disorder, ADHD, and Tourette's. The show softens or alters some technical elements, offers support materials, and encourages a laid-back attitude to movement and noise to create a comfortable and inclusive theatre experience.

I have been to a relaxed performance in the past. What is the difference between "relaxed" and "sensory relaxed"?

"Relaxed performance" has a great variety of meaning, depending on where the performance is happening and who is putting it on. For many, "relaxed performance" means that the strict theatre etiquette is suspended, the lights and sound are made more gentle, and free access in and out of the theatre is allowed during the show. Our performance includes those elements and more, by providing supplementary materials to create a more accessible and inclusive event. We are creating a multifaceted performance that blends many unique elements to create a supportive, comfortable, non-judgemental theatre experience.

How is this performance different from a standard performance?

"Sensory relaxed" describes the differences this performance has to a standard performance, and the elements we are focused on altering or supplementing. The structure and substance of the performance and the story do not change; instead, supplementary resources are provided and some technical elements are softened or explained ahead of time, to give our audience an open, relaxed experience. We won't be reducing or changing the actors' performances, instead we are relaxing the sensory elements of the show, and relaxing the classical theatre etiquette requiring everyone to sit still and quiet in a dark auditorium.

How can I be sure that this performance is suitable for my child?

You know your child best, and only you can decide if this show will be suitable for them. Everyone is unique in their requirements, and we have tried to accommodate a wide range of preferences and needs, but not everything works for everyone. During a live theatre performance unpredictable events may occur.

Is the theatre wheelchair accessible?

Yes. The theatre has an accessible entrance, and the accessible toilet is located across the theatre courtyard next to the theatre. There are limited numbers of wheelchair seats available, so please call the booking office at 09 489 8360 if you need a wheelchair seat.

Can I visit the theatre before the show?

Yes. You can book a free 15-minute private familiarisation visit tour for you and your child to see the theatre, check out your seats, and become familiar with the space. Familiarisation visits will be available in the two weeks prior to the sensory relaxed performance. You can book your visit by calling the TBTC office (information below) or email Katie at katie@timbray.org.nz

I've never taken my child to the theatre before, and I'm worried about how they will find the new experience.

Trying something new can be stressful. We will have a team of trained crew members and experienced volunteers on site to help you find everything from your seat to the toilets to the chill zone, and who will be available during the show to lend a hand or answer questions. Feel free to bring your child favourite toy or comfort item along to assist them.

Is it ok to move and make noise during the show?

Yes. During the sensory relaxed performance, the audience themselves is encouraged to relax- to move around, vocalise, come and go, and express themselves freely. The audience lights will be left on low and the audience doors will be open throughout the performance. It's ok to do what you need to make yourself comfortable during the show.

The show is about to begin, but I'm not ready to go inside yet.

The audience doors are opened about 30 minutes prior to the show starting, and they will remain open for the entire show. The ushers will let you know when you can go inside the theatre for the preshow introduction, and they will also let you know when it's time to take your seats for the show to start. If the show is about to begin but you're not ready to go inside yet, that's ok. You can enjoy the silent live stream of the show on the TV in the foyer or explore outside until you are ready to enter the theatre, and the ushers can help you find your seat inside.

Will I be distracted by someone else making noise or moving in the theatre near me?

Our world is a noisy, movement filled space, and most people tend to filter out stimulus all the time in everyday life. In general, we tend to become distracted by noise or movement which we don't understand or think is not allowed. If the performance is doing its job, you'll be engaged in the story and won't be bothered by noise and movement around you. Often people worry they may be distracted but find that the permission given at the start for everyone to be themselves means they can relax and watch the show exactly as they need. They generally find this acceptance creates an even more enjoyable experience.

Where will I be able to go during the show?

Audience areas are the theatre spaces where it's ok for the public to go during the show. The courtyard, toilets, foyer, outside amphitheatre, chill zone, and auditorium are all audience areas. These are separate from the performance areas, which are only for the actors and backstage crew. Audience members are not allowed in the performance areas, such as on stage or backstage.

Can I take a break during the show?

Yes. You can come and go as much as you'd like during the show. The audience doors will be left open and the lights will be left on low throughout the entire show. We will have a chill zone set up in the foyer with comfortable places to sit so you can take a break during the performance as much as you need. There will be a TV set up in the chill zone, showing a silent live stream of the performance so you can still watch while taking a break. If it's good weather you can also go into the outside amphitheatre space to move around or relax.

Is there an interval?

There is no interval during the show, but you can come and go as much as you'd like during the performance.

Do I have to sit in the same seat the whole show, or can I change seats?

You will have a seat which matches the number on your ticket, which is your seat for the whole show. You can leave this seat to take a break or to use beanbags or floor space, and return to your seat later. When you wish to return to your seat, you will need to sit in the seat which matches your ticket, even if another seat is empty.

I want to sit in a beanbag the whole show. Do I still need to book a seat?

Yes, you will need to book a seat for the performance even if you'd later like to move to a beanbag. Beanbags are first come, first served, and they cannot be reserved.

Can I bring a snack or comfort item into the theatre?

Yes. Snacks are allowed inside the theatre. There is no food available for purchase at the theatre. You may also bring a comfort item such as a fidget toy, hearing protection, weighted blanket, or small cushion into the theatre with you. We kindly ask that mobile phones and devices be turned off and put away during the performance. However, if you need to use your mobile phone or device during the show for accessibility reasons, please put the device on silent so it can be used without interrupting the show.

What supplementary resources are available?

Supplementary resources offer a wide array of support options, from specific details of the venue and the area to a scene-by-scene breakdown of the story. These materials are designed to help you prepare for your experience at the show. You can choose what elements you'd like to know ahead of time, and what you'd like to leave as a surprise. Some of these resources are specific to the show and will be available closer to the performance, while other materials be on our website permanently.

The resources available for every show:

- A welcome video explains what coming to a Tim Bray Theatre Company performance will be like.

- Traveling to the theatre information tells you how to get to the theatre, where to park, and what facilities are available on site.
- A colour seating chart provides a detailed description of the seating available for the performance, and the proximity of the seating to exits, speakers, and performers.
- A visual story about what the theatre looks like and what may happen while you are attending the show
- A Story Summary and Meet the Team document give details about the specific show and performers you're coming to see, to help you prepare for your visit and know what to expect during the show. These resources are available about two weeks before the sensory relaxed performance.
- A free familiarisation visit offers a private tour of the empty theatre to explore the space before the show day. A familiarisation visit guide will tell you what the visit will include and what you'll be able to do and see.
- The casual pre-show introduction before the show begins will let you meet and speak with the actors, musician, and backstage crew to learn more about the story and the performance. The pre-show introduction will provide details of what to expect.

When can I get details about the specific show I'm going to see?

Full details about the specific performance you are coming to see, such as how long the show is, a detailed story summary, actor and character information, and surprises will all be available in the story summary, which will be posted to the Tim Bray Theatre Company website shortly before the sensory relaxed performance. Check our website for the dates that these resources will be available.

More questions?

If you have any further questions, give Tim Bray Theatre Company a call at (09) 486 22 61 Monday-Friday from 9:00am-5:00pm, or email Katie at katie@timbray.org.nz

