

# Concert Reviews

Berg - Music

Spring 2007

## Details on the papers assigned for this course

**Assignment: Two Concert Reviews** will ask you to apply class material to live classical music. Attend **two approved live classical concerts** and write a review of each, summarizing and evaluating it by stating your opinion and supporting it with details. Approved concerts include classical (not Apops@) concerts by the Colorado Symphony or other professional/semi-professional/college orchestra or ensemble (not high school), and classical recitals by college students or professionals. **One must be an orchestra concert.** A stage production (opera or musical) is acceptable for the other, if you wish. ***This course focuses on classical music; therefore concerts of rock, folk, or non-Western music, or plays or dance programs that are not primarily musical, are unacceptable for these assignments.*** If there is any question of acceptability, please see me for approval before you spend your time and money.

**Alternate Assignment:** If you absolutely cannot attend the required live classical concert, you may instead **listen to three (3) recordings of the identical piece** (an entire work - ASymphony No.38" - not just one movement) performed by different soloist/ensemble/conductor. This will earn 10 fewer points because it does not meet the Alive@ requirement.

**Ideas: Your Review Should Include** identification of the concert (who, where, when); your impression of the concert environment; discussion of two pieces on the concert (consider using your favorite, and your least-liked or next-favorite); and your opinion of the concert overall. ***Especially, focus on the music*** *This is, after all, a music course.* This is an opinion paper, so you will also discuss your personal reactions to the music; however, be sure to support your opinions with specific examples.

**Length:** Your paper should be about three (3) pages long. If it is significantly shorter, there is probably more you can say: perhaps you can find more details to flesh out your descriptions. If it is much longer, you may not need to be so exhaustive in your coverage. (Reviews of stage works will be longer, for comments on staging, costumes, sets, etc.)

**Word Choice:** Use some musical Aterms of art@, but be sure to use them accurately. Reread your entire paper (preferably after at least one day=s rest) to be certain it says what you think you said.

**Show proper respect for performers** by referring to them (as anyone more than 10 years older than yourself) by the entire name at the first mention (Jeffrey Kahane), and thereafter by the last name only (Kahane) or with an honorific (Maestro Kahane or Mr. Kahane). Don=t refer to them by first name or especially by nickname (Jeff) unless you are personal friends. (Have you been invited to his house for dinner?)

### Forbidden words for this class and subject:

- ☒ *song* for anything except a short vocal work (Athe song by the Beatles@ but Athe symphony by Mozart@)
- ☒ *symphony* or *orchestra* when you mean Aconcert@ (Aa symphony by Mozart@, but Aa concert by the Colorado Symphony Orchestra@ - >I went to hear the Colorado Symphony= is acceptable)
- ☒ *composer* when you mean Aconductor@ - they are not the same!
- ☒ *awesome, neat, cool* (these are overused slang, and relatively meaningless; choose another word that conveys meaning more precisely)
- ☒ *so/such* when you mean Avery@ (Ait was very pretty@; these words require a consequent phrase: Aso beautiful that my heart melted@)
- ☒ obscenity, however appropriate or amusing it may seem (profanity is seldom appropriate in writing)

**Conventions/Mechanics: College-Level Writing** is expected in this course. Your papers will be graded on both content and writing. This is not an English course, but you should write your best for any college class, as you must for your professional life. Present your ideas coherently, using good grammar and spelling.

**Citations** should be used in all papers, giving the reference for any quotations or paraphrases you find it necessary to use. This applies to program notes, a performer=s comments from the stage, and the Internet, as well as reference books. You may use the "(author, page)" format within the text; then give the full citation in a footnote or endnote. (No citation is needed for items of common knowledge, such as titles, composers, dates, or genres; but be safe rather than sorryCgive a

citation if you're not sure.) Examples:

**quotation:**

According to the program notes, A\_\_\_\_\_@ (p.6).

Or A\_\_\_\_\_@ (program notes, p.6).

**paraphrase:**

As the conductor said from the podium, \_\_\_\_\_.

Or Conductor Jeffrey Kahane mentioned in the pre-concert talk that \_\_\_\_\_.

Please note that these are *opinion* papers and will have little or no reason to use other people's words (except for composers' birth/death dates and those are items of common knowledge that need no citation).

**Spell-Check Caution:** If you run a computer spell-check program, remember that very few musical terms or composers' names will be in the default dictionary. **Do not accept suggested substitutions blindly!** Also watch out for homonyms (words that sound alike but are spelled differently, such as *their* and *there*). Spell-checkers only look for a word's existence, not that it is used correctly. This is another reason to re-read your paper before turning it in.

## Presentation:

- 9 Type, and double-space. Use an easily-read 10-12 pt. font and 1" margins. (Fancy fonts, whether small or large, are difficult and annoying to read.) Handwriting is unacceptable for college or professional work.
- 9 Give your paper a title (but do not use a separate title page).
- 9 Put your name on every page.
- 9 The first page, upper right-hand corner, should give your name, the course title and class meeting time, and the date the paper is submitted.
- 9 You may use in-situ citation (*A author, source, page@*), footnotes, or endnotes for your citations.
- 9 Staple your ticket stub to the program page.
- 9 Attach the program page (ticket attached) and program notes at the back of the paper.
- 9 Staple all the pages together in the upper left-hand corner.
- 9 **Do not** use a plastic cover.

**Academic Integrity** requires that you give proper credit (and use quotation marks) for words and ideas that are not original with you. If you borrow someone else's words or ideas, you need to say where you got them; this goes for **concert program notes, a performer's comments from the stage, and Internet material** as well as **books and periodicals**. Failure to give credit is plagiarism, or academic theft. One occurrence of apparently inadvertent (*not blatant!*) uncredited borrowing may be given an opportunity to revise and resubmit, losing 20 points on the assignment. A second infraction, and any blatant plagiarism, will earn an F in the course and notification of the Dean.

