Over the duration of this course I have learned a lot about music theory, observing a master player and appreciating different styles of music. I think this course exposed me to a variety of music that I wouldn’t normally come across. This course gave me the ability to critically watch and analyze musical performances. My musical background before taking this class was virtually nothing, but over the course of this semester I learned how to read and notate music, read tablature, how to identify different finger placements for the right and left hands, how to identify different music styles based on tempo and rhythm, and how to differentiate between good and bad players.

The first concert I attended was Edel Muñoz’s guitar recital on Sunday March 5th at Auer Hall. Muñoz is a native from Cuba who is world renowned and put on quite a show. Muñoz held the instrument upright at an angle and used a footstool to keep his left foot elevated. He used the P-I-M-A fingerings on his right hand to pluck strings and occasionally strummed. The first piece Muñoz played was the Sonata in A major composed by Domenico Scarlatti. This piece had largo tempo which means it’s beats-per-minute ranged from about 40 to 60. This piece reminded me of many famous Italian renaissance pieces for it had a similar rhythm and tempo. The second piece that he played was Prelude, Fugue, Allegro, by Bach. The way that Muñoz played this piece it
Krajsnik on Sunday, March 26th at Auer Hall. Zoran is a highly accomplished and decorated guitarist from Bosnia. According to Zoran’s bio he is not only a live performer of guitar, but is also a recording artist who has many CD’s out, both solo and collaborative. It was interesting to read up on the many accolades that Zoran has racked up over the years, in the bio provided on the back of my program. The first piece that Zoran
played was the *Sonata in A Minor*, by Johann Sebastian Bach. Zoran made a few mistakes playing this piece sometimes missing notes but otherwise played very well. I recognized the andante section of this piece as something that I have heard before, but overall I did not love this piece that much, as I felt it blends together with all the other Bach pieces I have heard and doesn’t possess enough energy as a whole. Zoran used P-I-M-A fingering on his right hand with the guitar crooked on his right leg at an angle. Zoran’s guitar had a little stand for itself so that he could keep it crooked inside of his leg. At one point during the show Zoran had to wipe the sweat from his guitar strings due to him playing the instrument so feverishly. Of all the pieces played by Zoran, my favorite was the *Alfonsina y el mar* by *Ariel Ramirez*. The tempo of this piece range from 100 to 120 beats per minute, and Zoran looked like he was putting in a lot of effort while playing, sweating profusely and scrunching up his face. This piece was chalk full of Latin influence and had its fair share of percussive effects used, with Zoran banging on the guitar’s body to mimic the effect of a drum. Zoran also used this percussive effect on the *Cielo Abierto* piece. I really loved this piece for it’s energy and difficulty to play. Zoran played this song with mastery incorporating harmonics to this flamenco song. The song had an extensive percussive section with Zoran beating on both the body and the strings of the instrument to mimic a percussion instrument. I recognized many sections of different pieces including the ending section of *Invierno porteño*, which sounded very familiar to me. Overall Zoran played very well but my concert going experience was anything but pleasant. The kids sitting behind me would not shut up and were obnoxiously laughing and eating very loudly while the other concert-goers in attendance seemed to be all sick, as I heard more coughing during this concert than any other one that I have ever attended.
The third concert that I attended was Carlo Fierens’ on Friday, April 14th and this was an extremely memorable one. This concert was particularly memorable because Carlo’s playing was accompanied by the presence of other musicians and a singer. The first piece Carlo played was with singer John Punt, and they performed songs from *My lute and I*, a piece I have never heard of before but one that I really enjoyed. I enjoyed this piece so much that I listened to the rest when I got home from the concert. The songs from *My Lute and I* were among my favorites of the entire concert. The song *Out of My Mind* from this piece was incredibly beautiful and tragic and was about a man’s regret about his relationship with a woman that he loved deeply. *Tangled* was also a personal favorite of mine with a lot of folksy rhythm in the guitar playing and overall was just a very musically appealing piece. Harmonics were used in abundance throughout the performance and percussive effects were used heavily when Carlo played alongside Celloist SeungAh Hong. The musical accompaniments really added to the performance as a whole. The pianist Aram Arakelyan played very well but the Celloist did not seem to be in tune with Carlo’s playing and it seemed obvious that she had not practice a lot beforehand. The end of the *Night Club* song was very recognizable to me as a tango song popular in movies and TV. Overall this was one of the better concerts that I have attended.

The final concert that I attended was Matthew Sutton’s recital on Wednesday, April 26th. Of all the performers that I attended Sutton seemed the most nervous. He kept the guitar crooked at a 45 degree angle with a foot stand, looking off to stage left with some sort of guitar stand to keep the guitar upright. Sutton used PIMI fingering for the majority of the performance but occasionally switched to PIMA and also incorporated strumming. In terms of effects Harmonics were used in abundance throughout the performance, which is something that has been consistently used in all of the performances and concerts that I have attended throughout the
semester. Overall I enjoyed the performance despite Sutton’s shakiness. A particularly touching piece was the Variations on a Theme by Mozart which featured tender melodies that were very pleasant to the ear. There was less coughing and a more respectful audience during this concert but there was an old lady in front of me who was incessantly snapping pictures with her shutter sounds on full volume so that was a bit of a disturbance.

I was very happy that this was a required component to this class despite this lengthy paper. I believe that attending these concerts has forced me to greatly appreciate musical performances as well as guitar as an art form. I can now critically analyze and observe musical performances and I believe this skill will not only help me as an observer but as a player as well.