PROGRAMS AND PROGRAM NOTES
February, 2008

PART I: PROGRAM NOTES

Program notes are intended to enhance the anticipation, enjoyment and knowledge of an audience attending a concert. For that reason, they should deal with the works to be performed in a clear, organized, and evocative manner.

Program notes are partly a matter of research scholarship, but much of the writing on a particular work should be from the perspective of you as a performer and what your knowledge is of the work.

For example, in a Sonata movement, one does not have to cite sources that inform us that the movement is in a major key with five variations on a rondo theme which is in triple meter. All of this should be part of the knowledge any performer should know before performing the work. In almost every case, you know more about the works you are performing than anyone, so provide your audience with the framework of the piece, relevant but not random facts about the composer, and a description of the piece that creates anticipation and knowledge for a listener who will be experiencing it for the first (or nearly the first) time.

Program notes should:
- Provide the reader with some information about the composer which is relevant to the work being performed.
- Frame the work in reference to similar works or other works by the same composer.
- Discuss the genesis of the work if it is relevant and/or interesting (i.e., when was it composed? Where? Why? For Whom?).
- Summarize the form of the work in a way that is easy to understand to a general reader.
- Provide the reader with an understanding of the text and drama of the work (as in the case of an aria or a programmatic piece of music).

Program notes should not:
- Give random or generic facts about composers for their own sake.
- Be written in dry "facts only" sentences.
- Discuss the entire output of the composer or a period of music without tying these facts to the works performed.
- Be written in the first person.
- Give elaborate formal analysis of the works performed.

Keep in mind that program notes are intended to educate, but also to entertain. They need to be organized, cohesive, and need maintain their focus on the works performed.

PART II: PROGRAM PAGE

In concert and recital programs, works should be given their full formal titles, including key and opus or catalogue number (e.g., Sonata in F Major for Violin and Piano, Op. 24), but not the "popular" name or title (e.g., "Spring Sonata"), since it did not originate with the composer but rather the publisher. The "popular" title can be included in the program notes, along with an explanation for the appellation.

Be consistent with using titles in either their original language or in English translation. For example, if you choose "La fille aux cheveux de lin" rather than "The Girl with the Flaxen Hair," also use "Lieder eines fahrenden Gesellen" rather than "Songs of a Wayfarer."

Please note in the above example that capitalizations of words should conform to the grammatical rules of their particular language and only conform to the rules of English capitalization when the language used is English. Please consult the following texts for exact directions about formal construction, capitalization, etc.,:

Irvien, Demar. *Writing about Music: A Style Book for Reports and Theses*.
          Seattle, University of Washington Press, 1968.

Turabian, Kate. *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations,* Seventh Edition. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003.

A sample program page and program notes are provided at the end of this document.

PART III: TEXTS AND TRANSLATIONS

If you are performing works that include a text in a foreign language (e.g., if you are a singer singing in French), you will need to provide a page of texts and translations to the audience. This page should be submitted to the jury committee when you submit your program page and program notes for review, but you will need to print it yourself for your recital. The music office will not print your Texts and Translations page.

In preparing your Text and Translations page, please conform to the following rubric:
- The original text and its translation should appear in two adjacent columns with the original language in the left column and the translation in the right column at the same level on the page.
- Titles of works should appear in boldface in both columns in their respective languages. Authors of the texts should also appear in both columns, but composers do not need to be listed.
- Titles should be capitalized according to the grammatical rules of the original language (in Column 1) and according to the rules of English (in Column 2). E.g., "Après un rêve" in the French Column 1 and "After a Dream" in the English Column 2.
- The first line of each line of the text should be capitalized in each language.

AVOID

- **"(Insert Composer's name) father wanted him to be a lawyer."**
- **poorly copied notes (crooked on the page, ink setting too light)**
- **missing accents in foreign language songs (Use Character Map in System Tools)**
- **too many type fonts, sizes - one font, one size, bold titles are fine**
- **use of italics unless part of the poem as italics are harder to read (However, in the notes, when titles of works are used within paragraphs, follow conventions for use of italics or quotation marks. The Turabian book is a good source for these conventions.)**
- **cut and pasted translations (don't copy translations from different sources and paste them together, retype it)**
- **too small a type font - 8 pt is about the limit**
- **page breaks within one song's translation - turning pages during a song is louder than one thinks when 100+ people are doing it**