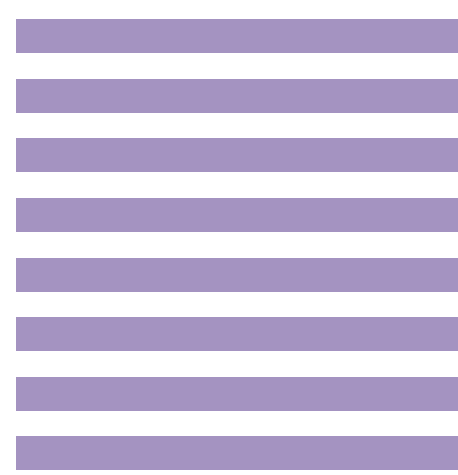


The **Alden**

USHER HANDBOOK



ALDEN

SMALL
STAGE.

BIG
TALENT.

WWW.ALDENTHEATRE.ORG



Quick Reference

HOW TO CONTACT THE COORDINATOR:

You may contact the Performing Arts Usher Coordinator, Jeff Virchow, using the methods below (also printed at the bottom of each page of this guide):

JEFF VIRCHOW:
703-744-9353 (Leave a message)
jeffrey.virchow@fairfaxcounty.gov

LEAVING A LAST MINUTE MESSAGE:

For last minute concerns about your schedule, such as running late, a sudden emergency, etc., please phone the front desk and ask to leave a message for the house manager on duty.

FRONT DESK:
703-790-0123

- ▼ If at any time you feel that you cannot handle a situation on your own, please notify the house manager immediately.
- ▼ No one is allowed backstage or onstage unless otherwise instructed by staff.
- ▼ Volunteers are not permitted to sit during sold out performances.
- ▼ Patrons are not permitted to stand during performances.
- ▼ Watch for food and drink at all times.
- ▼ Please know emergency procedures. (Page 8)
- ▼ Ushers must tend to patrons entering and exiting theater at all times!

A Letter from Sarah Schallern Treff



The word “literally” is used far too often these days, but believe me when I say we literally couldn’t do it without you. Without the ushers to be the face of The Alden, to provide assistance to patrons and even to be guard dogs, we wouldn’t be able to open our doors to the public. Your dedication and professionalism benefit your community and support the staff of The Alden.

On behalf of all of us, thank you for your continued service and for volunteering your time to be a part of our team.

I look forward to seeing you this season!

Sarah Schallern Treff
Performing Arts Director

Table of Contents

Welcome.....	4
Who We Are.....	5
Alden Ushering Basics.....	6
Policies.....	7
Emergency Procedures.....	8
Position Description.....	8
Signing Up for Performances.....	10
Benefits.....	10
Theatre Map.....	11

Welcome.

Dear Volunteers,

Welcome to a new season at The Alden. We are delighted that you have chosen to join our vibrant and broadening program. The assistance that you provide is vital to the success of our efforts to bring high-quality entertainment of regional and national acclaim to the community of McLean.

At The Alden we consider volunteering a great service opportunity and a serious responsibility. As an usher, you are often the first person to greet our patrons and the last to bid them farewell. Your positive attitude and commitment to this role will help ensure that we give our patrons a unique and lasting experience. We depend on you to be knowledgeable of our regulations and performances all the while remaining friendly and courteous as you represent The Alden and its mission. In return, you will have the opportunity to be a part of our exciting activities, see our talented performers and meet some new friends.

We are deeply grateful for the gift of your time and the joy that you will bring to our theater. We welcome you to our family.

Many thanks,



Jeffrey Virchow



Who We Are



Clockwise, from top left: Evelyn Hill, Cathryn Salisbury-Valerien, Jennifer Garrett, Danielle Van Hook, Justin King, Jeff Virchow, and Sarah Schallern Treff.



The Alden, a 383-seat professional house, operates under the Fairfax County Government agency, the McLean Community Center. We offer a full season of national and international professional touring artists which represent a variety of disciplines. Our focus is on education, arts and culture.

Sarah Schallern Treff *Performing Arts Director*

Jennifer Garrett *Technical Director*

Danielle Van Hook *Director of Youth Theatre Programs*

Justin King *Assistant Technical Director*

Evelyn Hill *Patron Services Manager*

Cathryn Salisbury-Valerien *Theatre Technician*

Jeff Virchow *Performing Arts Coordinator*

The Basics

DRESS CODE & UNIFORM

- ▼ A lanyard and name badge will be provided.
- ▼ Solid white shirt with sleeves and collar.
- ▼ Solid black dress slacks or skirt. No jeans or shorts.
- ▼ Black shoes.

