

# A GUIDE to PROGRAMS and NOTES

Program notes give you an opportunity to share with your audience information about the pieces you are performing to educate them about the music and enhance their concert experience. They are a standard component of the classical concert experience, and are equally useful in the jazz idiom.

## **In this guide:**

1. General recital requirements and submission guidelines – for all students holding recitals.
2. Content
3. Style and formatting
4. Examples

## **1. GENERAL RECITAL REQUIREMENTS**

All students giving a recital must create and submit the following.

### **Required of all students:**

1. A list of the pieces you will be performing, in order, with authors and their dates of birth/death in parentheses. If there is an intermission include that in the list. Separate the work and the author's name with a tab.

Sonata No. 12 in F Major, K. 332	Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756-1791)
"Douce Ambiance"	Django Reinhardt (1910-1953)
Intermission	
Mercy, Mercy, Mercy	Josef Zawinul (1932-2007)
Lowlife	Ed Volker (1948- )

2. A list of all musicians (with names spelled correctly) and their instruments. Also indicate which songs they are performing with you, if they are not performing on all works.

### **Required of all undergraduates holding senior or culminating recitals:**

Written program notes discussing each work being performed.

See Program Note Basics, Content, and Style sections, and examples.

### **Optional:**

1. Artist biography. Write your bio in the third person. Limit to 500 words.
2. Short acknowledgements. These may be written in the first person and should not exceed 300 words.
3. Program notes (graduate and non-degree recitals)

## SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

- Use Microsoft Word. Save as a separate document. Do not embed in email or use a cloud-based file.
- There is no need to format other than using the styles included here.
- Write notes for each work you are performing.
- Each entry should be at least 100 words in length. Notes usually range between 200-600 words per piece.
- Assume that you are writing for an adult audience with a modest degree of music literacy.
- Use a more formal, third person voice. It is appropriate to use the first person if you are the author of the work.
- **All writing must be your own.** Do not cut and paste from Internet sources. Cite the quoted materials as you would in any academic paper.
- Notes must first be approved by your teacher before they are submitted to the office.
- Check and double-check artist names and dates, grammar, spelling, and other technicalities before submitting your notes. Asking others to read your draft is useful. The UNO Writing Center is also available to help you.
- After your notes are approved by your teacher, email the Word file to the Music office. See the office for the specific email address.
- **Notes are due in the office at least 14 days before your recital.** This allows time for the programs to be formatted and revisions – if needed – to be made. **This is a non-negotiable deadline.**
- Failure to submit notes on time is cause for your recital to be canceled.

## 2. CONTENT: WHAT TO INCLUDE IN YOUR PROGRAM NOTES

Program notes offer factual information about the work, the author, and the specific performance. They enhance the audience's listening experience and appreciation of the work and the performance. Notes tell the audience about the composer, place the work in context, and offer details about the music's structure to help the audience be more informed listeners.

HOW TO START: What should you write about? First, ask yourself what's important or unique about your selections. Start by researching the works. The Oxford Music Online, available through the UNO Earl K. Long Library, is the access point for the digital Grove Music Dictionary and related resources. This is a top music research source.

Print versions of the Grove dictionaries (*New Grove Dictionary of Jazz*, *New Grove Dictionary of American Music*, *New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*) are available at the library, as are numerous other reference works on Western music and jazz history, theory and analysis, and biography. While generic Internet searches can often be productive, beware of accuracy and reliability of sources. Again, do not cut and paste; your words must be your own.



Here are some sample questions to ask and areas to consider before you begin writing. If you are the composer, ask yourself these questions. This is not an exhaustive list, just a start.

#### Historical:

- What is the genre or style?
- When was the piece written? For whom? Why?
- Under what circumstances was it written? What was happening in the composer's life?
- How does this piece fit in to the composer's overall output?
- Is it a part of a larger set of work?
- If the piece is an aria from an opera or oratorio, what is the dramatic scene?
- Where/when did it premier? Who first performed the work?
- How has the piece been received by audiences initially? Over time?
- Has it achieved fame in the modern musical world? Why?

