

Cell Phone-Based Programs

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New York Classical Theatre loves our home in the City's public places and green spaces. That's why we do whatever we can to help maintain and protect our natural resources. For years, I always wondered how to reduce the paper and ink being used to print our programs—and also where most of those programs ended up... the trash. It was with this inspiration that I began dreaming of the idea of cell phone-based programs. Our first "digital playbill" in Summer 2018 was accessed using a link listed on a bookmark (reusable!) and handed out to each audience member which—per our Actors' Equity agreement—also contained the cast list. We saved over 50,000 sheets of paper (and printing) for each show.

The very next season, we began using AudienceView Professional software. We asked people to make a free, advance reservation for our performances so we could email them a cell phone-based program and production dramaturgy before the show. We found we could better control the graphic design of our programs, link to actors' social media, and make any updates needed throughout the run. The staff time for building the program itself was about the same, but we definitely saved money and resources just printing bookmarks instead of 8-12 page booklets.

But what about the use of cell phones during a show? Rather than fight this, we began to embrace it. We know that audiences' cell phones are not going away, but it made more sense to keep their attention on the performance (and our digital playbill) if ever their eyes dropped to their portable screens. But what about the program book-as-souvenir? NY Classical's leadership is old enough to have fond memories from back when Styrofoam cups and CFC-propelled spray cans were still in use, too. That nostalgia doesn't stop us from making new, greener theatre without them. Now, please enjoy the show and this very collectable bookmark!



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