PRIOR TO THE SHOW

Please be on time, properly dressed and ready for duty. Arrival times are listed on your assignment confirmation.

Upon arrival, report to the House Manager's cabinet in the light lock via the backstage door and sign in to The Alden Usher Log. An usher preshow meeting will be held 5 to 10 minutes after your scheduled arrival time. Ushers will receive important information regarding the show, audience and assignments.

All ushers should take a flashlight and lanyard from the House Manager's cabinet in the light lock. Ushers posted inside the theater will need to take a stack of programs. These will also be found inside the cabinet.

Please report to your position following the usher staff meeting, so that you are ready to greet and assist patrons. Once the theater doors are opened, you must remain in your position during the entire performance. If, after 20 minutes into the performance, there are no immediate needs, ushers may sit in reserved seats, if they have been provided. Seats will not be guaranteed.

Be aware of all exits and be ready at all times to assist patrons to a safe exit should an emergency arise. Be aware of those patrons that may require special assistance in the case of an emergency.

Please be familiar with the locations of our restrooms, water fountains, telephones, etc., as these are the most frequently asked questions. Always answer questions to the best of your ability. If you don't know an answer, seek the House Manager for help.

OPENING THE THEATRE

Once in your position and the House Manager instructs to "open the house," open all doors to the theater. Greet the patrons, give programs, and offer assistance in finding patrons' seats. Remind patrons to "watch their step" when entering the theater as the floors slope. If needed, use your flashlight to illuminate the aisles for patrons. Be sure all patrons are seated as the show begins.



SPECIAL NEEDS PATRONS

Disabled Patrons:

- ▼ Our theater has a designated area for wheelchairs in Row J (see map on back cover). Please ask kindly to stow any unused walkers/wheelchairs in the light lock near the cabinet.
- ▼ Please do not touch a patron or a wheelchair without permission. When assisting, it is more gracious to offer your arm as support than to grab or hold on to a patron's arm.

Hearing Impaired Patrons:

- ▼ The theater is equipped with assistive listening devices for the hearing impaired. Patrons may obtain a device at the box office. To work, headsets must be on and inside the theater with the receiver facing the stage.

DURING THE SHOW

If, after 20 minutes into the performance, there are no immediate needs, ushers may sit in reserved seats as long as they have been provided. Seating for ushers is not guaranteed. (see late seating policy below). During the show you must remain prepared to assist with possible disturbances and emergencies. Please continue to monitor the theater throughout the performance.

AT INTERMISSION

Please return or remain in your assigned post during intermission. When the theater lights brighten for intermission, open the inner doors and be available to the patrons on the inside. Stay by your door to ensure patrons are not bringing food and drink in to the theater. Once the show resumes, you may return to your reserved seat for the remainder of the show. Please continue to monitor the theater.

PROHIBITED WITHIN THE THEATER

- ▼ Food
- ▼ Drink (covered water bottles are permitted)
- ▼ Cameras and other recording devices
- ▼ Patrons standing during performance
- ▼ Children may sit in a parent's lap, however, they must have purchased a separate seat for the child.

Politely request that patrons refrain from entering the theater with prohibited items. Please be especially aware as patrons return to the theater after intermission.

RECORDING EQUIPMENT

Policies concerning cameras, video cameras and other recording devices vary by artist. Often copyright regulations prohibit the use of recording equipment. When such equipment is permitted, it must be battery operated, without tripods or electrical cords running through the aisle. Flash photography is never permitted. Ushers need to politely enforce this rule for the safety of our patrons and performers. Please report any such violations to the House Manager.

AFTER THE SHOW

Ushers must remain on duty until the conclusion of the performance. Be sure to watch that no one goes up the stage stairs. After all patrons have left, and the theatre is empty, close the theatre doors and conduct a brief walk-through to pick up programs, look for lost items, etc. Please notify the House Manager if you find anything out of the ordinary (i.e. gum stuck to the floor). Items left behind should be turned in to the welcome center. Please check with the House Manager before leaving and **sign out in the Alden Usher Log**. Don't forget to return your lanyard, name badge and flashlight to the House Manager's cabinet.

Policies

AISLES MUST REMAIN CLEAR AT ALL TIMES

Any item left in the aisle prohibiting a clear walk way is in direct violation of fire codes and is a hazard to the safety of our patrons. Please kindly offer assistance with handbags, strollers, baby carriers, walkers, etc. These items may be stored in the light lock near the House Manager's cabinet. If you have removed an item, please remember to return it during intermission or after the performance.

