

## BLENDING BUSINESS WITH BEETHOVEN

### Mix Gourmet Picnic Fare with Outdoor Philharmonic for “Bravo” Business Entertainment

By Rachel Wagner, July 2007

Looking for a memorable way to entertain your visiting clients this summer—and show off a bit of your city’s musical culture as well? Then, look no farther than gourmet fare from your favorite deli combined with the melodic strains of Haydn or Mozart at outdoor symphony concerts offered in many cities across the country.

Whether you’re in Manhattan or Madison, Austin or LA, blending business with Beethoven creates a harmonious combo to delight local or visiting business clients. Even if you don’t know a cadence from a chord or a minuet from a motif, use these tips for a relaxing and memorable evening under the stars with your business guests:

**Plan ahead.** Pre-order your gourmet “business dinner” and beverages from your favorite take-out eatery for pick up on the way to the performance. Be sure to take a blanket, bug spray, flashlight, and whatever cutlery and paper supplies are needed for your alfresco meal. Cloth napkins, real china and stemware will make it even more special.

**Prep your guest.** Suggest casual attire—and a sweater or jacket since the night can turn cool after sunset. Provide your guest with a concert program that you printed from the orchestra’s webpage.

**Be in tune with protocol.** The mood and atmosphere of outdoor classical music concerts is generally relaxed, but “concert protocol” can vary at each venue. Some sites allow picnicking audience members to socialize during the performance, while at other sites you can hear a pin drop and even whispering patrons are likely to be shushed by nearby regulars. So, know what is the expected etiquette at your venue.

**No cell phone sonatas.** Let the symphony play the sonata, not your cell’s ring tone. Place cell phones and pagers on vibrate or silent mode. Make calls only during intermission.

**Applaud appropriately.** Knowing when to applaud shows you are symphony savvy. A classical composition is commonly divided into several movements. After each movement the orchestra pauses briefly and the conductor continues to face the musicians; do not clap between these movements. Only applaud at the end of the composition when the conductor turns to face the audience. If your little plot of “real estate” doesn’t give you a view of the conductor, or you’re unsure when to clap, then follow the lead of the experienced audience members around you.

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Following these tips will help you and your business guests enjoy a relaxing and memorable evening under the stars. “Bravo” will not only describe the symphony’s performance, but your business entertainment style as well!

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