This study investigated whether music specially written for people with cochlear implants (CIs) could be used to better pinpoint how the music listening experience for a CI was different to a normal hearing listener (NH). After the specially arranged live concert, focus groups were formed from audience volunteers (two groups each of CIs, NHs and a range of hearing assistant devices). The theme of musical features (MF) was reported most frequently for both NHs and CIs. Valence analysis identified no significant difference in positive comments about MF by CIs than NHs for the specially commissioned works. Spatialization, although reported infrequently, was considered important by some CI, NH and bimodal listeners (who use a cochlear implant and a hearing aid). Rhythm was enjoyed by both NH and CI groups, and percussion instruments liked more than other musical instruments, but more so by CIs. Bilateral and bimodal CIs expressed interest in optimizing the hearing assistance settings, but on several occasions, the optimization ended with turning the contralateral hearing aid off. The study identifies the possible critical role of familiarity in music enjoyment.