

CONCERT ESSAY CRITERIA

As of October 8, 2009

Purpose

Students will attend a live symphony orchestra performance(s). This essay was assigned in the second six weeks of school and students have six months to complete the assignment. The research and concert attendance will raise student's musical awareness, allow student's to observe social conduct and proper behavior in and during professional/higher level orchestral performances. In addition, students will be exposed to a professional level of technical excellence which helps to raise their own performance expectations.

Expensive tickets are not needed to fulfill this assignment. Many performances are free and open to the public. Students will find performances by reading the arts sections of their community newspaper, viewing cultural activity websites, watching the community arts information cable channel, reading the postings in the orchestra room and utilizing the DMN Guide which is available in the school library every Friday. Each of these sources will be discussed in class.

A list of recommended organizations is included below. Popular artist concerts, ballets and operas do NOT fulfill the requirements for this essay. Although listening to CDs enhances a student's musical knowledge, attendance at a live performance will expand student awareness of the social/musical environment and allow students a live performance experience and an opportunity to hear and view the technical aspect of performance that is taught in class.

Criteria

1. **Title page** must include (example below):
Interesting title (centered in middle of the page)
Student name/orchestra class period below title
Name of organization(s) observed and date(s) of attendance below name
2. **Ticket stub(s) OR** program(s) must be stapled/taped to the last page of the essay. In the case there are multiple concerts, a stub/program for each concert must accompany the essay.
3. **Minimum 4 pages of double spaced text.** Use one of these fonts for your essay - Arial, Helvetica, Times New Roman, Trebuchet or Comic Sans. Use no larger than 12 point font. One example of a painting per era is required. Do NOT include pictures in the text portion of your essay. Examples must have the title and the source underneath each picture. A properly labeled example is included below. Do not use inflated margins, extra spaces between paragraphs, etc. to inflate the content or page numbers of your essay.
4. **Minimum 15 vocabulary words** used (a vocabulary word may be used more than once but will only count once toward the required total). Vocabulary words must be highlighted in yellow highlighter and numbered. Foreign language vocabulary words may not be used in lieu of an English word. (i.e. the orchestra performed *molto forte con piu legato* strokes.) Use vocabulary words in the proper context (i.e. "the orchestra performed *La Cenerentola* at a very fast tempo, probably a *molto allegro*" NOT "the orchestra performed *La Cenerentola molto vivace*".

5. **Describe the instrumentation for each selection** relating it to the era's stylistic practices. **DO NOT JUST LIST THE INSTRUMENTS!** Clearly state how the size of the ensemble and the instruments adhered/did not adhere to standard orchestras of the era. In other words, you must know the instrumentation that was common in each of the eras you discuss.
6. **A minimum of three musical eras must be discussed.** It may be necessary to attend more than one concert to hear examples from three eras. **Plan ahead!**
7. **Discuss the musical era each piece is from and describe:**
 - a. musical characteristics from that era
 - b. composer's individual style and whether it is typical of the era
 - c. discuss stylistic characteristics such as bow strokes (marcato, legato, spiccato), dynamic characteristics, etc.
8. **Multi-movement compositions count only as one piece.** For example, Tchaikowsky's Serenade Mvt. I, II and III count only as one composition because all movements are from the same era.
9. **Compare the selections to pieces you have performed in the past or are currently working on** either orchestrally or in your private lessons; name titles.
10. **Include your opinion, observations and/or feelings** about each selection. This should not exceed two sentences.
11. **Close with overall observations** regarding audience attendance, interesting moments during the concert and how and why this concert raises your level of expectation in your own playing. You may NOT say, "It made me want to practice harder". Discuss how the performance supports what you are learning in orchestra, your observations of the professional musicians applying techniques you are working on in class, ensemble and section playing, intonation and unusual techniques you observed in the strings and/or brass and percussion sections. In other words, describe things you heard AND observed.
12. **All pages must be numbered at the bottom center of each page.** Do not number the title page.

Recommended Musical Organizations

See Mrs. Booth or Miss Mabel **BEFORE** you attend a performance if you are unsure - use the websites of musical groups you plan to attend to view the repertoire for upcoming concerts, DMN's Guide on Friday (this is in the JHS library every Friday), community calendars, etc.

Richardson Symphony Orchestra
 Plano Symphony Orchestra
 Lewisville Lake Symphony Orchestra
 Greater Dallas Youth Orchestra
 (*Philharmonic or GDYO*)
 North Texas Youth Orchestra

Dallas Symphony Orchestra
 SMU Symphony Orchestra
 UNT Symphony Orchestra
 Fort Worth Symphony Orchestra
 Fort Worth Chamber Orchestra
 Any Plano ISD senior high chamber orchestra

Due Date

May 7, 2010. You may turn your essay in anytime after December 11, 2009. This assignment was made at the beginning of the second six weeks. No late assignments will be accepted. You will receive a major grade in each of these areas:

deadline compliance (**no late essays will be accepted**)

physical criteria (correct number of pages, 15 highlighted & numbered vocabulary words, etc.)

content and clarity

creativity

Models of examples

Proper Title Page

**"Three Eras of Enchanting Music:
The Baroque, Classical and 20th Century Musical Eras"**

(skip a line here)

Hermione Blakely

3rd period orchestra

(skip a line)

Dallas Symphony Orchestra - October 10, 2008

Plano Symphony Orchestra - December 31, 2008

Richardson Symphony Orchestra - January 5, 2009

Properly labeled vocabulary word

The subtle musical **nuance (14)** in phrasing was indicative of a very musical orchestra and conductor.

Properly labeled art example

(state here what era it is from above the picture)

BAROQUE ERA



(you must state the name of the painting and the source below the picture)

Self Portrait by Donnart Cabriole

Ferdinand, Amos. Baroque Art. Mount Pleasant: Artemis Publishing, 2006. p.991