

Renaissance Theatre Fact Sheet – Top 10 facts about Shakespeare's Theatre

1. If you don't think an actor is any good you can shout at him. Perhaps they will find a better actor next time.
2. Keep an eye on your money. Cut-purses liked to steal a few pennies whilst they enjoyed the show. Money was kept in a leather pouch tied onto your belt. The cut-purse would try and snip these free if they found someone who looked like they were engrossed in the play.
3. If you don't have a good view just push your way through the crowd until you have the view you want. You might have to be quite pushy though as lots of other people will also be trying to see from the best spots.
4. Don't expect to hear every word, the audience is quite noisy except for during the really exciting bits.
5. If you are a woman you might want to go to the theatre with some friends or a male companion. If you don't you are likely to get teased and made fun of.
6. Keep your eye out for interesting people. Lots of ambassadors and wealthy people visited the theatre. But don't expect to see the Queen. When she wants to see a play she asks the actors to visit her.
7. Don't expect to see any female actors. All the roles are played by men. The young men play the lady's roles and the older men play the men's roles.
8. You can buy food from people wandering through the audience during the play. Just stop them and buy some. You might be able to buy fruit or hazelnuts.
9. The theatre is next door to the bear-baiting pit which costs the same amount of money as the theatre. In the bear-baiting pit you can watch bears and dogs fighting – sometimes to the death.
10. Take care when you leave the theatre – there were lots of fights and brawls after many performances. Some young men like to wait outside and see if they can pick a fight with the young apprentices after the show.



Richard Burbage