#### Interpretive/Theoretical:

- What is the form of the piece? (Fugue, sonata, 12-bar blues, aria, theme and variations, etc.?)
- What are the formal characteristics?
- Is there a recurring motive or idea?
- Are there recurring or notable dynamic contrasts?
- What is (are) the rhythmic structure(s)? Are they interesting and for what reason?
- Is there anything interesting in the choice of key or meter?
- What is the harmonic language? (Tonal, atonal, diatonic, chromatic, modal, etc.?)
- What are the characteristics of the composer's style generally and at the time the work was composed?
- Are these stylistic characteristics reflected in this piece? In what way?
- Does the work reflect a departure from the composer's normal style or a change in the compositional method? In what way?
- Does the piece conform to stylistic and compositional norms for the genre within the historical period? If not, what are the variations? Why?
- Does the composer utilize techniques, capabilities, or sounds unique to the instrument?
- What is the relationship between the voice and accompaniment, or among the instruments?
- Is this an arrangement or transcription?
- How does the work specifically pertain to your instrument?
- What does the title suggest?
- For works with texts/lyrics: How do the words relate to the music? Form? Key? Meter? Rhythmic structures?

**ORGANIZING:** After you've researched your pieces and authors, decide on the most important points relevant to the audience's understanding of the work. Organize your points just as you would in any short paper.

**TIP:** One common approach is to introduce the composer and the piece, and then walk the audience through the work sequentially, noting the most important characteristics and calling attention to what to listen for. Composition students may also describe their own influences and motives, as well as discuss the structural points and other characteristics.

#### OTHER CONSIDERATIONS:

- Focus on the work itself. Do not rely on general information about the historical context, genre, or composer.

- When discussing your insights, maintain your objectivity and remain in the third person. For example, write “In the third movement, the motive might be interpreted as...” rather than “I think the motive in the third movement represents...”
- Writers often want to explain why a piece was selected; this is acceptable only if relevant to the work itself and if accompanied by sufficient information about the work and composer. Again, use the third person.
- If you are the composer, it is appropriate to discuss the piece in the first person. Provide information about the structure and musical roots of the song as well as describing your motives or influences.
- Assume your audience has a modest degree of music literacy. You don’t need to list the make-up of a standard string quartet, for instance, unless there is something unique in your particular circumstance. Also assume that the audience will deduce information that is obvious or given in the title. For instance, you do not have to write a sentence stating the work is a sonata in D major if the title is “Sonata in D Major.”

### 3. STYLE and FORMAT

This is a listing of a few of the most common style elements for both jazz and classical performance notes. For more details, see the special sections below and check with your applied teacher and the Music office. We generally follow the *Chicago Manual of Style* and Kate L. Turabian’s *A Manual for Writers of Research Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*.

Note: the term “roman” means regular, or non-italicized type.

#### A. TITLES

Begin your notes for each work with a header that includes the title and the composer, separated by a comma. This is different than the style used for your list of songs.

Sonata No. 12 in F Major, K. 332, Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart

“Douce Ambiance,” Django Reinhardt

“Maria” from *West Side Story*, Leonard Bernstein and Stephen Sondheim

#### Two key points:

Different types of titles have different style rules.

Titles of works are treated differently when used as a header than in the main text.

1. **Short compositions, songs, and recordings.** These use **quotation marks** when used in both the header and the text.

“Douce Ambiance” Django Reinhardt

“Le Colibri” Ernest Chausson (1855 – 1899)

Hugh Masakela is perhaps best known for his hit, “Grazing in the Grass.”

**Works that are part of a larger work**, such as arias, also follow this style.



2. **Long musical compositions, movies, albums.** These use **italics** when used in both the header and the text.

*A Love Supreme* (The work is both a multi-movement work and an album title.)

David Anderson's *Seven Bass Duets* is a welcome addition to the limited canon of contemporary work written for the instrument.

3. **Musical works that include the genre in the title**, such as a sonata, symphony, or concerto. These use **roman type in the header**, but use **italics in the text**. Also, if these works have a popular name, that name should be referred to in quotation marks in both header and text.

As a header:

Sonata in D Minor, K. 1, L. 366, Domenico Scarlatti

In the text:

Scarletti's *Sonata in D Minor, K. 1, L. 366* is a wonderfully light work that includes several odd modulations.

Ravel's *Sonatine* exemplifies the composer's use of impressionistic style within a classical form.

4. **A work that includes the genre in the title, but is also part of a larger work:**

In a header, use roman type for the selection, and italics for the larger work:

Prelude and Fugue No. 21 in B-flat Major, from *The Well-Tempered Clavier*.

The Fountain of the Acqua Paola, Op. 7, No. 3, from *Roman Sketches*.

In the text: Use quotation marks for the selection, and italics for the larger work:

The "Prelude and Fugue No. 21 in B-flat Major," from *The Well-Tempered Clavier*, is a standard work for solo keyboard by Johann Sebastian Bach.

"The Fountain of the Acqua Paola, Op. 7, No. 3," from *Roman Sketches*, was inspired by a popular fountain that provided citizens with clean drinking water.