LATE SEATING

Late seating is at the discretion of the artist and House Manager. We make every effort to seat latecomers; however, entry may be delayed or patrons may have to be temporarily seated in a designated late seating area. Generally, we ask late patrons to take the first available seat they find to avoid disruption to the performance in progress. Please ask the House Manager about late seating prior to the start of the show as each performance may differ.



Emergency Procedures

ACCIDENTS & INJURIES

In case of any accident, either small or large, summon the House Manager or nearest Center staff person on duty immediately. Even if the patron insists that he or she is not hurt, you must notify the House Manager. An accident report must be filed by a staff member.

- ▼ In the event of a fall when a patron states that they are not injured, offer assistance in getting up and notify the House Manager.
- ▼ In the event a patron has an accident that results in bodily injury, do not move the patron, rather be sure someone stays with the patron and immediately summon the House Manager.
- ▼ If a patron is experiencing chest pains, difficulty breathing or similar symptoms and has the ability to walk, please assist them to the lobby and notify the House Manager; however, if they are unable to walk, summon the House Manager immediately.

EMERGENCIES

In the event of a fire alarm or similar emergency, all ushers on duty should quickly instruct patrons in near proximity to evacuate the building through the nearest exits, then promptly evacuate along with them. Once outside the building, please direct the patrons to move far away from the building and into the back parking lot areas or the Dolley Madison Library property. Keep patrons away from the building and entryways.

Position Description

INNER DOOR GREETERS

(Three inner doors at orchestra entrance, and right-side door of balcony, if required.)

- ▼ Direct patron to proper aisle.
- ▼ Hand out programs.
- ▼ Close doors as directed by House Manager.
- ▼ Stand at your assigned door for 20 minutes after show starts to assist with late arrivals.
- ▼ Open doors when lights go up at intermission and at performance end.
- ▼ See that no one goes up the steps to the sides of the stage except staff or performers.
- ▼ Late seating varies, ask the House Manager for details.

EMERGENCY EXIT DOOR GREETERS

(Doors opposite of the theater entrance.)

- ▼ Direct patron to proper aisle.
- ▼ If needed, hand out programs.
- ▼ Exit doors lead directly out of the building. These doors should be used primarily for emergencies only. Please know emergency procedures.
- ▼ Stand at your assigned door for 20 minutes after show starts to assist with late arrivals.
- ▼ Late seating varies, ask the House Manager for details.

TICKET TAKER

- ▼ Check for date, time, orchestra or balcony and performance title on ticket.
- ▼ Collect ticket stubs or scan ticket codes.
- ▼ Direct patron to the usher at the inner door for further assistance.
- ▼ Direct patrons without tickets to the Box Office.
- ▼ Ticket stubs will be collected by the House Manager five minutes after the start of the show.

BOX OFFICE LINE GREETER

- ▼ Greet patrons as they enter the center to help direct them into the correct box office line and assist with questions.
- ▼ Be familiar with Alden season and facility.
- ▼ Enrich patron's experience through personal connection, but remain available to greet everyone.
- ▼ Leave patrons with a lasting impression and send them off with a smile. Ushers may say things like: "Thank you for coming, please join us for _____, our next performance. Don't forget to fill out our survey and receive your free treat at the welcome center."

J-WALKER

Row "J", our row for patrons with disabilities, runs along the main aisle to cross from house left to right. This aisle can appear dark for some patrons. Only as needed, this position will assist our patrons who find it difficult to find their way across the aisle, patrons needing assistance to an accessible seat, and patrons exiting from house right during a performance. Please be sure to have a flashlight to illuminate the aisle. This position may be combined with the emergency exit door position.

BOX OFFICE WILL CALL

(Only as needed.)

Assist the box office associate with the will call line. Preprinted tickets are given to patrons showing proof of purchase. This position requires standing inside the office at the will call window until show time, at which time the usher will be assigned to an emergency exit door.

ASSIGNED USHER SEATING

At some performances, assigned seating will be reserved for ushers. Please be sure to remain standing in your position for latecomers (20 minutes after show time) and stand to assist patrons exiting during a performance. **Having a seat does not exempt ushers from their duties during a performance.**

NOTE: Assigned seating will not be available during sold out performances.



Signing up for Performances

USHER SIGN-UP FORM

In order to usher for a performance, you must first fill out a Usher Information Form, read and sign the County's harassment policy memo, and fill out the usher sign-up form. This sign-up form can be found separately inserted into your handbook. If one is not provided or you have lost your copy, please ask the Coordinator, Jeff Virchow, for a replacement.

