

Backstage with

By Jenny Bertelsen

Since last Sunday, four dress rehearsals of the *King & I* have been tweaked and polished. There were a few trip-ups, crackling microphone wires and missed cues but that's



what dress rehearsals are for; to test the gear and correct the mistakes before the audience arrives!

Backstage, where fluffy slippers, thick robes and blankets are a necessity to keep warm in the cold theatre, the final touches are being applied. The "royal children" are getting used to their exotic costumes (and are becoming experts on how to keep them clean at tea-breaks), the "royal wives" have figured out the best way to pull their hair up into a bun (even when some have short hair) and "Anna" is figuring out how to walk gracefully in her enormously grand dresses without stepping on her hem. Of course there are the more serious matters of getting the technical cues perfect, and making sure the props and set decorations are on stage on time and don't get damaged in the process.

The intense schedule of rehearsals has left its marks. Most people are tired, stressed, sore and some under the weather, but today they all feel that special ingredient bubbling up: **adrenaline**. For tonight, it's:



OPENING NIGHT!



Having spent the day at work, home, college or school, all cast and crew members will have this extra exciting feeling to know that tonight, it's for real. Of course everyone involved in the show is there to enjoy themselves, but the most important goal is to entertain and engage the audience – to bring a smile to their face, to touch their hearts or simply to make them forget their daily worries for a few hours. And knowing that the audience will be there tonight, adds the extra buzz.

So tonight, everyone will be at the theatre a little earlier, taking a little more care when dressing and applying their stage make-up, or setting up their work area. They'll enjoy the little messages, cards and small presents that circulate to wish each other good luck on opening night, and they'll listen to the motivating pep-talks of the director and stage manager. And while the audience takes a seat (in the heated theatre!) the hum of voices carries through on stage, and they'll know that tonight, they'll feel the magic of theatre. They'll share that last hug, whisper a quick "break-a-leg!" and take a deep breath before the curtain lifts...



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