

Concert Review

Listening to live performances is an essential part of learning to understand new and unfamiliar music. This course requires attendance at one live music concert, which you must attend during this current semester. You must submit a program or ticket stub along with your report. Classical, opera, jazz or world music should be the content of the concert. If you have any questions regarding whether the concert you choose to attend is appropriate, please ask me. Your report should be at least 2-3 pages (double-spaced with a 12 point font and 1 inch margins). Following are some general guidelines to help you listen, think, and write about a concert.

Basic information to include:

- When and where did the concert take place? How long did it last?
- How many pieces were performed? What were their titles?
- Who were the performers?
- What types of instruments were played and/or what types of voices were featured?
- Was there any special purpose to the concert? If so, explain.

General Questions to Keep in Mind:

- What was your general reaction to the concert? How did the performance sound to you? Was the music performed well? (e.g., Were the musicians rhythmically together; were they playing/singing in tune; did any instruments/voices stick out? How would you rate the musician's technical ability and the "energy" of their performance? Did the musicians seem prepared for the concert?)
- Which piece did you like the best? Why? (e.g., what specifically did you like about the piece or the way it was performed?)
- Which piece did you like the least? Why?
- Did any of the pieces trigger an emotional response from you? What were your specific thoughts or feelings in response to the music?
- Is this type of concert new to you? How do you think that might influence your perceptions of what you heard and observed?

Specific Questions to Consider:

You may want to focus your discussion and analysis of the concert on one or more of the following questions:

- Describe what you heard and observed using the following musical terms, elements, and concepts discussed in class:
 - Genre (e.g., symphony, concerto, string quartet, etc.)
 - Stylistic period (e.g., baroque, classical, romantic, etc.)
 - Mood (e.g., emotion conveyed by the musicians)
 - Rhythm (e.g., beat, accent, meter, syncopation) How are these elements of rhythm used to create "special" or interesting musical effects?

- Dynamics (e.g., level of sound) Identify changes in dynamics and discuss the effect these changes create.
- Tone color (Timbre) (e.g., bright, brassy, warm, hollow, etc.)
- Mode (e.g., major, minor)
- Melody/Harmony—Discuss the balance (or lack of it) between the melody and its “accompaniment.” Did you hear consonance, dissonance, or a combination of both?
- Texture (e.g., monophony, homophony, polyphony)
- Motives/Themes—Identify and note where individual motives and themes are first introduced.
- Form (e.g. sonata form, ABA, theme and variation, etc.)
- Using the musical terminology and concepts covered in class discuss the most interesting musical elements/features of the pieces performed.
- Compare the pieces from this performance with other compositions you have studied in class, noting similarities and differences.
- Describe the behavior of the performers and the audience. What, if any, interaction occurred between the two? What kind of behavioral expectations do performers and audiences bring to the concert? How are these expectations satisfied or frustrated?¹

¹ Kerman, Joseph. Listen Online, <<http://www.bedfordstmartins.com>>