

# CONCERT REVIEW PROJECT

**Concert Choir (PA 1000)  
A Cappella Choir (PA 1500)  
Camerata (PA 1200)**

**2016-2017  
Dr. Driscoll**

Observing and critiquing other performers can be very useful in helping you critique and improve your own performances. Sometimes you will observe performers achieving amazing things that you thought could not be done. On the flip side, you often will observe performers who do things that you do not like. You can then apply what you have observed to help improve your own performances.

**ASSIGNMENT:** You must attend one **choral** concert and write a newspaper-style review of the concert. A very good student review is included for your reference. The concert must be **live**. It should be of an **ensemble of singers**, not just a soloist. Performances of BHS choirs or Brookline elementary schools choirs are not allowed. A *cappella Choir* students are encouraged to attend local college a cappella concerts. *Concert Choir* members can choose any kind of choral concert. **Be sure to attach a ticket stub and program as proof of attendance!** Your review should be **500-800 words in length**. In addition to content you will also be graded on spelling, punctuation and grammar!

You are not required or expected to pay to attend a concert. There are many FREE choral concerts offered by local universities and music schools (New England Conservatory, Boston University, Boston Conservatory, Longy, Harvard). Other good places to search for choral concerts:

Boston Globe (boston.com)

Greater Boston Choral Consortium (bostonsings.org)

In addition, many organizations offer students reduced fee tickets or student “rush” tickets. Plan ahead!

## **BONUS POINTS FOR USING THE BHS WRITING CENTER!**

The BHS Writing Center is open before school every day from 7:40-8:15am and X-blocks in Room 279. If you make use of the BHS Writing Center, you can get **3 bonus points** (that’s equal to 10% of the grade for this assignment). To get the bonus points, you will need to get a Writing Center coach to sign your draft. Be sure to turn in your signed draft along with your final report in order to receive the bonus points.

**The concert review is 15% of your 4<sup>th</sup> quarter grade. DON’T AVOID IT!!!**

**1) Concert choice decided**

**Friday, September 23, 2016**

**2) Concert review due**

**Friday, April 28, 2017**

## Writing a Concert Review

### What is a concert review?

A concert review is like a movie review, except that you are reviewing a concert. Many movie-goers do not want to spend \$10 and two hours of their day watching a bad movie, so they will read a movie review first to see what sort of ratings the reviewer gave the movie. The reviewer gives a basic idea of the premise of the movie as well as what they liked and/or disliked about the movie.

### Basic outline of a concert review

The format of the concert review should contain an opening paragraph, a body and a concluding paragraph. The information below gives you more details on each of these sections.

#### 1) Introduction/Background information: Who, What, When, Where

Who was the performer(s)?

When did the performance take place?

Where did the performance take place?

What was performed?

Thesis statement/Opinion: What is your main opinion of the performance?

*Avoid naming all of the titles of compositions in the opening paragraph.*

#### 2) Body/Description of the performance & your opinions

Below are some things to observe and write about.

##### Questions about the performance

What were some of the highlights of the performance?

What about the experience was new or different for you?

What impressed you about this live music experience and why?

Which selection(s) intrigued you the most? Explain what it was about the music that intrigued you.

If the piece is a new work what is your opinion of the writing of the composition?

What work did you find most enjoyable? Why?

If there was a selection that you did not enjoy, why didn't you enjoy it? Was your like or dislike due to the piece itself, its position in the program or the way it was performed?

What style(s) of music was performed?

How were their dynamics? (all loud, all soft, variety)

Did they blend well? Could you hear individual voices sticking out?

Did they have good intonation? (ie Did they sing in tune?)

How was their diction? Could you understand the words?

##### Questions about the performers

What did you notice about the conductor? instrumentalists? soloists?

Was there a soloist or soloists who were particularly noteworthy (either good or bad)?

Did the performers engage with the audience?

What did they wear?

How did the performers look on stage? Did they look professional/unprofessional?

##### Important points

- 1) Back up your judgments/opinions with the reasons *why* you think so. For example, a statement such as “the soprano soloist was boring” would not be helpful to the reader. It does not tell the reader anything about what the performer did that you (the reviewer) deemed boring. A better statement might be “the soprano soloist’s rigid posture and lack of facial expression does not engage the listener”. It lets the reader know that you did not like her performance, but it also tells him or her *why*.
- 2) DO NOT write a play-by-play description of the entire concert. The reader wants to know the big picture, not a detailed description of every two-minute piece in a 90-minute program. Remember, they are reading your review to hear your opinions of the program and to determine whether this is a program or performance worth seeing themselves.
- 3) Speak for yourself *only*. Unless you interview everyone in the audience, you can’t write about how the felt! You *can* write about things you observe the audience doing. (“The audience leapt to their feet.”)

