



Backstage Tours

You've seen the lobby, the audience, and the stage, but have you ever wondered what hides behind the curtains? The Clarence Brown offers free tours for schools and groups. Tours can be tailored to fit your group's interests focusing on the current production or the CBT as a whole. Tours generally start in the Main Lobby and can last anywhere from 30 minutes for a quick backstage look at the current production to an hour for a more comprehensive tour including a visit to our shops. Contact Outreach and Education Coordinator, David Alley, at dalley@utk.edu to schedule a tour.

Tours begin in our main lobby, where groups learn the history of noted film director Clarence Brown—his life, his career, and his association with the University of Tennessee. We also discuss the day-to-day operations of the CBT, and its partnership with the Department of Theatre.

We then move into the mainstage auditorium, where we cover all of the “bells and whistles” that were designed as part of the original building in 1970, as well as some more recent updates, which allow us to create the “magic” of theatre using the physical space and the stage. Then, it's on to the Scene Shop, where all of the major structural parts of our set are assembled, and where our students have a hand in helping to make scenic designs come to life.

Once we're finished there, it's downstairs to the Props Shop...our own little “magic factory” where anything that the actors sit on, lie on, stand on, carry on-stage, handle on-stage, eat (or pretend to eat) on-stage is created. It's definitely the most fun place to work! Then we travel to the Trap Room, underneath the stage, and see just how we're able to manipulate the stage floor...in more ways than one!

When we're done in the Trap Room, we move on to the Costume Shop...the busiest of our shops. This is where costumes are stored, built, and/or altered, and the place where each actor cast in a play must visit for a costume fitting sometime before rehearsals begin, or at least early in the rehearsal process.

We then head back upstairs to visit the Green Room and Wardrobe/Dressing Room Area. If time permits, and no classes are taking place, we go all the way upstairs to see our 120-Seat Black Box Theatre, The Lab Theatre. We may even have time to trek over to see the Ula Love Doughty Carousel Theatre, the oldest continual-use Arena Stage, or “Theatre in the Round,” in the entire country!