



Monday Music Musings from Fischhoff! This week we'd like to highlight sensory friendly concerts in honor of Autism Acceptance Month.

Sensory friendly concerts are music performances that have been designed to be accessible, allowing even more people to experience and enjoy live music.

Chris Whitley of the Thalea String Quartet spoke of the joy and sincere honesty with which the Autistic community engaged with the music during one of their sensory friendly concerts. He remembered how the audience would laugh at the musical jokes of Haydn, and would engage fully with the music in the ways that felt most natural to them without having to be concerned about disturbing others. There was an understanding and acceptance of the individuality of one's experience with the music that Chris mentions was intense as a performer yet completely inspiring.

If you're interested in putting on a sensory friendly concert in your community, here are a few things to keep in mind:

- 1) It is highly recommended to get in touch with a person or organization who understands the needs of the audience you are trying to reach. They will be able to guide your preparation appropriately, especially if this is your first experience with a sensory friendly concert.
- 2) Think through the space and accessibility needs. Make sure to choose a venue that is wheelchair accessible. It is also recommended to have a space with flexible seating to allow for easy movement either as the audience members engage with the music or if they need to go to a separate area for a break.
- 3) Communicate to everyone involved that all reactions are welcome including talking, walking, moving, etc. This is a space where everyone is encouraged to be their authentic selves.
- 4) Be aware of your programming as a performer. Give time between pieces, or movements, for interacting with the audience and their unique engagement with the music.

Thank you to the [Thalea String Quartet](#) and [Xenia Concerts](#) for your help putting together this information.