



Concert Analysis & Review

Song Analysis Draft due October 12 by 11:59pm.

Concert Review Draft due October 25 by 11:59pm.

Final Concert Analysis & Review due November 8 by 11:59pm.

Submit everything under “Large Assignments.”

Assignment: Watch a video recording or livestream of a **full-length concert or other live musical event**, at least 30 minutes in length. This is the only requirement for selecting a concert. Feel free to choose any performer or genre of music. (You will have the option to use this genre of music for your second large assignment for this class.) While watching the recording or livestream, look and listen carefully and take notes as needed. Then, write about those observations in an essay that shares your experience watching the video, and includes an in-depth analysis of one song from the concert.

Imagine you are writing a concert review for a news or media organization, such as the NY Times or BuzzFeed, to be consumed by the general public. Your concert review should be clear and convincing, including facts about the event as well as your opinion of the event, and your justification for this opinion. Ideally, the review should also be entertaining or pleasurable to read (otherwise your reading public won't want to read it!). Strive to make your paper as cleanly written and free of spelling and grammatical errors as possible.

For this assignment, you have a **choice of format**: you may choose to submit **either a written review (Option W), OR a podcast-style script & audio recording of your review (Option R)**. Choose one option - do not do both. Below are instructions for both formats.

Option W for Write: Instructions for Writing Your Review

Step 1: Before you write: Keep your eyes and ears attentive while watching the concert, and practice the type of careful listening that we are learning how to do in class. Take note of the concert environment as best you can before it begins and during breaks. While the musicians are playing, concentrate on listening, and take notes only when necessary. Write up your initial thoughts immediately after the concert, while the event is still fresh in your mind.

Step 2: Draft your song analysis. [Note: If you did Journal 3, build off of the analysis you wrote there.] Choose one song from the concert and listen to it several times. Each time you listen, identify one musical element in the song and take notes on it, using vocabulary we've learned in class. Repeat this process until you've analyzed each of the following musical elements:

- 1) duration (rhythm, meter, tempo)
- 2) pitch (intervals, pitch range, ornamentation)
- 3) quality (instrumentation, timbre of each instrument)
- 4) intensity (dynamics)
- 5) texture (one of 5 types)
- 6) form (use section names or letters)

Then, turn your notes into complete sentences and write up your analysis of the song in paragraph form.



Remember this is a draft, so mistakes are completely okay. To earn full points for your draft, just make sure it addresses each of the elements in the list above. **Submit your draft of this song analysis by October 12 at 11:59pm. Worth 50 points.**

Step 3: Draft your concert review.

- **3a: Describe the performance:** Return to the notes you took while watching the concert. Rewatch sections of the video or the whole thing and take more detailed notes on the **sounds** of the concert and the **sights** of the concert, using vocabulary you've learned in class and from the textbook as much as possible. Describe the music being performed in general, as well as anything going on visually. Consider the setting, how the musicians are arranged in relation to the audience, the dress and demeanor of the musicians, the behavior of the audience during the concert, how the musicians interact with each other and with the audience, a
- **3b: Write & support your opinion:** Next, jot down your opinion of the concert and why you have that opinion. What about the experience was new or different for you? What were your favorite and least favorite songs or moments during the event, and why? Did the music evoke any particular images or feelings for you? Did you like or dislike the experience overall, and would you recommend this concert to others? Why or why not? Be sure to support your opinion with specific evidence or details from the performance. (*NOTE: This is where students most often lose points. Don't let that be you!*)
- **3c:** Turn your notes into complete sentences and **write up your review of the concert in paragraph form**. Remember this is a draft, so mistakes are completely okay. To earn full points for your draft, just make sure it addresses both the music and the visuals of the concert, as well as your opinion of it. **Submit your draft of this song analysis by October 25 at 11:59pm. Worth 50 points.**

Step 4: Compile & revise analysis & concert review. After drafting the two sections of this assignment, compile them into a single essay. Revise them based on any feedback you receive on the initial drafts, and edit or change anything else that you think needs editing. Write a clear introduction that introduces the performance and grabs your reader's attention, and a clear conclusion that summarizes or ties up what you've written. Provide a link to the concert somewhere on the document. Give your essay a creative title (hint: "Concert Review" is not a creative title). Double-space your document, and use 12-point Times New Roman font and 1-inch margins on all sides. See "Concert Analysis & Review Rubric" (on Blackboard) for more details on how to earn full points for this assignment. **Submit your final Concert Analysis & Review by November 8 at 11:59pm. Worth 100 points.**

Option R for Record: Instructions for Recording Your Review as a Podcast

Step 1: Before you record: Keep your eyes and ears attentive while watching the concert, and practice the type of careful listening that we are learning how to do in class. Take note of the concert environment as best you can before it begins and during breaks. While the musicians are playing, concentrate on listening, and take notes only when necessary. Write up your initial thoughts immediately after the concert, while the event is still fresh in your mind.