**Help is Available** for everyone! At the Writing Center in the LARC; an Online Writing Center is also available. (Do plan ahead, though; if someone is ahead of you, you may need to wait.) The staff there can help you at *any* stage of the writing process, whether figuring out the assignment, getting started, polishing, whatever. They will not write your paper for you, but will help you with specific grammar problems, organization, etc. Go there prepared with specific questions. **I strongly encourage you to use this resource!** You've paid for it, so you might as well use it!

**Tutor** Randy Landis-Eigsti, in the LARC, is a particularly good resource, given his background in music!

**Strongly recommended** is *Writing @ RRCC* (Boston: Pearson Custom, 2006); [www.pearsoncustom.com/pmedia/rccmcl/](http://www.pearsoncustom.com/pmedia/rccmcl/) . If you have this for another class, it will work well here too.

# Concert Review Outline/Checklist

Use this as a guide to what you should include in your review. (You may, of course, depart from this, as long as you discuss the music and the performance in substantial fashion.)

## Ideas/Content

### Introduction:

Performer(s) - list ensemble (but probably not every member) and any featured soloist(s)

Place and date

Context: Etiquette and customs you noticed, ambiance, performers= and/or audience=s dress and behavior, and other relevant observations

### Body:

#### Give specific supporting illustrative examples

*Do not give background information or plot summary, except as it applies directly to your opinions.*

In your opinion, which piece (title and composer) was the best?

What did you think of the **music itself**? What musical elements did you especially notice?

(Describe the music, using some musical vocabulary: dynamics, rhythm, form, timbre, texture, etc.)

What did you think of the **performance and interpretation**? What did you think of how the performers played/sang the music? Do you think they Agot it right@? What aspects of the performance stood out? Were there any Aclunkers@?

Evaluate the piece: What would you **change** about this piece, either music or performance? What would make it more pleasing?

Discuss another piece (least- or second-favorite) in the same way, with supporting examples

Which piece (title and composer) are you discussing, and how did you like it?

Discuss the **music itself**.

Discuss the **performance and interpretation**.

Evaluate the piece.

*Stage works - operas, musicals, ballet - call for comment on staging, costumes, sets, acting, choreography, etc.*

### Conclusion:

What was your overall opinion of the concert?

Would you attend a different concert by this group? Would you recommend it to a friend? Why or why not?

## Length

Have you given enough ideas and details (about 3 pages, or more for stage works) ?

## Word Choice

Have you used musical Aterms of art@? Correctly? Wherever appropriate?

## Conventions/Mechanics

Is your writing concise, following the conventions of standard written English?

Do you have an introduction, body, and conclusion?

Have you used appropriate citations for everything that is someone else=s words or ideas?

Have you used any Aforbidden words@ (see p.1) ?

## Presentation

Is format appropriate, concert program and ticket attached, etc.?

## Ownership of Words and Ideas

Have you given a citation for anyone else=s words or ideas, even your mother=s?

Are all paraphrases clearly indicated?

Do all quotations appear with quotation marks and a reference, with a full citation in an endnote?

## Timeliness

Is your paper turned in by the deadline, **on the due date or before**, either in class or by alternate method (with hard copy submitted next class)?

# Concert Review Rubrics

Berg

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## 50%: Concert Assignment (50 points maximum):

- Required: **Classical music** It was *not* pop/rock/jazz/folk/etc.  
20 points: **Completed review** My paper reviews a concert or piece of music  
20 points **Recent** This assignment was completed within this semester, for this course  
10 points **Live performance** It was *not* a recording, although I might have listened to a recording of the piece on the live concert

**These points are available ONLY with the Review. No points are given for the concert WITHOUT the review.**

## Review (50 points maximum):

### 25%: Ideas

- 25 Essay covers two pieces in depth, discussing all issues, using examples/details for each
- 12 Essay covers some issues, using a few examples; or covers only one piece; or covers every piece in scant depth
- 1 Essay covers none of the assigned issues, and/or uses no examples

### 10%: Word Choice

- 10 Many musical terms of art@ (specialized musical vocabulary) are used, accurately and wherever needed
- 5 Some musical terms are used, accurately, in many places where needed
- 1 Few musical terms are used, and/or are used inaccurately

### 10%: Conventions/Mechanics

- 10 Has logical introduction, body, and conclusion that make the reader easily able to follow the ideas; grammar and spelling are educated English throughout
- 5 Uses some elements of organization, but doesn't integrate them thoroughly; a bit difficult to follow; grammar and spelling have some errors
- 1 There is no clear essay structure; grammar and spelling are not standard English

### 5%: Presentation

- 5 The paper has all parts (paper, program notes from the concert program, and ticket), is printed in appropriate conventional typeface and with appropriate margins, and is generally aesthetically pleasing in appearance
- 3 Some parts are missing, inappropriate font size or margins are used, and/or the paper doesn't have a pleasing appearance
- 1 The paper uses very inappropriate font size or margins, is handwritten, appears sloppy, and/or has many parts missing

## Penalties:

**Timeliness:** -10 points per class day late, to a maximum of 20 points - determined by fax or email dateline, or by date stamp if through Instructional Services office

**My Own Words and Ideas:** -20 points for **any** uncredited quotations or paraphrases of other people's ideas or words (including from the program notes or the performer/conductor's comments from the stage). The paper may be revised and resubmitted - along with the first submission - within one week. For a blatant violation, or if this happens a second time, there will be no points earned for the paper, failure in the course, and notification of the Dean.