



UMass Amherst
FINE ARTS CENTER
www.fineartscenter.com

Community Usher Handbook

Updated March 2009

Audience Services
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INTRODUCTION

As a volunteer usher, you provide not only a valuable service to the Fine Arts Center, but you also serve as the face of the community to our patrons. In donating your time, you have helped make the Fine Arts Center what it is today- not only a highly respected performing arts establishment, but an indispensable part of the town of Amherst, and the Pioneer Valley as a whole. We depend upon you to be friendly, helpful, and knowledgeable as you represent what the Fine Arts Center and University as a whole are all about.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Reporting times and Attendance

Concert Hall:	one hour before curtain
Bowker Auditorium:	one hour before curtain
Bezanson Recital Hall:	one hour before curtain

Please arrive a few minutes early to get yourself settled. Please give us adequate notice if you cannot work by calling Audience Services or the FAC Box Office. If an event is cancelled, postponed, added, etc., the Audience Services Manager will make every effort to contact you as soon as possible. If you miss an event without notice, please contact the office as soon as possible. (Contact information and directions are in the back of this handbook).

Dress Code

Black pants/skirt, White dress shirt/blouse, Dark dress shoes

Please refrain from wearing dangling jewelry or overpowering perfume/cologne.

PERFORMANCES

Before the Performance

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- You will be briefed by the House Manager on your duties for the event promptly *before* Event orientation takes place in the house left lobby of the Concert Hall and just outside the house closet in the lobby of Bowker.

Ushers

- Greet patrons, hand out programs and assist people to their seats.
- Patrons are generally seated one half hour before an event. The House Manager will ask you to take a flashlight and a woodblock, if you are in charge of a section.
- After the House Manager briefs you, we will ask you to bring programs to your assigned station and do a pre-check of your section for any trash. If there are any inserts, you are responsible for putting them into the programs. Ushers are to welcome patrons, hand them a program, and assist them in locating their seats.
- Section doors are propped open with woodblocks once the hall is open, and closed once the event starts.

- During extremely busy nights, you may be asked to assist in front of the Box Office to direct patrons to bathrooms, other halls, etc.

Ticket Takers

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- on House Left.
- No one gets in without a ticket, regardless of age.
- Ticket takers are to remain at their posts until dismissed by a House Manager. Please return to your station at the beginning of intermission to answer questions and ask patrons to finish food and drinks in the lobby.

During the Performance

- We ask that you stay at your station until late seating is finished. The House Manager will release you from your station.
- You may view parts of the event, but we ask that you remember you are responsible for the care and safety of all of our patrons. If you are watching the performance, please do so from your assigned section.
- We also encourage ushers to read the program. It will help you in talking with our patrons about the event.
- During intermission, we ask you to return to your assigned station.

Late Seating

The late seating policy is at the request of the company, and changes from performance to performance. The House Managers will let you know of the late seating policy during event orientation.

✓ Always

- greet patrons,
- give them a program,
- tell them the late seating policy, and
- explain that you will assist them to the “best available seats” at an appropriate time, and that you will assist them in finding their seats at intermission. (If there is no intermission or side seating is not available, you may assist patrons to their assigned seats.)
- ✓ Whisper to late patrons. It will encourage them to respond in kind, and keep noise from filtering into the theater. Doors to Bowker are especially porous.
- ✓ If you are unclear on the late seating policy, double check with the house manager. Seating late patrons is always disruptive to the performers and other audience members, so it is important to find an appropriate time during the performance.
- ✓ When seating patrons, shine your flashlight on the ground, and assist them to the best available seats, whenever possible.

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- Once an event starts, latecomers are to enter through the House Right side door. An usher should be stationed there at all times. The ushers that are assigned to the balcony must remain there.
 - Ushers, who hand out programs, must stand at the back of the hall near the center doors to direct patrons house right for exiting during the performance as well as to open the doors at intermission.
 - Ushers will be assigned to sit near the house right door inside the hall to assist patrons during the performance.

