

# PERFORMER ETIQUETTE

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## I. Introduction

- A. What is Performer Etiquette?
  - 1. Physical presentation of a performer on stage during a performance
  - 2. Includes attire, physical demeanor, and stage presence
- B. Why is this important?
  - 1. Many people hear with their eyes
  - 2. Gives you confidence in knowing what to expect (thinking ahead), thus allowing you to perform free of non-musical worries
  - 3. Allows you to look and feel more natural on stage
    - any uncertainties translate to the audience as uneasiness
  - 4. Respectful to the audience
- C. Be a salesman – you want the audience to buy *all* of what you're selling, not just part of it

## II. Preparation

- A. Be prepared for the performance. Make sure you are confident with your music and the ensemble.
- B. Arrive early to set the stage, get comfortable, tune, organize music, etc.
  - 1. Performance space
    - a. Stand a few steps in front the crook of the piano
    - b. Position music stand slightly off to the side so the audience can see you and the bell of your trumpet
    - c. Angle your body *slightly* toward the pianist for good peripheral eye contact
    - d. Mute stand – turn a music stand horizontally and position it close to where you will be standing to facilitate quick mute changes. Place a cloth on the stand to eliminate the clanging sound of metal against metal that can disrupt the performance
    - e. Predetermine piano lid height (during dress rehearsal) and make sure the stagehand is aware of any changes throughout the performance
  - 2. Tuning
    - a. Never tune on stage
    - b. Always tune all instruments ahead of time
    - c. Check piano with electronic tuner to use backstage if needed
- C. Music should be placed on stand prior to the performance. Avoid carrying music on/off stage.
- D. Use spare time for relaxation techniques

## III. Attire – look nice, but also feel comfortable

- A. Prior to performance, ask the personnel manager to see if there is a special occasion being celebrated
- B. Soloist – depending on the venue, your attire may change
  - 1. Solo recital
    - a. Men:
      - suit with tie is most common
      - tuxedo is acceptable for a more high-profile recital
    - b. Women:
      - according to your taste and style (feel comfortable)
      - avoid low-cut tops, very tight clothing, and uncomfortable shoes
  - 2. Solo with large ensemble
    - a. More formal than recital
    - b. Typically, tuxedo (men) or evening gown (women)

## IV. Stage Presence – physical presentation on stage is as important as the music

- \*Confident and comfortable appearance = better performance and a relaxed audience that is undistracted
- A. Smile all of the time
  - not a big, cheesy smile, but one that says, “Hey, I love doing this and you are in for a real treat.”

## B. Bows

\*This is often where most performers make mistakes

1. The proper bow
  - a. Smile the whole time
  - b. Legs straight
  - c. Heels together
  - d. Hold trumpet with both hands
  - e. Bow at waist (keep head down and look at shoes)
  - f. Hold for two/three seconds
  - g. Stand straight

## C. Entrance

1. Know the stage setup so you can navigate through it
2. Walk confidently and with a purpose
  - \* The performance begins the second the audience sees you
  - \* The performance is not over until you are driving away
  - keep your head up and look straight ahead
3. Order of entrance
  - a. Recitals
    - generally, soloists enters first (but wait to take bow with accompanying musicians)
    - if entering from stage left, pianist should walk behind the soloist, but in front of the piano
    - page turner enters last and walks behind piano
    - take a brief bow together
  - b. Solo with large ensemble
    - ensemble is already on stage and tuned, performer then walks out first with conductor behind
    - shake concertmaster's hand, take a brief bow (not too fast), and then begin

## D. During the Performance

1. Stand with good posture at all times
2. It is OK to make periodic eye contact with audience
3. During piano interludes, look at the pianist and enjoy their music
4. If you end a movement before the pianist, wait to empty water until after they finish
5. While emptying water, be discreet and courteous to audience
6. Be aware of, and avoid, any nervous ticks you may have
  - obnoxious foot tapping
  - "mouthing" counting
  - excessive water emptying
7. If you make a mistake, continue to smile and avoid flinching or looking disgusted. The audience may not even notice, but if you show it in your face, they *will* notice.

## E. Exit

1. After completing the selection, take a bow and leave the stage as confidently as you entered (regardless of how *you* think the performance went). Avoid looking like a robot.
  - for sonatas, bow *together with pianist*
  - for all other works, take a solo bow and give the pianist a solo bow
2. Soloist exits first, then pianist and page-turner (or conductor)
3. Solo bow with orchestra:
  - a. Shake conductor's hand, then concertmaster's hand, *then* take solo bow
  - b. Give time for conductor to acknowledge orchestra before bowing again