

Classical concert etiquette essay sample



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Attending a classical concert is a very different experience to attending other concerts. Classical concerts in particular are very special, in that, it is almost like re-creating history. The performers play music from the past and in a way serve as a 'bridge' between the composers and the listeners. It is important to know the concert etiquette before attending one of these concerts in order to make it a pleasant experience for yourself and others. Below is a guideline to ensure that your presence does not disrupt but enhance the enjoyment of the music.

Step 1. Dress

Before attending a classical concert, the most obvious decision to make is what to wear. At first, this may seem like a simple task, simply wear anything you want. This is where most people go wrong, especially younger people. It is important to keep in mind that you are attending a 'classical' concert, and not a pop concert, and therefore is expected that you dress in a more formal and respectful manner. A suggested outfit for a female would be a nice dress or suit, and for a male, a pair of neat pants, shirt and tie, and perhaps a jacket. A less formal dress may also be acceptable provided that you avoid clothing with holes, rips or tears, skirts, or jeans. It is important to note that certain concerts require more formal clothing than other concerts, by this it is meant that if you were to attend a concert recital at Carnegie Hall it is expected that you wear extremely formal clothes in comparison to attending a school classical concert held in Choir Hall.

Step 2. Arriving at the Concert Hall or Auditorium

Now that the appropriate dress has been established, it is important to when to arrive at the concert hall and what to do. Generally, the audience should arrive at least five to ten minutes ahead of the scheduled concert. This is because of practical reasons such as to find your seat, and to settle down to read the concert program or any notes accompanying the program. If you are attending the concert with a partner, conversation with your partner or others sitting nearby is welcome and appropriate, however as soon as the lights dim, the conversation should cease as a sign of politeness and respect to the performer(s).

Step 3. During the Concert

As soon as you have seated yourself, you must stay seated throughout the concert. Before the performance starts, most concert hall authorities will request that you turn off your mobile phone, and check that you have also turned off your watch alarm.

Once again, it is important to keep in the back of your mind that this is a classical concert, and therefore despite enthusiasm for the performance, standing up and dancing to the music, singing or humming along is most certainly unacceptable!

During the performance you may not eat, drink or smoke as this usually disturbs those sitting nearby and may also disturb the performer(s). The main idea is that you should focus your entire attention to the performance without distractions.

Step 4. Applause

Applause is one of the most rewarding experiences for a performer, and shows the audience's appreciation of the performer's hard work. During the concert, there are several occasions for you to applaud. The first applause usually occurs when the conductor of the orchestra enters and/or when the soloist enters onto the stage. As applause is given at the end of a major work, and not in between the various movements of the work, it is probably a good idea to read your music program and know when applause is to be given. If this is your first time attending a concert of this type, and become uncertain whether to applaud at a particular moment, it is best to simply follow other members of the audience. If you are lucky enough to attend a concert where a performance has gone beyond everyone's expectations, you may hear words such as 'Bravo' being shouted in the audience which means 'well done'.

Step 5. Curtain Calls

After the last item is performed and applause is given, usually the soloist and/or conductor will leave the stage for a few moments, and then return to the stage. This is called a curtain call. In the case of a stunning performance, the excited audience may demand another item to be performed that is not on the concert program, and words such as 'Encore' will be shouted out to signal the performer that the audience wishes to hear more, provided that the performer has enough energy left.

Step 6. After the Concert

After the concert, there are several options. You may either go home, or you are usually welcome to meet the performers backstage and offer your

positive comments. It is very common for audience members wanting to have their concert program autographed by the performers. This allows the audience to go home taking a bit of that ‘ magic’ with them.

If all concert goers adopt the above concert etiquette, it makes these occasions more enjoyable for the audience, the performers and most importantly yourself!