

## Supporting Music Education: Audience Guidelines

Becoming a discerning, supportive and knowledgeable audience member is an important part of a student's education. Successful audience participation requires skill, discretion, common sense, discipline and a bit of knowledge.

**You have worked very hard** to prepare your students to perform in concert. One final step remains: It is also essential that you set a high expectation for audience behavior and appropriate participation.

- Most of us learn to be “an audience” in front of the television or at the movies. This is quite different from actually being present in a room with other people—most likely, people you don't know and who don't know you—at a live performance. At live performances, **we enter into relationships**, both with the performers and with our fellow audience members.
- **One of the pleasures of live performance** is spontaneity, but what is required of an audience is spontaneity within certain discreet boundaries.
- **Appropriate performance behaviors change** according to the type of performance we are attending. When we comment on a performance, we are not only voicing our opinions, but also revealing our knowledge—or lack of knowledge.

**Choose from the appropriate event information below and consider including it in your program.**

### At Live Performances

- **Be amazed, impressed, challenged, fascinated and appreciative.**
- **Applaud** when the performers walk onstage and at the end of the piece—but not in the middle. Look at the printed program: Some pieces consist of several “movements.” It is customary to wait in silence between these movements and then to applaud at the end of the entire piece.
- **Refrain from talking during the performance.** The performers and our fellow audience members
- are trying to concentrate. The medium is sound, and unwanted sound competes with the performance.
- **Show appreciation through applause.** Cheering is not appropriate at a live concert.
- **Refrain from taking flash photos or making video or audio recordings.** Flash photos disrupt the performers, and copyright laws prohibit recordings of any sort.

## In Addition, at a Jazz Concert

- **Get excited!**
- **Applaud** a solo that you find particularly great. You may show appreciation in the middle of a piece.
- **Express** yourself more openly than at a classical concert, but remember that cheering is still not appropriate.

## In Addition, at a Dance Concert

- **Be amazed and fascinated with the movement of the human body.**
- **Applaud** anywhere in the midst of the dance. You may applaud a particularly difficult or well-executed move, step or leap.

## At a Visual Arts Event

- **Examine, ogle, question, speak with the artist, scrutinize, be baffled, converse, melt, raise your eyebrows—but also show respect for the creative process.**
- **Refrain from touching** unless specifically asked.
- **You may ask permission from the artist to take photographs.**

## At the Theatre

- **Be fascinated, cry, laugh, get angry and smile.**
- **Applaud** at the end of a scene, act, speech or zinger. In other words, you may respond in the middle of the piece.
- **Refrain from talking and taking flash photos or making recordings.**

- **Don't distract the performers** before, during or after the performance.

## At a Poetry or Fiction Reading

- **Listen in silence.** Cultivate the ability to let the words play on your imagination. Let the voice of the reader and his or her language conjure up images in your mind's eye.
- If a poet is reading more than one poem, he or she will tell you this at the beginning of the reading. **Do not applaud until** all of the poems have been read.

## And Finally

- Standing **ovations are rare in the real world.** Be judicious with your standing ovations. They should not become so commonplace that performers who receive only warm applause fear that the audience disapproves of their performance.

## Informances

- **Informances** (opportunities where the audience gains information about an arts discipline while at a performance) are extremely effective advocacy tools. Informances can be one number in a program or an entire production.
- **Build opportunities for the audience to actively participate** (sing, move, emulate, play, etc.) in them.
- **Encourage the audience to look at the process** of creating, not just the product. It is through “process” that students become enriched through the arts.



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**TIP 23**