

CIVIC ORCHESTRA *of* MINNEAPOLIS

Concert Goers Guide

At the Concert

Orchestral concerts last about two hours, with one intermission of about twenty minutes. They generally include three or four compositions representing several stylistic periods and genres, such as a classical overture, a twentieth-century concerto, and a romantic symphony.

When you arrive at an orchestra concert, typically some of the musicians will be onstage tuning and warming up.

The next thing that happens is the turning of the orchestra by the concertmaster; then, the conductor will come onstage (to applause), and the first piece on the program, will be played.

It is common for a conductor, a soloist, or one member of a chamber group to speak briefly if a piece has some special significance or is being performed under special circumstances.

At orchestra concerts, the conductor sometimes leaves the stage between pieces, perhaps returning to acknowledge applause; but the musicians remain in place (unless some rearrangement of personnel or seating is necessary) until the intermission, when they may leave the stage. During the applause, the conductor may signal individual members of the orchestra to stand up, in recognition of special passages they played. If an orchestral piece (such as a concerto) involves a soloist, they will come onstage with the conductor, and afterward go offstage and return with the conductor, or perhaps alone. (Applause for a soloist is often prolonged.)

When the composer of a piece on the program is present (this frequently happens, for instance, when a new work is introduced), he or she may come onstage for a bow, or stand up in the audience.

The program booklet, given free, often contains a variety of helpful and interesting information. At a concert or recital, it will list the performers and works to be heard; it may also include program notes describing these

compositions. If the concert includes a vocal work, the program may provide the text, with a translation if the original is in a foreign language.

Programs may also have biographical sketches of the principal performers, a listing of the members of the orchestra or opera company personnel, articles on musical topics, and lists of coming musical events.

The titles of musical works on a concert program sometimes include numbers (opus and others). These generally indicate the chronological order of the composers works; the higher the number, the later the composer wrote the composition.

Concert Etiquette

If possible, arrive at the concert hall at least fifteen minutes before the performance, so that you can relax and read the program notes. (Although you may refer briefly to the program while the performance is in progress, reading it steadily will distract you from the music and is considered poor manners.) Bear in mind, too, that at many concert halls, latecomers aren't allowed to take their seats until some logical break in the music occurs.

During the performance, audience members are expected to remain silent; absolute silence helps the performers to concentrate and enhances the emotional intensity of the musical experience. Performers can be distracted by talking, coughing, humming, or incidental noises—which will also distract and annoy other audience members.

At a concert or recital, audiences express their enthusiasm by applauding at the *end* of a work; if a work has more than one movement, audiences do not customarily applaud between movements.

Taking photographs and using recording equipment are usually not permitted at either concerts or operas.