- ▼ Every effort will be made to give ushers their choices for assignments; however, there will be some cases where this will not be feasible due to the nature of scheduling and the needs of the theater.
- ▼ Signing up for a performance does not necessarily mean you will be scheduled to work. You must wait to receive **confirmation** that you have been scheduled. Confirmations are made by email.
- ▼ In addition to your confirmation, you will receive reminder notifications prior to your scheduled shift.
- ▼ Please do not show up to usher if you have not been confirmed as you will not be permitted to work. If you are unsure of your schedule, always feel free to call before you arrive.

Benefits

BRING A CHILD TO A SHOW FOR FREE

Ushers that work a children's performance, may request one free voucher for a child to attend that performance. Please note, the child must be old enough to be unsupervised.

FREE PERFORMANCE VOUCHERS

Ushers that work two (2) children's performances may request one free voucher. This will be redeemable for **most** performances (see staff for a list of possible performances). For additional information contact the Coordinator, Jeff Virchow.

ANNUAL VOLUNTEER USHER INFORMATION EVENTS

As a way to show our appreciation to our ushers and offer new season orientations, The Alden staff will host an exciting party prior to the beginning of each season. This will be the first chance to sign up for each new season, learn about the upcoming performers and discuss new policies. Previous events have included live performances, delicious refreshments, and prizes.

