

Orchestral Etiquette
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(from www.richiehawley.com)

I made this list of orchestral etiquette for one of my masterclasses at CCM several years ago. It was compiled over the course of several weeks during rehearsal breaks with the CSO. I asked a dozen or so of my colleagues, "what orchestral habits drive you crazy?" Here are the results of of this informal survey:

ORCHESTRAL ETIQUETTE

1. Do not turn around and look at the people behind you while they are playing.
2. Keep perfume and cologne to a minimum - many will appreciate none at all.
3. Do not tap your foot or conduct along.
4. Always help your colleagues count rests. (This is more complicated if you dont speak english)
5. Do not tap/applaud/shuffle for every solo that section colleague plays. Save it for when it really means something or better yet... stay still and just give them your positive words afterwards.
6. Do not tell someone he/she sounds good if he/she does not deserve the praise.
7. Never complain about your reeds. (they might sound better than they feel)
8. Do not cross you legs on stage in a concert.
9. Swab out discreetly and not if the person next to you is playing a solo.
10. Practice only your own parts... never play passages from another's page or excerpts from different music.
11. Be aware and sensitive to others' lines of sight to the conductor.
12. Leave your seat immediately when switching pieces or seats... swab out and pack up later. The next players want to play a few notes before tuning!
13. Do not yawn or "buzz" your lips audibly if you are tired.
14. When a conductor speaks to you, always acknowledge by making direct eye contact and possibly a nod "yes." (this one became problematic as several students in my studio at CCM really enjoyed vigorous nodding with very loud "YES-MAESTRO" proclamations)
15. Never ask questions about notes/rhythm during rehearsal - this wastes valuable rehearsal time. Check score during breaks or after rehearsal.
16. Your pencil is your best friend.... Do not make the same mistake twice because you "forgot."
17. Write in cues before the first rehearsal... and after the second rehearsal...and after the third rehearsal
18. Remember that every time you are in public, an impression is made, good or bad... This applies both to the music you play and the statements you make to your colleagues.
19. Avoid nervous repetitive actions: Looking at reed, adjusting seat/stand, instrument adjustments.
20. Do not turn a page during silence.

21. At the end of a piece, do not finish playing and fling the clarinet out of your mouth before the conductor has concluded.
22. Your non-musical accessories (phone, keys, etc.) belong in your case/purse/briefcase, not on the shelf of your stand waiting to tip over and clatter to the floor.
23. Show up early to rehearsal to get your instruments together, reeds chosen and instrument warmed up to pitch at least 10 minutes before the "A" is given.
24. Be direct and friendly about fixing pitches or rhythm. Do not be manipulative about your words.
25. The only conversations should be about issues regarding the music and only at the appropriate times.
26. Have good hygiene, keep your shoes on, wear appropriate clothing, etc.
27. Do not pack up before the end of rehearsal.... you still might have more to play.
28. Always double check rehearsal/performance times and locations.
29. Never sight read in rehearsal. Prepare your part in advance