

Final Virtuoso History



Instructions

Write a history in which you describe and analyze the musical style of a 19th-century performer of your choice.

Imagine you are writing this history for inclusion in an anthology about 19th-century performers aimed at college-level music students. Your goal in the history should be to describe the performer's musical style and explain why audiences and critics enjoyed that performer's style.

Your description and analysis should be based on nineteenth-century reviews of the performer, supplemented where available by your own analysis of that performer's repertoire.

You will be graded on the following:

Argument: Your history should have a central argument about your performer and their style, as well as, potentially, why the performer used that style. The argument should be interesting to your audience and true.

Evidence: You should back your argument up with information from your primary sources

Citations: You should cite your reviews and any secondary sources using footnotes and a bibliography. The citations should be formatted using the Chicago Manual of Style.

Organization: Your history should be organized into paragraphs, with each paragraph containing one central idea that is summarized in the topic sentence. The paragraphs should flow from one to the next. You should not use five-paragraph form.

Style and audience appeal: Your writing should be aimed at college-level music students and should appeal to that group. You can and should write creatively, using evocative imagery (fueled by your sources), direct sentences, and other methods to appeal to a broad readership.

Submission: The history should be 5-8 pages, double-spaced, in 12-point Times New Roman font. There should not be excessive typos.

Suggested Steps:

1. Read the reviews; take notes of any patterns you see.

Answer any of the following questions:

What special techniques did the performer use?

What was their sound or tone quality like?

Are there comparisons to other notable performers? How is your performer similar to or different from those other performers?

Are there any descriptions of audience reactions? If so, who reacted and in what manner? Is there any indication that the audience liked any particular style of playing or singing?

Are there non-musical aspects to the performer's style? (behavior, manner of engaging with the audience, dress)

Are there expectations or prejudices that the critic seems to come to the concert with? How does the critic report those prejudices and how do they affect the critic's writing?

2. Listen to selections of the performer's repertoire. For performers like Liszt, Paganini, and Chopin, who wrote their own music, you can listen to those compositions. For performers like Schumann, Greenfield, and Lind, who specialized in performing the works of others, you can listen to any pieces mentioned in the reviews.

Answer any of the following questions:

What special techniques would be needed to play this piece?

Why might an audience member be impressed when listening to this piece?

Is there any special style that you see across multiple pieces? (like a lot of loud or fast pieces, a lot of delicate, quiet pieces, and so forth)

3. Decide on what your overall argument will be about the performer's musical style.

The argument should be interesting to your imagined audience (college-level performers) and should reflect the answers to parts 1-2. You may not be able to cover all of your insights in your history and may instead need to pick the most interesting subset.

4. Write your body paragraphs. Each paragraph should start with a topic sentence giving the sub-argument for that paragraph. The topic sentence should be followed by detailed evidence from your reviews, including short, direct quotes and summaries or detailed evidence from the music, including descriptions.

(You should reach this stage by week 5, when you will submit one paragraph online and workshop it in class)

5. Put your body paragraphs in order. Rewrite your topic sentences so that each smoothly transitions from the previous one.

6. Write an introduction that briefly gives some background on your performer and gives your overall argument. Be specific in your introduction rather than broad (i.e. write about your performer and the 19th-century, not about all music or all history)

7. Write a conclusion that restates your argument and suggests again why this performer and this argument is important.

8. Read and revise!

(This is the step you should reach by week 6, when you submit a draft for peer review)

9. Proof read

Before you submit, make sure your citation formatting looks good and that you don't have typos.

Points 15

Submitting a file upload

File Types doc, docx, and pdf

Due	For	Available from	Until
May 17 at 5pm	Everyone	-	Jun 6 at 5pm

+ [Rubric](#)