After the Performance

- You are responsible for inspecting your section and cleaning up large pieces of trash as well as lost and found. Anything left in seats/aisles (umbrellas, etc.) is to be brought to the House Manager. Extra programs are either to be put into their boxes and left in an appropriate spot or recycled. Inserts are to be taken out (if not relevant to any other events) and recycled. Once you have finished, please check out with the House Manager.
- Please remember to return your badge, flashlight, and woodblock back to where you originally got them.

HOUSE POLICIES

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If at any time you feel that you cannot handle a situation on your own, please contact the House Manager immediately. The Fine Arts Center staff is there to support you!

HEATER INFORMATION

Concert Hall

- 1,981 seats – 1,500 seats in the orchestra and the remaining seats in the three mezzanines and two balconies. As you face the stage, even numbered seats are on the right and odd numbered seats on the left. Please refer to the seating chart for more details.
- The FAC Concert Hall is equipped with an Assisted Listening System. If a patron asks for one, let a House Manager know. They are available at the box office.
- Rest rooms are located on the lower level adjacent to the University Gallery. The Ladies' Rooms are on the left side of the house and the Men's Rooms are on the right side of the house. There are also Ladies' and Men's Rooms in the FAC atrium lobby and a handicapped unisex bathroom on level 1 of the South Lobby outside of section 3 house right. When available, there are additional rest rooms in the Rand Theater.
- On busy nights, we will be open the Rand Theater to use their bathrooms. Two ushers may be assigned to direct people to and from the bathrooms.

- The University East Gallery is usually open for patrons to cross through to each side of the Hall to use the men and women's bathrooms. If it is not, patrons will have to go around to each side of the Hall. Patrons may use the restrooms prior to opening the house, but may not go to their seats.
- Drinking fountains are located outside of each rest room, at the top of the balcony stairs and outside of Section 1 on both sides of the house, as well as in the FAC Lobby.
- Sections 2 and 3 House Right in the Concert Hall are handicapped accessible. Please be aware of any needs these patrons might have. There is a wheelchair for patron use located in the FAC Lobby closet. Please let the house manager know if a patron needs it.
- EMTs are located in the South Lobby at theater level in the Concert Hall.
- The nearest pay phone is in the first floor of the library off the lobby, or in the Campus Center. If a patron has a personal emergency, they may use the box office phone to make a local call.

Bowker Auditorium

- Bowker Auditorium, located in Stockbridge Hall, has 704 seats- 500 seats in the orchestra and loge sections. As you face the stage, even numbered seats are on the right side and odd numbered seats on the left. Please refer to the seating chart for more details.
- The Ladies' Room is located off the corridor on house right. The Men's Room is located downstairs house right. There is a handicapped unisex bathroom house left across from the handicapped entrance ramp.
- There is a drinking fountain across from the Box Office.
- There is no public telephone in the building. Patrons may be directed to the outside the Campus Center. If a patron has a personal emergency, they may use the box office phone to make a local call.
- EMTs are located in the back of House Left in Bowker.

MANDATORY TRAINING

Emergency Training

Usher Training

Fire Extinguisher Training

SIGNING UP FOR PERFORMANCES

6 events,
then e-mail or send your selections back to us. Be sure to keep a copy of the selections (including date, time, and location) for yourself. You will be notified as soon as possible of which performances you have been selected to work. *Note: The time listed on the sign-up sheet is the event start time. Your reporting time is 1 hour earlier.*

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- FAC Box Office: 545-2511
- Fire /Police/Medical (emergencies only): 911
- Bowker Box Office: 545-4162
- University Campus Police: 545-2121

DIRECTIONS AND PARKING AT THE THEATERS

http://www.umass.edu/umhome/visit_campus/directions.html

Free parking is available in almost all University lots after 5:00 PM and all day on weekends.

Bowker Auditorium in Stockbridge Hall

Fine Arts Center Concert Hall

Bezanson Recital Hall
