

How to Write A Concert Review

A Student's Guide to Writing a Concert Review, Prepared by Frank Horvat, ORMTA Central Toronto Branch Member.

Courtesy of Middle Tennessee State University
<http://www.mtsu.edu/~sshearon/161crg.html>

The following is an outline of information and writing style that is usually part of a standard concert review:

1. Basic Information

Who, What, Where, and When (and Why, if applicable). Who was performing? What was the event, and (especially) What were the performing media? When and Where was the event held? Why was the event held (any special reason)? All this information should be contained within the first paragraph.

2. Critical Narrative

The review should deal with aspects of the concert that are considered most important or striking. Be sure--always--to concentrate on musical matters, although brief discussions of other aspects of the concert may be included. In the process, talk about the works performed, how they were presented, how well the performers presented the music, and what made the performances effective or ineffective. Employ the concepts and vocabulary you have learned in your music classes. The use of first-person narrative is fine (ie. I, me, my). When writing about events that occurred at the concert, use the past tense. (Example: "Although the trombonist was quite good, I thought that she was far too loud to blend well with the others in her section.") But when writing about a particular musical composition or work of art, use the present tense. (Example: "In Beethoven's Fifth Symphony, the fourth movement in C Major seems to serve as a triumphal conclusion to the struggle of the preceding three movements in C Minor.") Finally, Be Objective! Comparisons of pieces and performers should be avoided unless it is to make an argument regarding Music History or Analysis. Reviews are most effective when they are honest and show that you seriously engaged the music and performance. This section should contain 3 or more paragraphs.

3. Conclusion

Sum up the concert in your option, good, bad, or otherwise. Your closing statement should reflect the content of the previous paragraphs. Saying it was a great concert after listing 3 paragraphs of problems is not a representative closing statement.

4. Length

Paper must have an introduction, sufficient supporting material/content and a concluding paragraph. The reader should be able to experience the concert through the writing. Please use the attached rubric as a guide for your writing and to gain an understanding for how your work will be evaluated.

5. Additional Information

Use 12-point Times New Roman font. A copy of the program from the performance should be attached to the paper. Make sure the center top of your paper has the following:

Concert Review _____ Nine Weeks

Your Name

Date of the Concert Attended:

Group performing at the concert: