



**National
Music
Centre**

**Centre
National
de Musique**

Concert Etiquette Guide

Arrive On Time or Early

The National Music Centre offers many opportunities for students to experience live music. For performances, such as *Showtime!*, at Stage 1 at the National Music Centre, please arrive at least 10 minutes prior to the performance time. Stage 1 is intimate and often shared by more than one class so early arrival guarantees an organized start.

Out of respect for the performers it is important to arrive on time. In most concert situations, if you are late, you won't be allowed in until there's a pause in the music. In some situations—especially when the music has no pauses or in the case of ballet—no one is admitted after the music starts. Arrive early enough to enjoy the atmosphere, hang up your coats, use the washroom, find your seat and get ready for the music.

Where to Sit

Whether at the Rozsa Centre, in the gym at your school or at the National Music Centre, students that are tallest see best from the back. Those that are smallest should sit at the front. Adults are encouraged to sit at the back and along the sides so as not to obstruct the child's view. Please use your discretion if you feel some students would benefit from having an adult closer by.

Sounds that Get in the Way

The basic idea is to help each other focus on the music. Making noise, fidgeting, or walking around can distract other listeners, and it may interfere with the musicians' concentration. We're all used to talking and moving around while the TV is on—it's easy to forget that at a concert the performers can see and hear the audience! Musicians can feel your involvement, and it inspires them to give their best.

- Cell phones, pagers, and beeper watches (Please turn them to silent)
- Talking (You'd be surprised how many people get so excited that they forget they're not watching TV.)
- Whispering (It is not as silent as you think)
- Unwrapping anything. Please leave snacks and juice boxes in your bag until you are back on the bus.
- Coughing (If you have a cough, then bring cough drops—unwrap them beforehand, please!—or take cough medicine.)
- Squeaking a chair
- Kicking a chair
- Jingling coins
- Rustling the program and other paperwork
- Saying “shhh”

Activities that Get in the Way

You don't have to sit like a statue. You can breathe; you can shift your body in your chair. You can respond to the music. In classical performance, the common etiquette is “emotion without motion” however traditional view points are changing. Encourage your students to recognize the space around them and the neighbor next to them and act appropriately for the environment they are in. Students must stay seated throughout the performance so please assure you arrive in enough time to visit the washroom before the performance begins.

- Texting
- Photographing and Filming (see below)
- Fidgeting
- Passing notes
- Adding or subtracting clothes
- Opening a purse or backpack
- Eating
- Entering or leaving (unless in an emergency, of course!)
- Walking around (an exception always applies to adults who need to attend to a student)

Photography and Filming

Please wait until *after the performance* (during Q&A at the end) to take photographs. We encourage your students, co-teachers and adult volunteers to focus on the experience of the concert, not the preservation of it. Cameras and video recorders are often very distracting for the performers, whether they make sound or not. The National Music Centre hires professional musicians who are concerned with the integrity of their work and how they are being represented publically. Therefore, all photographs must be used for personal/classroom use and may not be published.

Applause and Questions for the Performer

Musicians hate to tell people not to clap. They love applause and are happy to accept approval in any form. In classical performance, however, please wait until the very end of a piece: we want everyone to hear the complete piece as a total experience. Long pieces, especially in Classical Music or Opera, may involve several mood changes, and it's lovely not to disrupt these with applause.

We celebrate a child's desire to experience music freely and kinesthetically (and we recognize their inability to sit for long periods!) National Music Centre performances are designed to be as interactive as possible and so dancing, singing and clapping rhythms will be encouraged. Wait for your cue from the musician and then go for it! The performance is designed to be a listening experience. There will be plenty of time for questions at the end of the show!

What to Watch at a Live Performance

Watch the players and feel their energy and intensity; watch what they do to make their instruments sound in different ways. Watch as the music moves between players, or between groups of players. Watch the way the conductor controls events, or how he or she gives control to the musicians. What types of instruments do they play? How do they hold them? How do they sit? What do the performers wear and how does it enhance or distract from their performance? How is the stage set up? What is the role of the people backstage? Can you identify sound technicians, roadies etc..?

What if I get bored? What if I don't like the concert or the recording?

Don't worry; it happens to all of us at one time or another. Sometimes you don't connect with the music. It's perfectly normal. Remember to be respectful of other members of the audience by practicing concert etiquette and see if any of the Active Listening questions from the *Active Listening Guide* help you to engage with the music more. No one expects that you will like every moment of every concert or piece of music. Remember, the listener's job is to be affected, not to like everything. Teachers can encourage students to reflect on the listening experience back by discussing which elements were positive and which were negative for them as audience members. Refer to the Thinking Routines for listening to and reflecting on music as entry points for this type of assessment.

Some things to enjoy in music:

- Loudness and softness
- Changes and transformations
- Recognition of something heard earlier
- Different speeds
- Instrument sounds
- Melodies
- Rhythms
- Patterns
- Terrific performing
- Ebb and flow of energy
- Musical conversation; instruments talking to each other or lines of music talking to each other
- Timbre in different instruments; the way they sound unique compared to each other
- Moods and feelings
- Memories that get triggered
- Visual images that come to mind
- Vocals, lyrics and content
- Narratives and stories
- Voices on top of each other and solo voices

