

Concert Report Guidelines

Listening to live performances is an essential part of learning to appreciate and understand music. Here are some general guidelines to help you listen, think, and write about a concert. *You will be required to attend and report on one concert before the end of the first quarter, and 2 concerts each subsequent quarter.* Concerts should be classical in nature, not pop or rock concerts. Also, church performances are excluded. Students may attend chorus, band, or orchestra concerts at home schools for the first quarter, however they should not be a performer. If you're not sure, see Mr. Garmon for approval. Tickets will be available for purchase for the Winston Salem Symphony Concerts.

Basic Information to Include

- When and where did the concert take place? How long did it last?
- How many pieces were performed? What were they called and how many movements were in each? Who composed each piece?
- Who were the performers (name of the ensemble and/or names of the soloists)?
- If there was a conductor, what was his or her name?
- What types of instruments were played and/or what types of voice parts 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?
 - Were the musicians rhythmically “together”?
 - Were they playing/singing in tune?
 - Did any instruments or voices stick out?
 - How would you rate the musicians' technical ability and the energy of their performance?
 - Did they seem well prepared for the concert?
- Which composition did you like best? Why? (e.g., what specifically did you like about the piece itself or the way it was performed?)
- Which composition did you like least? Why?
- Did any of the compositions trigger an emotional response from you? What were your specific feelings or thoughts in response to the music?
- Is this type of concert experience new to you? How do you think that might influence your perceptions of what you heard and observed?
- What makes a performance an artistic event?

Specific Points to Consider

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

- Describe what you heard and observed using the following musical terms, elements, and concepts discussed in class.
 - *Genre* (symphony, concerto, string quartet, etc.)
 - *Stylistic period* (Baroque, Classical, Romantic, etc.)
 - *Mood* (emotion conveyed by the music and performers)
 - *Pitch* To what extent does pitch vary throughout the piece? How do changes in pitch reflect changes in mood?
 - *Rhythm* (beat, accent, tempo, meter, syncopation) How were the elements of rhythm used to create special or interesting musical effects?
 - *Dynamics* (level of sound) Identify changes in dynamics and discuss the effect these changes create.
 - *Tone color* (bright, brassy, warm, ringing, hollow, etc.)
 - *Mode* (major, minor)
 - *Harmony/Melody* Discuss the balance (or lack of it) between the melody and its "accompaniment." Did you hear consonance, dissonance, or a combination of both?
 - *Motives/Themes* Identify and note where individual motives and themes are first introduced and subsequently reappear in each piece.
 - *Texture* (monophony, homophony, polyphony, etc.)
 - *Form* (sonata form, A B A, theme and variations, etc.)
- Using the musical terminology and concepts covered in class, discuss the most interesting musical elements or features of the pieces that were performed.
- Compare the pieces from this performance with other compositions you have studied in class, noting similarities and differences. (Note: In selecting a composition from class, you may want to look for a piece by the same composer, from the same style period, or of the same genre as the piece(s) from the performance.)
- How does this concert compare to the performance(s) you attended previously?
- 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?

Outside Research

You may choose to add depth and detail to your report by *briefly* researching the pieces you heard at the performance. The following questions will help to guide your research.

- When was each of the pieces from the performance composed?
- Why were they written?
- What is each composer's background? Include the following information:
 - Major works
 - Birth and (if applicable) death dates
 - Historical or stylistic period to which the composer belongs
 - The composer's influence on contemporaries or later musicians