## OTHER TITLE STYLE RULES

**Titles in a foreign language:** In general, do **not** use italics.

**Numbering movements within a work:** If you are playing all the movements in a piece, list each movement on a separate line, but do not number them. If you are playing selected movements, list them separately, and number them using small Roman numerals.

All: Sonata No. 12 in F Major, K. 332, Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart

Allegro

Adagio

Allegro assai

Selected: Concerto No. 2 in G Minor, Op. 8, RV 315, "L'estate" (Summer), Antonio Vivaldi

i. Allegro non molto

iii. Presto

**Tempo:** If a movement has a title and tempo indication, list the title followed by a colon, then the tempo in lower case.

Scherzo: allegro molto

Finale: allegro non troppo, ma con fuoco

## GENERAL STYLE GUIDELINES

**ABBREVIATIONS:** In general, don't abbreviate. Write out the names of states, World War II, and so forth.

**AUTHORS or ARRANGERS:** List all authors and arrangers. Do not list a band as the author. Do not assume that the recorded version you are familiar with was written by that artist. Look it up.

"Like a Lover" Dori Caymmi and W. Nelson Motta

English lyrics by Alan and Marilyn Bergman

"You Taught My Heart to Sing" McCoy Tyner and Sammy Cahn

Arrangement by John Smith

### CAPITALIZATION:

**In a title:** In titles, capitalize nouns, pronouns, verbs, subordinating conjunctions (as, because, that) and adjectives. Do not capitalize articles, coordinating conjunctions, or prepositions with fewer than five letters. (a, an, and, but, or, for, nor, on, at, from, etc.)

The Fool on the Hill

In a Sentimental Mood

Nine Below Zero

**In a text:** Beware of misusing capital letters in the text; the rule of thumb is to only capitalize proper nouns and adjectives derived from proper nouns.

**DATES:** Spell out. "Nineteenth century," not "19<sup>th</sup> century."

**FOREIGN WORDS AND TERMS:** Generally, if the word isn't in the Merriam-Webster dictionary, italicize it in the text. Use roman in the title.

**KEYS:** Write out key signs rather than using the  $\flat$  or  $\sharp$  sign. Hyphenate the flat and sharp designations.

C sharp

B-flat major

F-sharp minor

**MAJOR, MINOR:** The words "major" and "minor" are capitalized when used as proper nouns, and not capitalized when used as descriptive words.

Bowen's "New Fugue in G Minor" is a good example of how transposition (in this case, from the key of A major) can alter the tone of a piece.

### MOVIES, RECORDED WORKS, TELEVISION PROGRAMS:

Movies, albums (not songs), radio and TV programs should be italicized when referred to in the text.

Miles Davis' *Kind of Blue* was very influential in the development of modern jazz.

This work was based on the theme from *Apocalypse Now*.

NUMBERS: In general, write out numbers under ten.

PUNCTUATION: Commas and periods almost always go inside quotation marks.

### **SPECIAL NOTES FOR CLASSICAL PERFORMERS**

CATALOG CITATIONS: Catalog citations appear in the titles of some works, most commonly in works by Bach, Mozart, and Schubert. Use a capital letter followed by a period, a space, and a number. An exception is BWV for Bach, which is used without periods.

Fantasy in C Minor, K. 475 (or KV. 475)

Mass No. 6 in E-flat Major, D. 950

Toccatina and Fugue in D Minor, BWV 565

COMMON NAMES: Include common names after the official title, in quotation marks:

Symphony No. 41 in C Major, "Jupiter"

Symphony No. 8 in B Minor, "Unfinished"

### OPUS, NUMBER:

#### **In a title:**

When opus and number are part of a title, they are abbreviated and capitalized, separated by a comma.

Op. 15, No. 3

**In a text:** In a narrative, commas are used as follows:

*Sonata in D Major, Op. 30*, was composed in 1842.

*Sonata in E-flat Major, Op. 15, No. 3*, was first performed in 1853.

### **SPECIAL NOTES for VOCALISTS**

**LYRICS:** Lyrics are most often included in the program when they are sung in a language other than English, with the original language accompanied by English translations. If you wish to include English lyrics, consult with your applied teacher.

**TRANSLATIONS:** Translations are usually listed side by side, with English in one column and the original language in the other. Please do not put your text in columns when submitting your notes; the office will do that.

Translations can either accompany the notes for each work or be listed in a separate section following your notes. Space is usually a factor in making this decision. Please discuss with your instructor as you are preparing your notes.