

Guidelines for Concert Attendance Requirement

1. Finding the concerts.

The CSUS Music Department offers a large variety of concerts during the semester, some of which are free to the public while others offer student discounts. These include student recitals, student ensembles, the orchestra, choral groups, and professional concerts. Most of the CSUS concerts take place in either the Recital Hall or here in Room 151. 8pm is the *usual* starting time for evening concerts (about 2 hours in length) but there are also shorter and less formal afternoon concerts. The Music Dept. prints a brochure of its formal concerts each semester called the *Bravo*, which you can get from the Music Dept. Information Office or at the Dept. web site. Students publicize their recitals through flyers stuck to bulletin boards and walls in the Music Dept. hallways. *Important: Get all CSUS programs stamped at the end of the concert by one of the student ushers.* For nearly all events casual clothing is fine - the performers will usually be dressed formally, but audience attire is very flexible.

There are many off-campus opportunities for concerts. UC Davis's Mondavi Center presents famous national and international artists (these are more expensive, but very worthwhile), and all Sacramento area colleges offer fine arts concerts. Area churches are frequently used for both sacred and non-sacred fine arts concerts because of their large size and good acoustics. However, music heard or performed in a regular Sunday morning church service should NOT be used for this class, since most of this music will not meet our criteria of fine arts. Most events are listed in on-line calendars. Check the *Sacramento Bee* Arts Calendar listings each week for other ideas. Programs should be saved and stapled to the submitted paper, wherever you go. Pop music concerts including rap, hip-hop, rock, soul, reggae, country, folk, gospel, blues, and Broadway-style musicals (e.g. *Phantom of the Opera*) are not acceptable for this class.

2. What to write.

Try to attend different types of concerts (e.g. chamber music, orchestra, opera, solo recital) with different styles of music (e.g. Renaissance, Baroque, Classical, Romantic, Modern). In your writing describe the concert and your reactions - the challenge is to translate non-verbal communication into words. For example, could you place each piece into an appropriate stylistic era (Baroque, Classical, Romantic, Modern, etc.)? The composer's dates will help a great deal in this regard. Were any of the composers or pieces discussed in class? Are any of the composers included in our textbook? If there were sung lyrics, could you identify the language? Was the text translation provided? Was the meaning of the text conveyed well by the composition itself and/or by the performer? Could you hear the main themes and meter in any of the pieces? Could you recognize the existence of form in the music? Could you identify emotional states in the music (happiness, anger, love, humor, excitement, melancholy, nationalism etc.)? Was there a programmatic theme to any of the pieces (i.e. was there a story connected to the music), or was the music abstractly conceived? Were you able to distinguish the sounds of different instruments or voices? Did the concert bring up questions that you would like to have discussed in class? How did this experience compare with other concerts (including non-fine arts) you may have attended before? **If program notes and text translations are provided in the program, be sure to read them before or during the concert.**

3. Suggestions for wording.

Many people without serious listening experience find slow tempo pieces to be either "sad" or "boring." In fact, most slow music is not really meant to be simply "sad," and I would suggest that you consider some other words to describe slower pieces: profound, lyrical, moving, heartfelt, passionate, powerful, magnificent, sentimental, melancholy, mysterious, gloomy, sinister, foreboding, somber, serene, seductive, peaceful, bittersweet, etc. The word "boring" is nearly always used in cases where the listener is incapable of concentrating on, or understanding, the music which is presented; in other words, it reflects more upon the writer than on the music itself. Be patient and open-minded - good listening takes time to develop, and first impressions can be superficial.

4. Be respectful and silent at concerts. Whispering, text messaging, and paper rustling are all disrespectful distractions to the artist and other audience members. Leave your seat *only* after applause, and do not enter the hall if music is being performed. At the end of a piece, wait for others to begin applauding if you are not sure.