

I. GENERAL PURPOSE/AUDIENCE

Music has two different types of writing – scholarly research writing and more casual, practical writing – each with its own audience and conventions. Research writing explores a topic and makes an argument based on evidence from both primary and secondary sources. **Audiences** include students, professors, scholars, and performers. Practical writing is geared more toward the general public. Other **audiences** include musicians, music historians and researchers, concert audiences, businesses, and nonprofit organizations.

II. TYPES OF WRITING

- Response papers (personal reflections)
- Concert program notes
- Reviews/criticism/performance study (evaluation, commentary)
- Journal articles (research and analysis)
- Press releases (publicity)
- Grant proposals
- Term papers/research

III. TYPES OF EVIDENCE

Primary sources: Materials that come directly from the piece, composer, performer, or time period you are studying. Examples include musical scores, recordings of performances, letters, reviews, and newspapers.

Secondary sources: Material that analyzes, synthesizes, or evaluates an event, which may support an argument. Examples include books, articles, reviews, documentaries, or newspapers about the event.

Some sources, such as newspapers and reviews, can be both primary *and* secondary sources. For example, if a musicologist were writing about the public's initial rejection of Stravinsky's *Rite of Spring*, he or she might cite reviews from the time period as primary sources.

IV. WRITING CONVENTIONS

- In academic writing, use specialized vocabulary from music theory and history, but in practical writing, do not use specialized vocabulary that would be foreign to a layperson unless you define it.
- Compositions are characterized by detailed, specialized titles
- First person is acceptable in reflective pieces and in grant proposals but used sparingly in reviews.
- Use third person in press releases, program notes, or research papers.
- Reviews should be fair and analytical, not based on personal taste
- Past tense is used for review or analysis of a piece of music
- Active voice and active verbs are preferred
- Specific examples are used for support

V. COMMON TERMS AND CONCEPTS

VI. CITATION STYLE

- MLA (Modern Language Association), CMS (Chicago Manual of Style) or Turabian
- Citation styles are up to individual teacher, but Author-Date System for in-text citations is often used
- Bibliographies are not included for reviews and less formal writings but often required for class assignments
- Footnotes or end notes are up to discretion of author, instructor, and/or editor/publisher

VII. RESEARCH SOURCES

The Garland Encyclopedia of World Music

The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians, 2nd ed.

RILM, *Répertoire International de Littérature Musicale* (Music bibliography)

<http://www.rilm.org/>

Wingell, Richard J. *Writing about Music: An Introductory Guide*. New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1990.