

Piano concert essay sample

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On April 8th 2004 I attended the “ Music for Piano” concert featuring Bette Coulson and Philip Seward at the Columbia College Concert Hall. The show was only about an hour. Mr. Seward and Mrs. Coulson played five pieces together and then each play on solo. This was my first piano concert, of any kind, that I have attended. This was something new for me.

The concert included seven different pieces. Claude Debussy composed three of them, *La puerta del vino*, *Le Vent dans la Plaine*, and *Lisle Joyous L. 106*. Anton Dvoark composed the opening and closing songs, *Slavic Dance Op. 46 #1* and *Salvonic Dance Op. 46 #5*. The piece by Samuel Barber was called *Souvenirs* and was played by both Seward and Coulson and their hands over lapped in it. One of the pieces was composed by Columbia’s very own Philip Seward and preformed solely by his self. Although different people composed the pieces the concert was nicely and evenly put together like a sandwich. It started with a Dvorak piece, the bun, then went into Seward’s the cheese, then into three Debussy’s, which could represent three different types of meat in the sandwich. Then after that a Barber piece symbolizes the lettuce and then the concert ended with the “ bun” another Dvorak piece.

The titles of the pieces fit each of them well. The title of a piece is a great clue to both the performer and audience what the composer was trying to portray. I read the program before the show started, so as to get better idea of what the songs might sound like just by their name. I was later surprised to hear that the composer did write what I expected in regards to the song title. Even pieces with more than one part need different names because although they are built to join together they still can stand on their own alone and each have their own feel to them.

I was very intimidated by the skill and ability of Seward and Coulson. They of course have been playing for many years and have lots of experience under their belt, as for me I have been playing for a very short fifteen weeks. Both seemed to stay together well, like it was just one person with four hands playing. Each played with the same dynamics, like if the tempo picked up they both kept moving forward, or if it got quiet then they would play the keys lighter. When they played together one person would give the count off and head nod and one player would always turn the page. Seward and Coulson were a well-put together duet. They each played a solo piece in which neither of them used music; but instead trusted themselves that they knew it by heart.

Since there were only two performers it was easy to compare their style of playing to each other. While Seward sat completely on the chair Coulson sat at the end of her seat like taught in basic piano classes. Seward's hands barely lifted off the keys before going into another part of his piece, Three Preludes. This little break allowed the audience to realize it was the beginning of a new segment but still part of same large piece.

All of the pieces went together well enough to make a good concert but they differed in tempo and dynamics to make it interesting. The first piece Slavic Dance was up beat and exciting and it brought the audience into the show. I heard the piece and thought to myself ok the show has now begun. I think it is a good idea no matter what kind of performance it is, the start should be exciting and welcoming. The second piece, Three Preludes, was very calm and relaxing to the ears. At some points the song did get louder but still had a

nice legato feel throughout. La puerta del vino, was the third piece and was even quieter than the last, it sounded like a mystery piece. When a song is quiet and soft it make the audience listen harder because you do not want to miss it. The fourth piece was another duet and was up beat and woke everyone up from the short “ nap” of quiet and softness form the last two-piece.

The next piece Lisle Joyous L. 106 was similar to the last piece but wasn't as quick moving. Souvenirs was the second to last piece and was not only great but was fun to watch because the way it is written the performance are constantly getting their hands mixed up. The last piece was almost the same as the opening song but just a different section from it. I really like it because it was fast, fun, and very articulate. It had a lot a repeats or similar phrases so after a while you felt as if you know the song and could hum along with it. Not only is it good to open on a quick, jumpy song but also I think it is a good to close the show with one. This way the audience will go away still humming the piece as opposed to a slow love piece.

Although piano concerts are not really my favorite type of performance to watch, I enjoyed the concert. Watching the concert was great because as a child I would just listen to piano music and never have I ever gone to a piano concert. Being able to see the performers flow with the piece and watch their hands move up and down the keys really makes the music sound different and is good to see.