

THE STAR AUDIENCE!

by Carolann Philips

Live performances and stage shows are eagerly awaited events in this part of the world where family entertainment is otherwise restricted to private gatherings or perhaps a visit to the shopping mall! However, the lack of courtesy on the part of the audience towards both the performers and fellow audience members never fails to amaze me. With the popularity of live concerts steadily on the rise, I present some basic rules of audience etiquette in the hope that some of us may in a small way contribute to making the whole experience more enjoyable and memorable for all.

Audience etiquette is about support and participation. A starchy audience with superior airs is a performer's nightmare. The success of a performance depends in part on the audience. Performers "feed off" an audience's energy and are perturbed if audiences do not react in tangible ways. Applause is the most wonderful non-musical sound a performer can hear. Clapping at appropriate times such as when the performers come on stage and after they finish the performance is customary. Clapping in the middle of a performance is generally appreciated at pop concerts or those where performers request the audience to join in. Booing, passing negative remarks and making derogatory comments about the performance is not only inconsiderate but makes listeners uncomfortable.

There are a number of other etiquette guidelines which boil down to a simple consideration of those around. Part of the beauty of a live show is the experience of

sharing the moment with other people. It is courteous to acknowledge others who are close with a friendly smile. Reserving chairs with handbags whilst others who have made the effort of arriving early are forced to find less preferred seating is rude. Constantly changing rows and seats is an unnecessary ritual that impacts another's enjoyment. It would seem unreasonable, undesirable even, to expect complete silence. Exclamations, cheer and laughter are all welcome and valid responses. However excessive talking during a performance either on a cell phone or with a friend is not only rude to the performers, but also to those around. Teaching a child good manners while a performance is on detracts from the enjoyment by distracting other audience members. It is inconsiderate and impolite to leave in the middle of a performance as it obstructs the view of others. Instead, leave only once the performers have left the stage. Everyone coughs or sneeze from time to time. But if it is continuous, it seems fair to step aside for one's own sake and for those around.

Audience etiquette varies depending upon the type of performance one attends. However, one guideline remains constant. Enjoy along with the others around and allow those on stage to give the performance the audience deserves. Each live performance is an entirely unique experience. What we participate in will never occur the same way twice.

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Carolann has had the pleasure of delivering programs to a diverse clientele; from major airlines, leading banks, embassies, and reputed business houses to the modeling & fashion

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