

YOUR SLSO CONCERT GUIDE

For Middle and High School Students

Orchestra music isn't about knowing the rules but about being open to something beautiful, different, and maybe even a little surprising. Here are a few pro tips to help you feel confident and ready for your visit to the St. Louis Symphony Orchestra. Whether it's your first concert or your fiftieth, you're welcome here.

What do I wear?

There's no dress code—be yourself! School clothes, comfy clothes, or even your best outfit are all welcome. Just make sure you'll be comfortable sitting for a bit.

What should I do during the music?

This is your chance to unplug and be totally in the moment. Immerse yourself in the music. See what emotions or ideas come up. Watch the musicians, feel the rhythm, and let your imagination run wild.

What if I need to sneeze or cough?

It's okay! Try to catch it in your elbow or tissue during a louder moment. If you need to step out of the concert hall, no problem—an usher can help you re-enter at a good time.

Can I talk or use my phone?

Whispers and bright screens distract from the music, for you and your neighbor, so save conversations, texts, and selfies for before or after the music. You'll be amazed at how immersive the music feels when you give it your full attention.

How can I be a good neighbor during the concert?

We're all here to enjoy the music together. A smile, a little armrest sharing, and being mindful of personal space makes a big difference. If someone nearby needs help, let an usher know right away. And if you need anything, just ask. Let's take care of each other so everyone can enjoy the music. That's the heart of the experience.

When do I clap?

Clap when everyone else does—usually at the end of the piece, not between movements (think of them like chapters in a book). Those quiet pauses are there on purpose to let you process what you just heard and transition into what you're about to hear. And when in doubt, just wait until the conductor turns to face the audience.

What if I really liked the music?

Clap, cheer, say "bravo!" Come back to see another concert and bring a family member or a friend. Share your experience with others.

What if it wasn't really my thing?

It's okay. Orchestral music, just like movies, should be critiqued and discussed. We encourage you to form your own opinions and talk about the music after the performance. Maybe a different piece or different concert will change how you feel.