### 3) Summary/Concluding Paragraph

Summarize your overall impression of the concert.

Share your own reactions and opinions: what did you like, what did you not like, and why?

Finally, give the performers a pat on the back or suggestions for improvement, and give your readers good reasons for going (or not going) to the next such concert.

#### Additional Suggestions

- Bring along a notepad/paper and pen with you to the concert. Take notes of your observations.
- Write your essay as soon as possible after the concert or performance.
- Write about 3–5 pieces and proceed in chronological order. If more than one group is performing, do not choose all 3 pieces from the same group.
- The use of first-person narrative is fine.
- When writing about events that occurred at the concert, use the past tense. (Example: Although the trombonist was quite good, I thought that she was far too loud to blend well with the others in her section.)
- However, when writing about a particular musical composition or work of art or literature, use the present tense. (Example: In Beethoven's Fifth Symphony, the fourth movement in C Major seems to serve as a triumphal conclusion to the struggle of the preceding three movements in C Minor.)
- Use italics for the titles of large musical works, and use single quotation marks for the titles of individual movements in a larger work or individual songs. (Example: The 'Lacrimosa' is a movement from Mozart's *Requiem in D*.)
- If you comment on specific people (e.g., the conductor or soloists), give their names.
- If you think your review is very well written, submit it to the Sagamore or Brookline TAB for publication!

#### Common Pitfalls

- Diction vs. Dictation
- Enunciation vs. Annunciation
- Sing, sang, sung – proper usage
- *Performed* vs. *Preformed*
- Use the correct spelling of *a cappella*.
- Avoid the use of 'pitchy.' Use 'intonation' instead. (e.g., The choir's intonation was poor.)

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Choir: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Describing Music Rubric

Criteria	Level 4	Level 3	Level 2	Level 1	Your Score
<i>Introduction</i>	Includes “who, what, when, where.” Main opinion of the performance clearly stated.	Missing 1-2 elements of the “introduction” requirements.	Missing 3-4 elements of the “introduction” requirements.	Introductory paragraph not apparent.	
<i>Body</i>	Supports the main opinion with meaningful details. The music is described with extensive detail. Information is presented in effective order. Opinions are backed with supporting details.	Mostly follows the guidelines for the body section.	Sometimes follows the guidelines for the body section.	Does not follow the guidelines for the body section.	
<i>Conclusion</i>	Summarizes and draws a clear, effective conclusion and enhances the impact of the review.	Follows and summarizes review discussion, and draws a conclusion.	Concluding paragraph is only remotely related to the report topic.	Concluding paragraph is not apparent.	
<i>Music Terminology</i>	The music is described using specific music terminology, correctly applied to the music.	The music is described using some music terminology, correctly applied to the music.	The music is described by relating some specific music terminology to the music. The terminology contains some inaccuracies.	The music description may use music terminology incorrectly, may use only lay terminology, or may simply list music terms without relating them to the music.	
<i>Grammar and spelling</i>	The writing is creative, fluent, coherent, and easy to read. No spelling or grammatical errors.	The writing is fluent, coherent, and easy to read. 1-2 grammatical or spelling errors.	The writing is fluent and easy to read. 3-5 grammatical or spelling errors.	Numerous grammatical and/or spelling errors.	
				Turned in signed initial draft from the Writing Center: 3 bonus points (equal to 10% of the overall grade!)	
					+10
				<b>YOUR SCORE</b>	/30

**Comments:**

NAME \_\_\_\_\_ DATE \_\_\_\_\_

## CONCERT REVIEW PROJECT

**DUE:**            **Friday, September 23, 2016**

**ASSIGNMENT Part I (9<sup>th</sup> grade students only)**

Go to the Writing Center to have them stamp this page noting that you stopped by.

**ASSIGNMENT Part II (all students)**

Fill in the information below.

I will attend and write a concert review of the following performance:

**Name** of group performing \_\_\_\_\_

**Date** of performance \_\_\_\_\_

**Location** of performance \_\_\_\_\_