



SOGO Virtual Music History January 2021

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Applause---Its History and other types of Audience Participation ---We are all missing the live performance experience because of the pandemic. A greater part of live performance is the attending audience and their appreciation of the performance. Applause is the most basic part of the audience appreciation. But the audience can also be an integral part of the performance. The following is a look into applause and audience participation.

Hand clapping---the human striking together of the palms of hands. Used rapidly and repeatedly to express appreciation as applause. Also used in rhythm as form of body percussion matching sounds in music, dance, rituals, and hand clapping games.

Applause---a primary form expressed by clapping hands, signifying the praise or enjoyment of a performance of a musical concert, speech or play. In most parts of the world, audiences usually clap randomly producing a constant noise. In Russia, eastern Europe and parts of Scandinavia, synchronized clapping is more popular than random clapping. The enjoyment can be gaged by the intensity, speed, and length of applause. Other characteristics applied to audience response: Booming, no applause, weak applause, collective applause, intense applause, ovation, standing ovation.

Applause and Hand Clapping history and origins---The origins of applause expressing appreciation for a performance are uncertain. Hand clapping may extend as far back as early homo sapiens in clapping games and ritual. Early references to clapping as part of praise ritual can be found in biblical reference in Psalm 47 (Old Testament) "O clap your hands, all ye people" (one of 150 Psalms written as early as 5th century BCE). Early Chinese unanswered riddle from Tang dynasty (618-907 BCE) "What is the sound of one hand clapping?" The ancient Romans had a documented set of standards to express degrees of approval for a performance: from snapping fingers, to clapping, to the waving of a stole or a toga.

Applause protocol and concert etiquette---There are some different and sometimes very confusing protocols for applause particularly at classical concerts. At classical orchestral or chamber music concerts, applause is expected after a single movement composition (or if only a singular movement is being performed). But it is generally considered inappropriate to applaud in between movements of a multi-movement work like symphony or a concerto (a piece with several full stop pauses). Yet at operas and ballets, applause is expected after each number within the piece. At choral concerts, applause is expected after a single movement song, but longer multi-movement choral works like oratorios and cantatas receive applause at the end or at the end of major sections; concert performances of Handel's Messiah Oratorio are done this way except when it is performed as a audience participation sing-along.

On-stage musician applause substitutes---Instead of clapping and to show appreciation for a conductor, concert chair player or soloist: string players will sometimes bob their bows in the air (it is incorrect to tap bows on the stands and could damage to bow); all orchestral players may also lightly tap or shuffle their feet, or clap a hand on the knee.

Audience participation, clapping, singing---Church congregational singing is a type of audience participation. Other large outdoor venues have audiences waving flags, glow sticks or colored cards to make larger designs from a remote location (the Superbowl halftime show is an example). The Sing-Along concert invites the audience to participate in singing; examples include singing medleys of favorite tunes at Pops concerts or Holiday carols. SOGO's Messiah Sing-along is an example of audience participation. Some compositions call for audience participation which can range from singing, whistling, snapping finger, hand clapping, etc. There are some works in classical music that, by custom or tradition, include hand clapping; Johann Strauss Sr.'s *Radetzky March* is very well-known for this; Offenbach's "Infernal Galop" from *Orpheus in the Underworld* is sometimes done this way.

Remote audience participation---There is precedent for the condition we find ourselves in for remote-only performances. For many years movies, television and other audio and video devices has allowed for the enjoyment of a larger audience (beyond the in-person audience) for a performance in a remote location from the performance in real time or in recording. It has allowed people to have appreciation for concerts that they may not be able to personally attend. Perhaps many of you have sung along to your favorite recorded popular song. There have been many variety types of

shows on television over the years that encourage audience participation from viewers; an early example of this was the “Sing along with Mitch” show from 1961-66. A technique called The Bouncing Ball, was a concept used in films to help movie theater audiences sing along to the film; it was invented 1924 by animated film director Max Fleischer. A modern equivalent of the bouncing ball would be the moving cursor on YouTube recordings, midi, and other sound cloud formats.