

**SEATTLE  
OPERA.**



# **MCCAW HALL SENSORY SEATING GUIDE**

## **Sensory Seating Guide to McCaw Hall**

321 Mercer Street

Seattle, WA 98109

Created for Seattle Opera

McCaw Hall is an expansive 2,900 seat performance space that is home to Seattle Opera. Because of the size of the auditorium, the sensory experience for audience members can be markedly different depending on where they are seated. The following guide may be useful in selecting a seat that best meets your needs when you attend the opera. Additionally, when you purchase tickets from the Seattle Opera website, you are able to preview an approximation of what the stage looks like from the seat you select. On the ticketing page, click on the seat you are considering, and a photograph of what the stage looks like from that seat will appear.

### **General Information**

Seats at McCaw Hall are approximately 1'10" from arm rest to arm rest. When the seat is down, there is approximately 1'2" from the end of the seat cushion to the back of the seat of the row in front of it. The seat cushion is approximately 20" off of the floor. Booster cushions are available to raise patrons an additional 4". While seating distance from the stage impacts the visual and emotional intensity of the performance, because of the acoustics of McCaw Hall there is only a very slight variation in sound intensity throughout the hall.



## **Orchestra Seating**

The orchestra section is the largest seating section in the theater. It is divided into three sections, left, center and right, by two aisles. There are additional aisles on the outside of the left and right sections. Rows range from 10-16 seats across. Patrons seated in the orchestra section will generally look up at the stage. This is most noticeable in the front and middle sections of orchestra seating. As the rows get farther from the stage, they become more elevated so that the rear orchestra section is almost even with the stage changing the viewing angle. See photograph for reference.

### **Orchestra Rows A-U**

This seating area, along with the gallery seating, is the closest audience members can sit to the stage. Row A is approximately 33' from the stage, and 6' from the orchestra pit. In this area the ceiling soars over a hundred feet above the seating area. It feels expansive, airy and open. At times this area may feel a bit drafty. Rows A-L will experience the most intense sound, visual and emotional intensity of the opera. As one sits farther back in the orchestra section and gets distance from the stage, one will have a somewhat less intense sensory experience, although the orchestra section as a whole will experience the most intensity.

### **Orchestra Rows V-BB**

This seating area is sheltered by the dress circle above. The ceiling is roughly 10' above the seats in this section. As a result, this section feels significantly more protected and cozier than the orchestra rows without the overhang. Because of the low ceiling this area also feels less drafty than the orchestra rows without the overhang. The sound quality changes very slightly in this area and is a little bit less intense than in the other areas of the orchestra section. The sensory experience in this section is less intense than in the front orchestra section as one gains distance from the stage and experiences the shelter of the dress circle above.

### **Gallery Seating**

The two gallery sections are on the outside of the orchestra sections. Row A on the same elevation as row A of the orchestra section. The seats in the galleries quickly gain elevation ending with row X even with the first row of the Dress Circle. As a result, rows A-F look up at the stage, rows G-I are approximately even with the stage, and rows J-X look down on the stage. These rows are generally 6 seats across and are accessible by one aisle, on the outside of the row next to seat 6, with the inner most seat, seat 1, against a wooden barrier. Seats 5 and 6 are slightly sheltered by the overhang of the box seats. The rest of the seats experience the full spaciousness of the ceiling over 100' above. Because of their proximity to the stage, the gallery seats also experience intense sound, visual and emotional sensations of the opera. Some of the intensity decreases as one moves to rows farther back in the gallery and gains distance from the stage.

### **Dress Circle Seating**

The dress circle seats are the first four rows (A-D) of the first balcony. Row A is approximately 85' from the stage. There is a short railing running across row A. The seats are separated into four sections by three aisles. Each section is approximately 14 seats across. There is a wide aisle behind the dress circle, separating the seats from the first tier balcony. There is a distinct sensation of being high in the air when seated in this section. The ceiling soars about 60' above this section. It feels open and airy, and may feel slightly drafty. Patrons seated in this section will look down on the stage. Because of the angle and the distance from the stage, some of the

emotional and visual intensity of the performance is decreased from what one experiences in the orchestra section.

### **First Tier Balcony Seating**

The first tier balcony sits behind the dress circle. It includes rows A-J, in five sections separated by four rows. Most rows are 12 seats across. There is a distinct sensation of being up high when seated in this section. All seats look down on the stage. Rows C-J are sheltered by the second tier balcony. The ceiling here ranges from approximately 20' overhead at row C to 10' overhead at row J. As a result, this area feels more protected and less drafty than the dress circle. This section allows significant distance between the audience and the performers resulting in less intense visual and emotional stimuli compared to other sections.

### **Second Tier Balcony Seating**

The second tier balcony seats are farthest from the stage of any seating section. It includes rows A-Q in five sections separated by four aisles. Row A is approximately 120' from the stage. The rows of each section average 12 seats across. These seats experience significant differences in elevation from row A to row Q and the stairs between rows are quite steep. These seats look significantly down on the stage, with the sensation of being very high above the stage. These seats are closest to the ceiling, ranging from 25' at row A to 10' at row Q. As a result, they feel sheltered and protected. The distance from the stage and elevation of the second tier balcony lead to the least intense visual and emotional experience of any seat at McCaw Hall.

### **Box Seating**

The boxes are located against the walls, high in the air on the left and right sides of the house. The boxes generally seat people two to a row, with most boxes consisting of 3 rows. Access to each box is through an individual door. Because of the small number of seats in each box, boxes are an excellent option for patrons who wish to feel more isolated and away from a crowd when seated. The lower boxes are somewhat sheltered by the upper boxes and don't experience quite the same expansive, open feeling as the orchestra sections, although they still feel somewhat open because one side of the box is open to the space above the orchestra section. The boxes are high in the air and look down on the stage. This decreases the visual and emotional intensity of the performance.



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