

## **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; (2) your perceptions of the performance; (3) 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:  
<http://music.asu.edu/events/index.php>

Additional concerts by ASU students may not be listed here, so please refer to my website for student recitals: [www.brendanlakemusic.com/](http://www.brendanlakemusic.com/) and go to the tab under “For Students”.

### **Requirements:**

1. Bring paper and a pen/pencil to the recital. I want you to 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 must 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 leave early, consider attending a different recital. As a general rule, student recitals last a little over an hour, while professional recitals will often take up to two hours. If the recital lasts longer than two hours, you're excused to leave, and please include that in your review.
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 I expect a university-level writing proficiency (grammar, spelling, formatting, paragraph structure, etc). If you have trouble writing papers or English isn't your first language, I would encourage you to consider ASU's tutoring resources:  
<https://studentsuccess.asu.edu/tutoring>

### **Helpful notes:**

1. If it's early in the semester and we haven't covered enough material for you to write a separate paragraph on how it relates to class or what terminology to use, do your best and I'll grade leniently on your comments. Expand the other two paragraphs 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 are unticketed, while professional guest artist concerts cost typically from \$5-20. Tickets are available at the ASU box office 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. I've included an example review below to help you understand what sort of analysis I'm looking for. Your observations may be drastically different than what I've written, and this is fine as long as they're truthful and apply to music performance. Other topics may include the performer's demeanor or mannerisms, his or her equipment, why they performed pieces in that particular order, what you liked, what you didn't like, what you wish would have happened, etc.
6. If you have any questions, always feel free to contact me.

**EXAMPLE:**

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. It was well attended, and 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 the time to speak with 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 7<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> 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.