A Brief Guide to Writing Concert Program Notes

The aim:
This guide aims to give a sequence of performance and background, in order to appreciate the music and the performance.

External Elements
1. Cover page - the concert heading gives the time, date, year and place of the concert, eg

   Sydney University
   Conservatorium of Music
   Presents
   2014 Master of Music Recital Series
   JOHN BROWN, clarinet
   with
   SUSANNE DOE, piano
   3.00pm
   10 April 2014
   Verbrugghen Hall

1. Contents Page
The order of the program:

For each work, include the formal title, with key ("F-sharp Major" not "F# maj") and musicological number (BWV, Hob., Op., K. etc) and the composer's name. The subheading should list the movement titles or tempos. If the composer's full name and dates are listed later in the Notes, then the surname is sufficient here. In word processing programs, under 'symbols' use diacritics (e.g., "Fauré" not "Faure").

If your performance is a premiere, it should be listed in brackets below the title: this records an important event.

List your accompanist and any soloists under the works in which they appear. If you have an ensemble, list just its title. The full roster of players is given at the end of the programme notes, e.g.,

Programme
1. Sonata Pathétique for Piano in C Minor Op.13, Beethoven
   Grave: Allegro molto e con brio
   Adagio cantabile
   Rondo: Allegro

1. Partita in A Minor BWV 1013, Bach

INTERVAL (10 minutes)
3. *Eintritt: Nicht zu schnell*
4. *Jäger auf der Lauer: Höchst lebhaft*

Acknowledge any copyright or other special permissions you had to obtain.

Include a line - Please switch off your mobile phones or devices.

**Final Notes**
Lastly in your programme notes, cover) give full roster of its members, each listed under heading of the instrument played. e.g.,

**Goldner String Quartet**
Dene Olding -- Violin I
Dimity Hall -- Violin II
Irina Morozova -- Viola
Julian Smiles -- Violoncello

Technical Assistance – John Smith

The University of Sydney, Conservatorium of Music.

Special thanks to my mother, for her enduring patience.

**Preparing and Presenting the Programme Notes**

**5.1 Researching the Notes**
In preparing, check composition dates in the composer's thematic catalogue or in the Works List in the composer's entry in a music dictionary (e.g., *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*) and verify music bibliography and/or indexes (e.g. *RILM*, or *Music Index*, etc).
It is preferable not to use footnotes. If you are using a direct quotation, citation of the source in the text is required.

**5.2 Sections and Headings**
Divide the Notes into a separate section for each work. Place your name as author of the Notes at the end of the program. Next, add the formal title of the work, its index number, and its year of composition, e.g.,

"Täuschung," D. 911, No. 18. (1826), Schubert
from *Die Winterreise*

**5.3 Vocal Works**
A Note on any vocal work should include its text in full (or a translation of the foreign-language text). E.g., Fallen veils, op.6 for soprano, Raymond Hanson; words by D.G. Rossetti
Permission given by Ms A. Gleeson (Hanson estate), from composer’s manuscript materials held by the Sydney University, Conservatorium Library.

5.4 Form and Content of the Notes
If there is a descriptive title to the work, explain the title. Provide compositional and performance content. Also, illuminate the background of the work, how and when it came to be composed.

Finally, if it is an ensemble work, list the instrumentation, something many concertgoers enjoy having so they can search for instruments on the stage while they are listening.

FURTHER READING