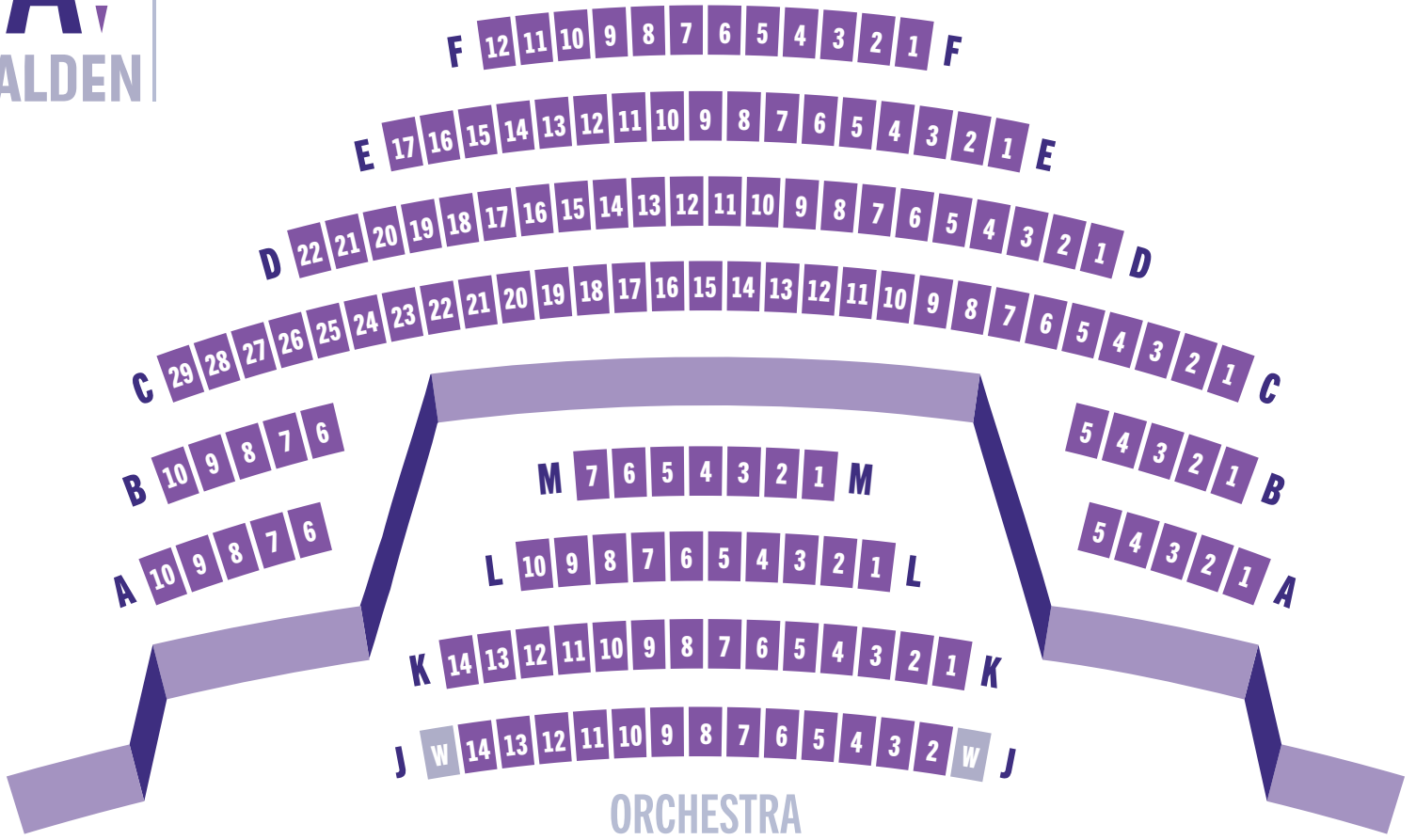
MCC VOLUNTEER RECOGNITION EVENT

The H. Gordon Randall Outstanding Volunteer Service Award reception will be held each year to recognize outstanding volunteers that have served the McLean Community Center for the previous year. This will be a themed reception with food and entertainment.

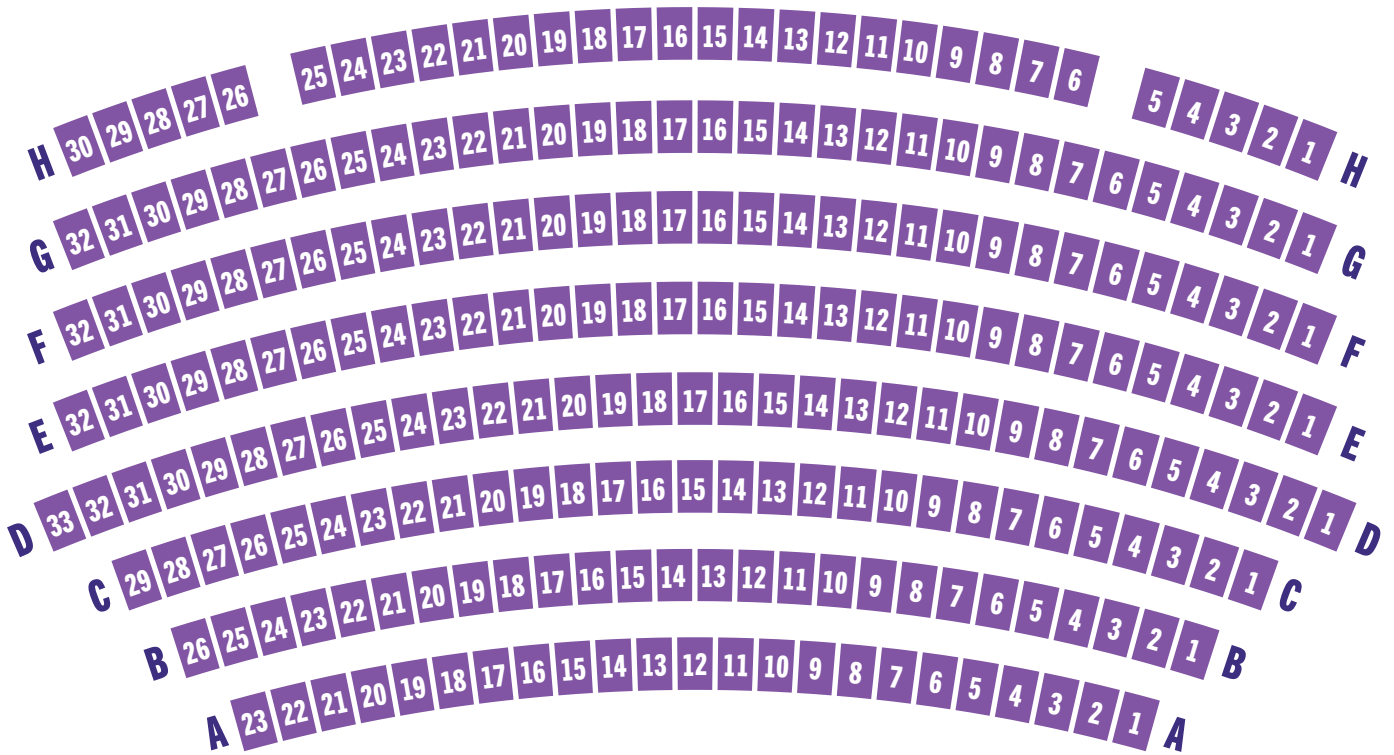
Questions? Please contact the Performing Arts Coordinator with any questions.

BALCONY

W = SPACE RESERVED FOR WHEELCHAIRS



ORCHESTRA



STAGE



CHITA RIVERA



BRIAN STOKES MITCHELL



AMERICAN SHAKESPEARE CENTER



THE ALDEN

1234 INGLESIDE AVE.

McLEAN, VA 22101

BOX OFFICE: 703-790-9223

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