

Concert Review Guide

Class Guitar for Non-Majors

From the syllabus:

CONCERT REVIEWS: You will be required to attend one on-campus guitar recital. In addition, you are asked to write a 1+ page double-spaced review of the recital. Please include three paragraphs in your review: (1) the names of the performers, titles of the pieces, and any other important concert details; (2) your perceptions of the performance; (3) what you learned, or how what you heard (and saw) relates to this class. Use musical terms where appropriate.

Concert Dates:

Concert listings will be available on the ASU events listings. Go to the link below and search keyword “guitar” on the right side of the page.

<http://music.asu.edu/events/index.php>

Additional concerts by ASU students may not be listed here, so your instructor will periodically give you advanced notice of upcoming concerts.

Requirements:

1. Bring paper and a pen/pencil to the recital. List all of the pieces, and some concert halls don't give programs (or will run out) so you'll need to have a list of the pieces. It would also help to write your observations and opinions with each piece so you don't forget them.
2. The guitar concert must take place on an ASU campus or be affiliated with ASU.
3. You're expected to attend the entire recital. If you show up a little late and miss the first piece, this is permissible but include that in your review.
4. If you think you may need to arrive late or leave early, consider attending a different recital. In most cases, student recitals last a little over an hour, while professional recitals will often take up to two hours.
5. Formatting: the paper must be Times New Roman, size 12, double spaced with 1" (or less) margins. The paper must be at least one page long.
6. This is a university course, not just a guitar lesson, so a university-level writing proficiency (grammar, spelling, formatting, paragraph structure, etc) is expected. If you have trouble writing papers or English isn't your first language, please consider ASU's tutoring resources: <https://studentsuccess.asu.edu/tutoring>

Helpful notes:

1. If it's early in the semester and you don't know how the concert relates to class or what terminology to use, write about what you know and expand the second paragraph to reach a page-length.
2. Don't plan on attending one of the last concerts of the semester. Concerts can be canceled or you may have unexpected commitments, and this assignment is ten percent of your grade.
3. ASU student recitals are free and un-ticketed, while professional guest artist concerts require tickets and cost typically from \$5-20. Tickets are available in the

- ASU Music School lobby before the concert, or at the ASU Box Office (near the art museum) if you don't want to wait in line before the concert.
4. Arrive early and sit towards the front of the hall to get the clearest observations.
 5. An example review is included below to help you understand what sort of analysis is requested. Your observations may be drastically different than what is written, and this is fine as long as they're truthful and relevant to the performance. See below for ideas on what to write about.
 6. If you have any questions, always feel free to contact your instructor.

Possible topics of discussion:

- What were your expectations of the concert or performing artist? Were your expectations correct?
- What was your favorite and/or least favorite part?
- Did anything surprise you? Was there anything you wish would have happened?
- Did they use any equipment or accessories besides a guitar? Why do you think they used them?
- What was the performer's demeanor? Happy? Sad? Focused? Bored? Did it change from piece to piece?
- Did he or she look nervous? Did they make more or fewer mistakes than you expected?
- Why do you think he or she picked the songs/pieces in the program? Which piece do you think was the easiest or most difficult?
- What did the performer wear, and why do you think they chose that?
- Did anything surprise you about the audience?

Example Review:

NOTE: The review below should not be used as a sentence-by-sentence rubric for you to follow and organize your own review. You're free to discuss in any order the details that were meaningful to you and your process of learning about guitar.

Student Name

Date written

MUS194 - MW 10:30

Concert Review – Michael Partington

Michael Partington performed a solo recital in Katzin Concert Hall on Saturday, November 16, 2013. The concert hall was nearly full, and the performance lasted about one and a half hours including the intermission. The pieces he performed were Fantasia Sevillana (Joaquin Turina), Sonata Romantica (Manuel Ponce), Gran Solo, op. 15 (Fernando Sor), Lute Suite no. 4 in E Major, BWV 1006a (JS Bach, arranged by Frank

Koonce), Sunburst (Andrew York), and Libra Sonatina (Roland Dyens). It was a wide variety of classical pieces, from the gentle and melodic Sonata Romantica, to the pop guitar sounds of Sunburst, to the percussive drumming in Libra Sonatina.

The wide variety of styles allowed Partington's virtuosity to be revealed in entirety. The Fantasia Sevillana, the first piece on the program, started with a tremendous burst of energy in the form of rasgueados (Flamenco strumming). The first half of the program sounded very Spanish, with dramatic slides, punchy attacks, and an exotic, chromatic feel to the harmonies and melodies. The second half was very diverse compared to the first. It was incredible how in the Lute Suite no. 4, the performer was able to play in a way that sounded like two guitars interacting with each other. My personal favorite part of the concert was the very ending, where in the third movement ("Fuoco") of the Libra Sonatina, Partington ended in a funk style, slapping his thumb on the strings while tapping on the guitar. He even played the area near the headstock to create a wind-chime effect. Overall, I wish he would have taken more time to speak to the audience and describe the pieces in his words, but I still had a very enjoyable evening.

From our experiences in class, I noticed that he tuned by using the 5-0 method a couple times. I recognized a number of open chords (A major, C major) that he was playing, but it was very quick compared to how long we hold chords in class. We recently covered rest stroke and free stroke plucking last week, and I noticed he used more rest stroke in the Spanish style pieces, and almost none in the Bach suite. On several occasions, Partington used harmonics over the 7th and 12th frets, which I remember are the two easiest and clearest places to play harmonics. Lastly, it was great

to hear his use of rubato and dynamic changes and how effective they can be in otherwise repetitive melodies. I'll try to use this idea in my final exam performance in two weeks.