

Please PIPEDOWN

The source for news about the campaign for freedom from piped music.



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Ruth Schiedermayer, editor

Hello Pipedown Supporters

It may be difficult to approach a store or restaurant manager with a polite way of talking about the program audio. Too often the complaint is treated in a disrespectful manner by untrained staff. Discussions about service quality can deteriorate into arguments. We want to avoid that because confrontation often increases the level of resistance to change.

One method my husband and I struck upon lately is telling the manager how disappointed we are to hear the loud music. We explain that we were looking for a quiet and relaxing place to have a meal. This worked for us the first time we used it in that the manager actually turned off the music.

We had been planning to leave and not have supper at a nice-looking restaurant due to the volume of the music. We really wanted to eat there, but could not tolerate an entire meal listening to the noise, so we decided to let the manager know that we were disappointed to hear the music so loud. It worked and we had a nice quiet meal. Upon leaving we insisted on tipping the manager a small amount in addition to the wait staff tip. We hope that an unexpected reward, even when relatively small, reinforces the message and may make it more likely that people remember. Hopefully the next time someone asks this business for the music to be turned down they will get their wish.

Comments on Society:

The on-line blogs about the too-loud music in stores and restaurants continue to be a source of interest. What I have observed is that many people complain about the excessive noise. It is not just a few people who are sensitive to this unwanted intrusion during what might otherwise be a relaxing experience out in public.

It is worth mentioning that some of the people who complain about the program audio in these blogs will say that a favorite song may sometimes come on and then they can stand the background/foreground music. Once, when I complained about too-loud music coming from a kiosk, the manager mentioned that no one had ever asked them to turn it down before. She went on to say some people had asked to turn up the music because they liked a particular song.

I suspect that many people will tolerate program audio with the specific hope that the music will eventually include songs that the person likes.

Comment Cards

Readers might be interested in an electronic form of the Please Pipedown comments cards, which could be printed. Please email me if interested. Otherwise comment cards are still available for those of you interested in leaving them with the person who has the control of the volume. Please send a Self-Addressed Stamped Envelope (SASE).

News from readers

One Toronto classical radio station has started an "anti-noise pollution campaign". They have a place on-line to sign up for their announcements. One stated purpose is to locate restaurants where "civil" dining can take place.

The PIPEDOWN philosophy is that no music is preferred, but quieter is definitely a step in the right direction. Any music can be misused by being played at a too-loud volume.

Advice:

Remembering to say "PLEASE" will always go a long way in discussions with people (managers, employees, those in control of the volume). We all like to be asked nicely.

Another approach can be seen from reading the full article referenced below. Tipping for service might be successful and can always be considered.

During a recent taxi ride, the driver actually asked me if I would like to keep the radio on. To me it does not matter what type of music it is, I would rather not have to listen to it. In addition, I sometimes like to talk to the driver about local events or what else is going on in the city. This driver was nice enough to turn the radio off when I indicated I would prefer it off.

I made a point of tipping him extra at the end of the ride. I told him that I really appreciated that he asked me what I wanted when it came to the radio. I also mentioned that I tip for service and his service was very good in this respect. Hopefully this taxi driver will develop the habit of asking his passengers about the radio and not simply leaving it on to discourage talking in his cab.

Quote:

"Scan the restaurant's website for the noisy, bare-bones look. Go early or late to dine, skip the peak hours 7-8:30 p.m. When you reserve, ask the maître d' if the place has music and how loud it is. Don't be intimidated — call the manager to ask the sound be turned down. Make loud music seem as antisocial as smoking." - Gina Mallet in the article "Restaurants: A piece of quiet"

The entire article can be found at:

<http://news.nationalpost.com/2010/07/23/restaurants-a-piece-of-quiet/>

Bibliography:

"Spaces Speak, Are You Listening?: Experiencing Aural Architecture" by authors Barry Blesser, Linda-Ruth Salter

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I submit this one with the following review:

"The authors present a groundbreaking synthesis of auditory spatial awareness as it has developed from cave acoustics through the modern concert hall to digital simulations of virtual spaces. Drawing on numerous disciplines, they summarize the scientific and cultural knowledge of the subtleties of acoustic spaces in a clear and readable manner, while challenging our social values about the optimal design of those spaces. A must-read for every student of architecture and aural culture."

—Barry Truax, Professor and Composer, Simon Fraser University