Step 2: Draft your song analysis. [**Note:** If you did Journal 3, build off of the analysis you wrote there.] Choose one song from the concert and listen to it several times. Each time you listen, identify one musical element in the song and take notes on it, using vocabulary we've learned in class. Repeat this process until you've analyzed each of the following musical elements:

- 1) duration (rhythm, meter, tempo)



- 2) pitch (intervals, pitch range, ornamentation)
- 3) quality (instrumentation, timbre of each instrument)
- 4) intensity (dynamics)
- 5) texture (one of 5 types)
- 6) form (use section names or letters)

Then, turn your notes into complete sentences and write up your analysis of the song in paragraph form. This will be part of your podcast script. Remember this is a draft, so mistakes are completely okay. To earn full points for your draft, just make sure it addresses each of the elements in the list above. **Submit your draft of this song analysis by October 12 at 11:59pm. Worth 50 points.**

Step 3: Draft your concert review. This will also be part of your podcast script.

- **3a: Describe the performance:** Return to the notes you took while watching the concert. Rewatch sections of the video or the whole thing and take more detailed notes on the **sounds** of the concert and the **sights** of the concert, using vocabulary you've learned in class and from the textbook as much as possible. Describe the music being performed in general, as well as anything going on visually. Consider the setting, how the musicians are arranged in relation to the audience, the dress and demeanor of the musicians, the behavior of the audience during the concert, how the musicians interact with each other and with the audience, a
- **3b: Write & support your opinion:** Next, jot down your opinion of the concert and why you have that opinion. What about the experience was new or different for you? What were your favorite and least favorite songs or moments during the event, and why? Did the music evoke any particular images or feelings for you? Did you like or dislike the experience overall, and would you recommend this concert to others? Why or why not? Be sure to support your opinion with specific evidence or details from the performance. *(NOTE: This is where students most often lose points. Don't let that be you!)*
- **3c:** Turn your notes into complete sentences and **write up your review of the concert in paragraph form.** Remember this is a draft, so mistakes are completely okay. To earn full points for your draft, just make sure it addresses both the music and the visuals of the concert, as well as your opinion of it. **Submit your draft of this song analysis by October 25 at 11:59pm. Worth 50 points.**

Step 4: Compile & revise drafts to make podcast script. After drafting the two sections of this assignment, compile them into a single "script" for your podcast. Revise them based on any feedback you receive on the initial drafts, and edit or change anything else that you think needs editing. Think about a podcast that you would like to use as a template, deconstruct its structure, and model your script after it. Think about the tone, feeling, or aesthetics that you want to communicate in your podcast, and how you can reflect that in your script. Write a clear introduction that introduces the performance and grabs your reader's attention, and a clear conclusion that summarizes or ties up what you've written. Provide a link to the concert somewhere on the document. Give your essay a creative title (hint: "Concert Review" is not a creative title). Double-space your document, and use 12-point Times New Roman font and 1-inch margins on all sides.

Step 5: Record your podcast. Record yourself speaking your script. Use the technology of your choice (resources below). Feel free to include audio clips of the concert itself in your podcast, as well as any other audio excerpts that you feel strengthen your podcast in some way. You may choose to create a "bumper" - a short recording that identifies the podcast with signature music or an expression that helps listeners know what they are tuning into. To avoid monotony, consider adding hooks, and/or making up some ads (perhaps about other course topics). You are not required to include any audio other than your voice speaking your script, but doing so will make a more interesting and engaging podcast for your listener. See "Concert Analysis & Review Rubric" (on



Blackboard) for more details on how to earn full points for this assignment. **Submit your final script AND podcast recording by November 8 at 11:59pm. Worth 100 points.**

Podcast recording resources (optional):

- [NPR's Guide to DIY Podcasting](#)
- Online voice recording platform
 - [Online Voice Recorder](#)
- Computer-based software:
 - [Audacity](#): free, open source software for audio editing. See the [Audacity manual](#)
 - GarageBand
- Smartphone-based softwares
 - [Anchor by Spotify](#)
 - Can be used on the web too, signs in using your Spotify credentials.
 - Comes with some sound effects options
 - Music can be added from your Spotify
 - GarageBand app
 - [Alitu](#) (rated best for beginners, comes with a 7-day free trial, then \$28/mo)
- Audio archives (some free some not)
 - [Free music Archive](#) - free, to download music licensed under Creative Commons.
 - [Open music Archive](#) - free, out-of-copyright sound recordings
 - [Freesound](#) - free, Creative Commons licensed sounds
 - [Zaplast](#) - for downloading sound effects
 - [Smithsonian Folkways](#). Not free but really awesome archive: (you can buy songs for 0.99).
 - [Bandcamp](#) is another place where you can buy songs (and artists get most of the money).

Grading (for either option)

Your grade will be calculated according to the Concert Analysis & Review rubric available on Blackboard. Be sure to peruse this rubric before writing or recording your review, so you understand what is expected of you. Your work will be graded using this rubric, whether you choose to write or record your review.

Sample written concert reviews and song analyses are available for you on Blackboard. These were written by your peers in previous classes. I suggest you read at least one of these before beginning this assignment.

Happy listening!