

# CONCERT MANNERS

Although concert etiquette (*good concert manners*) can be a little different for different types of concerts, here are some tips on how to be **A GOOD AUDIENCE MEMBER** . . . from start to finish!

## WHAT TO WEAR

You will probably be more comfortable at a concert if you **dress in a way that is respectful to the performers and other audience members**. It is a good idea to "dress up" for most classical concerts. Outdoor concerts, family concerts, and rock concerts are usually more casual. You will need to use your own judgment. Be sure to show respect by avoiding clothes with holes, rips or tears; very casual shorts, skirts or jeans; and very casual t-shirts or tank tops. It is also good concert etiquette to avoid wearing perfumes or fragrances since many performers and audience members are highly allergic or sensitive to these products.

## CONCERT SEATING

For most concerts, you will need to arrive at the hall or auditorium at least five to ten minutes before concert time in order to find your seat, receive a program, and be seated.

- **It is very, very important that you stay in your own seat and remain quietly seated throughout the concert for two reasons:**
  1. *It is disrespectful to the performers who are working hard to perform good music.*
  2. *It is disrespectful to other audience members to interfere in their enjoyment of the music in any way.*
- **Never enter or leave a concert hall or auditorium while a concert in progress** unless it is an absolute emergency. If you arrive late or need to leave early, make every attempt to wait until intermission or a break in the program. *It is considered to be very rude to leave a concert that is in progress* except in cases of dire need or emergency.

## NOISE

**It is extremely important to stay as quiet as possible during a concert**, for the same reasons as listed in the "concert seating" section above. A quiet performance hall is as important to a musician as a clean, empty canvas would be to a painter.

- *Please do not talk, sing along, hum, or yell, or keep a beat with a body part during a performance.* Signs that it is time to stop making any noise are the dimming of house lights, the beginning of an overture, the entrance of a concertmaster or conductor, etc.
- Make sure that all *cell phones, pagers, and watch alarms are off* before the concert begins.
- Wait until intermission to rifle through a purse, backpack or bag.
- Do not unwrap candy or cough drops once the concert begins. If you have a cough, consider having a cough suppressant in your mouth before the concert begins. If you begin to cough, make a quick and quiet exit at the next best opportunity.

## SHOWING APPRECIATION

**Applause, or clapping, is the traditional way to show appreciation for the efforts of the musicians.**

If you do not enjoy the selection of music or the way that it is performed, you should still show respect and appreciation. If you *especially* enjoy a selection, a soloist, or an overall performance, your applause will naturally be longer and more enthusiastic!

- Be sure to read your program at a classical music concert. If you notice that a major composition has several movements or "subcategories", please do not clap between the movements. Sometimes, if you are not familiar with the music, it is difficult to keep track of where the musicians are in the course of the program or composition. If you are not sure whether clapping is appropriate at a certain time, wait until the more experienced audience members around you begin to clap, and then join in.
- Sometimes, at the end of a performance, audience members shout out "Bravo!" or "Brava!" when the applause begins. This is completely acceptable because it means "Awesome!" or "Well done!" It is not appropriate to whistle or shout out other words, though.
- Sometimes an audience will show extra appreciation for an especially good performance by standing when they applaud. This is called a standing ovation. It is probably most respectful to join and stand even if you did not think the performance was particularly special.
- Curtain calls are when the conductor and/or performer/s leave the stage for a moment, and then return because the audience is still clapping. It is good manners for a performer or conductor to thank the audience by bowing or nodding to receive the appreciation of the audience. Sometimes when this goes on for quite awhile, the performer/s may return to perform an "encore", or a bonus performance. If you are anxious to leave, don't worry. This usually will not last more than a few minutes.

## EATING, DRINKING, SMOKING

During a performance, you should never eat, drink, or smoke. The reasons for this are the same as the reasons listed in the "Concert Seating" section. Cough drops that are unwrapped before the performance or during intermission are acceptable, of course.

## YOUNG CHILDREN AND CONCERTS

Some concerts are more appropriate for children than others. Short concerts or informal concerts are the best ones for young children. It is inappropriate to expect young children to be able to sit as still or stay as quiet as older children and adults. Sometimes young children are allowed to attend a concert in order to see a particular performer or to be "introduced" to the music. However, the musicians and other audience members should receive respect and attention from ALL audience members. **Babies and children that are too young to understand and use concert manners do not belong at most concerts.**

*Please note . . . in the case of school concerts where families would like young children to hear the concerts of older siblings, consider making a videotape or making arrangements for the child to attend part of a rehearsal instead of the concert. Poor concert manners from very young siblings are certainly understandable, but **not** acceptable. In addition, school performers will appreciate and enjoy the full attention of the parent for this special event.*