

Concert Review Assignment

COURSE

Music 121

INSTRUCTOR

Madison Spahn

TERM

Fall 2025

ASSIGNMENT OVERVIEW

For this assignment, you will watch online or attend a live concert that includes classical music by women. You will then write a review of the concert, imagining that you are a reporter for a magazine or newspaper who has been assigned to cover this concert. This means that you are responsible for educating the public about the facts of the concert and for providing your informed musical opinion about the repertoire performed and the quality of the performances. As part of practicing the writing process, we will have an in-class peer review activity to evaluate one another's reviews before the final product is due.

POINTS AVAILABLE

50 Points

REQUIREMENTS

Your review should be between two and three pages (minimum 500 words), formatted in 12-point Times New Roman font, double spaced, with one-inch margins.

While at the concert, be sure to read the program and program notes if they are available and keep a copy for later reference. Take notes before and after the concert and during any breaks, but while the music is being played try to listen attentively and critically as we have been practicing in class. Observe the behavior of the conductor, musicians, and your fellow audience members. Make sure to write down notes immediately following the concert while the experience is still fresh in your mind.

Here are some questions to consider when writing your review (not required, but useful as starting points):

- Was there any unifying theme to the concert? How did the pieces performed fit (or not fit) this theme? Can you detect any logic to the order in which the pieces were played?
- How did the choice of repertoire relate to the venue and atmosphere? Was it formal, or more relaxed? Was it a small or large venue? What was the physical relationship between the performers and the audience?
- What were the features of the music performed? What sort of textures and instrumentation did they use? Were there prominent contrasts in tempo, dynamics, or register? Did any features of the melody or rhythm stand out to you? Did any of the pieces have multiple movements, and if so, how did the movements differ from one another? If there were words, how did the words relate (or not) to the music? Did they change your experience of the music?
- What were the performers like? Were they technically proficient? Did they seem emotionally connected to the music they were performing? How did they use their bodies in relation to their instruments? Did they engage with the audience at all?
- Did you enjoy the performance? Why or why not? Did you find the music particularly pleasant, uncomfortable, or emotionally moving? Try to identify concrete musical details that relate to your subjective experience.



DUE DATE

You will bring a **draft version** of your review to class on **Tuesday, September 30**, to be used for the in-class peer review activity. **Please note that participation in the peer review session is part of your assignment grade.** The draft will likely still require some editing for content, organization, and grammar, but it should be written in full sentences, NOT notes or bullet points. Your final review should be uploaded to Blackboard on the Assignments page by **11:59PM on Thursday, October 9**.

GRADING

Presentation of the facts of the concert (date, time, performers, repertoire performed, etc.)	10 points
Thoughtful and critical discussion of the music performed, the quality of the performances, and the overall concert experience	15 points
Use of technical musical vocabulary and musical concepts learned in class to discuss repertoire and performances	10 points
Clear organization of ideas and correct use of English grammar, syntax, and spelling	10 points
Engaged participation in the in-class peer review activity and attempt to act on the feedback received for the final draft	5 points