

Presentations Guidelines

General guidelines

- 25-30 minutes in length
- include audio material
- supply written outline of your talk to the class
- may use divisional projector for PowerPoint or other audio-visual presentation by prior arrangement with Prof. Neenan

Outline draft

You must supply a draft outline of your presentation to Prof. Neenan **one week** prior to your presentation. **No exceptions.**

What to cover (some points will be more appropriate/applicable than others)

Material to be covered will vary widely, depending on the piece or pieces and its or their place in the composer's output. In all cases, include the following:

- general characteristics of the piece or pieces (very brief description, see below re "describing a piece of music")
- when and where it or they were composed
- any known impetus for the composition (commission, planned publication, performer request etc.)
- any interesting or enlightening information about the compositional process (did the piece cause the composer a lot of trouble or was it dashed off in a hurry? was the piece revised? when, why, how?)
- if speaking of a single piece, relationship of the work to other pieces by the composer; if speaking of a group of works, their place in the composer's output; put the work in context of the composer's output.
- circumstances of the composer at the time of composition (early, middle, late; any particular influences or life circumstances that may have influenced the composition of the piece); if speaking of a group of works, were the pieces spread out over many years or fairly concentrated?
- first performance, if known; dedication, if any; financial results, if known
- public reception of the work(s) if applicable; reviews or critical commentary around the time of the performance or later
- interesting or unusual characteristics of the piece, including unusual ordering or sequence of movements; movement titles; performance directions
- special challenges, if any, to the performers
- if you feel it would be interesting or useful to others, you may compare portions of two performances of the same piece, being cognizant of the time constraints (I have ordered historic performances of some of the pieces to be presented and will make a list available)

What not to cover

- the form or general characteristics of specific movements unless they are in some way unusual or otherwise interesting; ie don't "describe" the piece with phrases such as, "the cello enters at the beginning, followed by the violin;" or "the exposition is 35 measures long and the development is 19

measures long,” or “the 2nd violin has a really beautiful melody near the end of the recapitulation.” These sorts of descriptions are generally not illustrative of a piece of music. This is not to say that interesting musical ideas or interesting or important points in the music should not be pointed out by way of recording (or live demonstration, if you like). Just don’t describe what is better heard. **“A (sound) picture is worth 1000 words.”**

- the complete biographical history of the composer.