

Selecting And Attending Concerts

What is a Concert? A concert is an event featuring one or more vocal or instrumental performers in a *live* (in person—not broadcast) *musical performance* setting. This excludes music at regularly scheduled religious services, and music played at events such as ball games, circuses, ice shows, weddings or wedding receptions, dances, or similar events. Performances by children are also excluded, although high school choral or instrumental performances are fine. Shows with only recorded music are not live and are therefore excluded. A performance featuring a large number of performers is usually called a concert, while a performance featuring only one or two performers is often called a recital. From here on the word “concert” refers to either a concert or a recital.

What Concerts Can I Attend for This Assignment? Concerts should be chosen from those posted on the bulletin board in the classroom or announced in class, and should feature types of music studied in this course. The assignment does not have to cost you a penny—we are fortunate to live in an area where there are many, many free or low cost musical events to choose from. Note: If you are wondering whether a particular program is acceptable for this assignment, ask before you go!

Where Can I Find Concerts? All around you! There are many musical performances presented by the music departments at area schools such as the SC Governor’s School for the Arts and Humanities, Clemson, Anderson, North Greenville, Furman, Bob Jones, Converse, Wofford, Lander, and USC-S. All have websites that include concert information, directions, and campus maps. The Peace Center has a busy concert schedule, and student discounts are often available. The Sunday edition of *The Greenville News* is a good source of information.

What Should I Expect at a Concert? Most of the concerts posted on the classroom bulletin board will be events where audience participation is limited to listening quietly and attentively. In other words, the audience isn’t singing along, dancing, eating, drinking, or talking during the performance. Although the quiet of the audience may be intimidating at first, it allows the listener to really focus on the sights and sounds of the performers. Most of the time you will have a printed program listing the performer or performers, the pieces being performed, and the composers. Applause is usually delayed until the end of a selection. If you’re not sure whether a piece is over, wait for the rest of the audience before you begin to clap. If there is a “standing ovation,” you don’t have to stand if you really don’t want to.

Attend A Variety Of Events. Broaden your horizons—seize this opportunity to try something new. You may find a new favorite! Here are some types of events appropriate for this assignment.

Dramatic productions: Music theater, opera, operetta, ballet.

Large ensembles with a conductor: Symphony, concert band, jazz band, a capella choir, choral concert

Classical solo and chamber concerts: String quartet, brass quintet, piano trio, solo recitals for voice, piano, trumpet, flute, saxophone, trombone, percussion—almost anything!

Traditional (folk) and/or world music from other cultures

Research Before You Go. If possible find out what will be performed, who wrote them, and anything else you can before the concert. Many concerts at schools, universities, and churches are free. Tickets for others can be expensive, and reserved seats may be required. Always ask about student discounts! Most ads for concerts list a phone number you can call for information. You will see a wide range of dress at different kinds of concerts. When in doubt, dress neatly and avoid extremes.

Arrive at least 15 minutes early, more if you’re not sure of directions, parking, or seating. If you are late you may have to wait to be seated until after the first piece or section of a piece is finished. That can be as long as 20 minutes at some concerts! During the performance, avoid talking, eating, zipping/unzipping purses or backpacks, rustling your program or rattling gum or candy wrappers. Make any visits to the restroom or drinking fountain during intermission. Take along a couple of cough drops if you think you might need them. Be aware that cameras or recording equipment are usually prohibited.

Should I Take Notes? Make a few notes on your program or a notepad to help you describe the concert. See the other side of this handout for suggestions about things to listen and watch for.

Writing Your Concert Reports

You will probably find it helpful to take a few notes during the concert. If there is no printed program, you will also need to make a list of the pieces played. Please prepare your report this way:

I. Your report should include, but need not be limited to, the following information:

1. An short introductory paragraph including:
 - name and type of performer(s); size of ensembles;
 - date, time, and place of concert
 - type of music: choral, band, orchestra, musical, opera, singer, jazz band, variety, etc.
 - many short pieces or a few long ones?
 - Don't get carried away describing setting, dress, etc.—focus on the music
2. A brief description of each work performed on the program, in prose, outline, or chart form:
 - Title and composer
 - **What did you hear?** Here are some ideas: (all might not apply to every piece)
 - media? what kinds of singers or instruments were involved?
 - fast or slow? smooth, bouncy, soothing, harsh, happy, sad, scary, etc.?
 - loud or soft? steady dynamics or changing? dynamic range?
 - any solos? long or short? any featured instruments or groups?
 - any melodies, themes, or sections that are repeated?
 - relatively consonant or dissonant?
 - most prominent thing about the piece? your reaction to the piece?
 - **This is the most important part of your report!**
3. Your general reaction to the performance:
 - What did you like or dislike about the music played?
 - Did the performers seem to do a good job? Was this different from what you expected?
 - If so, how? What information would be helpful to someone going to a similar concert?

II. Use your best writing style! The Writing Center is available to help you.

Spelling, grammar, and punctuation will be taken into consideration in grading.

- Use proper citation form for anything that isn't your own thoughts and words.
- Titles of musical works should be in quotes, italics, or underlined.

III. Format your report according to these guidelines:

- about 500 words long—no less than 2 full pages
- double space
- *Times New Roman* or *Arial* font
- 12 pt. font size
- black ink
- no cover sheet
- include your name, section, and Concert Report No. 1 or 2 at the top right of page 1
- staple pages together
- include the printed program with your report
- **Errors or omissions in formatting will result in a lower grade.**

IV. Turn your report in no later than the designated due date.

Late papers will lose 3 points per day (M-F) that they are late.

A paper will be considered "late" if it is turned in after the beginning of class on the due date.