

## **The Midwest Clinic**

### **Performer Stage Etiquette and Procedures**

Performing at the Midwest Clinic represents the highest possible level of musical achievement for school bands, orchestras, and jazz ensembles. The following suggestions concerning stage etiquette are intended to contribute to the sense of professionalism we all wish to convey with our ensembles and to ensure that concerts run smoothly and end on time.

#### **1.) TUNING**

On a stage other than Jazz, plan to start promptly with a tuning note two or three minutes before your assigned concert time—no warm-up chorales or chords on the stage. Your Midwest liaison will probably need to make a few announcements before your concert begins, so your tuning should be completed in time to allow for these announcements. If you prefer a different pre-concert schedule for announcements and tuning, please arrange this with your liaison. For your Jazz concert, expect your liaison to ask that your ensemble take the stage several minutes prior to downbeat so that Midwest announcements can be made with your band onstage. If any tuning is needed post-soundcheck, plan to gather members further in advance off-stage. (Note that such instances have been rare, as the ensemble often completes its soundcheck a mere 10 or 15 minutes prior to taking the stage.)

#### **2.) CONDUCTOR**

- A. Decide how you want your concert to begin when you are introduced and come onto the stage. Do you want your ensemble to stand, etc.? Practice this at home so players are informed and confident in their roles.
- B. Although your group will be onstage more than the actual playing time, time must be allowed for announcements, introductions, and changes of conductors. The titles you select **MUST** total your specific playing time. Our schedule does not allow for intermissions or encores. Directors of Jazz ensembles performing in the evening should especially note if their concert is scheduled to end before 9:00 p.m., as typically union overtime charges for McCormick Place staff will be assessed thereafter.
- C. When adding up the total music timing of your repertoire, please be aware of the time needed for set changes or changes of conductors. If you have multiple conductors or set changes, you may need to program less music to complete your concert on time. If your concert ending time arrives prior to the downbeat of the final piece on your program, you will not be allowed to play that work. Set/chair changes, should be practiced. This is especially important for the percussion section. It is also helpful to assign a backstage assistant for the purpose of directing entrance of guest conductors, thus eliminating an awkward silence and fomenting a smooth transition between selections. Directors of the Jazz ensembles typically speak to the audience between tunes or every other tune, often naming soloists within the ensemble and at some point acknowledging the presence of band staff, administrators, and/or parents. If doing so, be sure to plan for this within your timing.
- D. Plan which soloists from within the ensemble you would like to acknowledge and rehearse having them stand, etc.
- E. When featuring a guest soloist on a stage other than Jazz, the conductor should follow the soloist on stage, wait while the soloist bows, and then proceed to the podium behind the soloist near the completion of the applause. At the conclusion of the solo performance, the conductor should follow the soloist off stage. Work out the remainder of your procedure with the soloist. Some conductors like to send the soloist back on stage alone for a solo bow while other conductors follow the soloist back on stage. For the Jazz concerts, the ensemble director typically remains on stage as a solo artist enters or leaves unless a change of director ensues.
- F. Please confirm with all composers whose works you will perform whether or not they will be in attendance for your Midwest Clinic concert. If they are in the audience, please familiarize yourself with where they will be seated so you can ask them to stand at the conclusion of their composition. Due to limited time, it is best if they simply stand and do not try to make their way to the stage. We have

notified the publishers about which pieces are being performed and asked them to tell their composers that if they plan to attend your concert, they should contact you before the performance starts so that you know they are present.

- G. Rehearse exactly how your concert will end. Some conductors like to bring all guest conductors and soloists back on stage for a final bow, etc. Jazz concerts instead typically end with music featuring one or more of their guest soloists. Typically your Midwest liaison will return to the stage during the closing applause to again salute the ensemble, directors, and guest soloists.

### **3.) ENSEMBLE MEMBERS**

- A. When the conductor is leaving the stage, the ensemble should automatically be seated. (It is helpful to designate one player in the front row to be the “leader” in this process.) For the Jazz concerts, the ensemble remains seated unless the director at any point asks them to stand.
- B. Ensemble members should rotate seating assignments and/or adjust sheet music to the next composition only after the applause from the previous piece has stopped and/or the conductor is offstage. The ensemble should be seated before any personnel rotation or music adjusting occurs.

### **PLAQUE PRESENTATION**

In most cases, your board liaison will present a plaque commemorating your performance prior to your final piece. We ask that you decide in advance who will receive the plaque on behalf of the ensemble. While this can certainly be the ensemble director(s) we find that it is more meaningful when several ensemble members (especially in the case of the school groups) come to the front of the stage to accept the plaque. For the Jazz ensembles, please reserve the last five or so minutes of your soundcheck for your liaison to speak to the band and present the plaque to all on stage, handing it to the director.

### **POST-CONCERT PROCEDURE**

Plan to have your students leave the stage immediately at the conclusion of your concert and prepare to leave the ballroom. It is imperative your percussion section remove all school instruments from the stage as quickly as possible so that the next ensemble may begin set-up on schedule. Your cooperation in this situation ensures the next performing ensemble will have their full scheduled warm-up time on the stage. In most cases, the stage will be reset immediately following your concert.

Please contact your Midwest Clinic Board liaison if you have additional questions concerning stage etiquette and procedures.