

## Concert Report Guidelines/Adv. Hum. Credit

Concert Reports should be approximately 1,000 words in length.

Concert reports are **due 1 week after the concert**. It is important that you write your report within days if not hours of attending the concert so that your memory is fresh and your reactions to the pieces are accurate. Do not delay. Serious penalties will be assigned to reports turned in more than 1 week after the concert.

Note that part 1a under Identification and Historical Context is to be done if at all possible before attending the concert. You should write a brief paragraph for each work on the program.

**You are encouraged to take a small steno or other some sort of pad of paper and a pencil to the concert to make brief notes.**

**Do not write your report during the concert or become so consumed with making notes that you don't listen to or enjoy the concert.**

Your name

The name of the ensemble and/or soloist(s) performing

Date & Location of the concert

List of pieces performed (composer, title, opus number or other identifying number where applicable)

### Identification and Historical Context – for each piece presented on the program

1a. Usually there will be three or at most four pieces of music on a program. Adjust the length of the description to stay roughly within the approximate 1,000 words, as necessary.

Write a few paragraphs comprising 200 - 300 words describing each composer and the specific piece in the context of the composer's overall output (this will be easier to do with standard repertoire pieces than works by very young or contemporary composers; do your best to understand the context of the piece you are hearing). **Do this part of the assignment before going to the concert.** The LA Phil has online program notes for most pieces. You can also use The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Oxford History of Music in the library, as well as any online source.

1b. Identify the work in detail. Include a list of the movements if appropriate (these may be appear as tempo markings such as "allegro con brio," a title, such as "Morning" or the first line of a vocal work, such as "Credo in unum Deum."). Give the composer's dates (in the case of living composers, include his/her year of birth or the date of the composition; in the case of dead composers, the year of the composer's birth and death) and an opus number or some other identifier if one exists.

### Subjective Reaction

After your description, include a subjective reaction. Your subjective reaction should be one paragraph (about 50 – 75 words) for the entire piece, regardless of the length or number of movements. Did you like it or not, why? Was there anything that particularly moved you or turned you off? Why? You aren't expected to like everything. There are no deductions for saying you hated a piece of music, soloist, conductor, whatever. **Write this part of your report after**

**not during the concert.** You might want to make a couple of notes during the interval between pieces to aid your memory later.

### Overall Reaction

At the end of the report, summarize your overall reaction to the concert. Did the performers do a good job? Did they seem to be enjoying what they were doing? In the case of orchestral concerts, who did you perceive the relationship between the conductor and the players to be? Were they communicating with one another or were the players ignoring the conductor (or visa versa)? Which of the pieces did you like the best/least? What did you think about the hall in which the concert was heard? How were the acoustics? What did you perceive the demographics of the audience to be? Did anything surprise you about the concert or the circumstances of your hearing it?

Reports should word-processed, grammar- and spell-checked pages. Except for your paragraph identifying the piece and giving a brief historical context, do not refer to the program notes unless you find something in them particularly helpful and applicable – then you may quote a sentence or two to make your own point.

### **Sample Identification and Historical Context (Beethoven 1<sup>st</sup> Symphony)**

1a. Symphony No. 1 in C major, Op. 21 by Ludwig van Beethoven (1770-1827). It has four movements:

- I. Adagio molto – Allegro con brio
- II. Andante cantabile con moto
- III. Menuetto: Allegro molto e vivace
- IV. Adagio – Allegro molto e vivace

1b. Beethoven's First Symphony was composed in Vienna in 1799-1800 when he was still a relatively young, unknown composer. As a young man he displayed great abilities as a pianist and was even granted a stipend in his late teens to travel to Vienna and study with Mozart. No sooner had he arrived than he learned that his mother was seriously ill and was forced to return to his hometown of Bonn. After the death of his mother he spent several years looking after the affairs of his alcoholic father and younger siblings but in 1792 returned to Vienna where he studied for a short time with Franz Joseph Haydn.

The symphony is modeled on those of Mozart and Haydn, both representative of the so-called High Classical style. Beethoven is often identified as “standing with one foot each in the doors of musical classicism and romanticism” because over the course of his approximately thirty years of composing, his style changes dramatically, displaying ever-increasing characteristics of romanticism, including freedom of expression and form.

The First Symphony is typical of its late eighteenth-century Germanic prototype: four movements with a fast opening movement in sonata-allegro form (preceded by a slow introduction); a slow second movement; a quick third movement (early versions typically use a Minuet; Beethoven later turns to the faster Scherzo); and a rollicking finale in sonata-allegro or rondo form. The first movement, although “Classical,” reveals distinctive aspects of Beethoven's unique personality. Like many examples of first movements by Haydn, it begins with a slow introduction. However, Beethoven begins the work seemingly in the wrong key – F major at first – and meanders around several others before settling, just at the “Allegro con brio,” in the “right” key of C major.

### Sample Subjective Reaction (1<sup>st</sup> Symphony)

I thought the symphony was very enjoyable and interesting to listen to. It has a lot of light, sparkling melodies and quite a bit of drama. Compared to other pieces by Beethoven I have heard, I think it is one of the more energetic and interesting maybe because it is less somber or plodding. I was surprised by the slow, kind of strange introduction to the last movement but it made sense once it got going – I think Beethoven was trying to surprise or shock people. I thought the second movement was kind of boring and repetitive. The wind players seemed really enthusiastic about their part but I thought the strings played kind of sloppy sometimes and looked a little bored. Maybe they've played this piece too many times.

### Sample Overall Reaction

Overall, I enjoyed the concert. I think the Beethoven Symphony No. 1 was the piece I liked best. As noted above, I really hated the Four Etudes by Evtuhovarimskikhov. The Ravel work had the most interesting use of colors and textures. I found the conductor's gyrations and bouncing around to be distracting. I got the feeling some members of the orchestra were ignoring him. I liked the variety of pieces (the modern piece notwithstanding) and was surprised that I wasn't totally bored by the concert. I was interested in seeing how the players looked at each other and seemed to react to one another (sometimes more than to the conductor). The brass players (which surprisingly included a number of women because I usually think of brass players as men) played very powerfully though sometimes – especially in the Etudes – too loud. The lady behind me with the candy wrapper and older gentleman who occasionally snored were very annoying. It seemed like everyone knew when to applaud. Only two people walked out during the Etudes which surprised me. I probably would have left except I would have had to walk back to campus. I was glad I stayed for the Ravel.