

# Learning from “Occasional” Writing

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In my first semester at Cornell University, my roommate was a senior, Henry Higuera.<sup>1</sup> Henry had been reviewing concerts for the town newspaper, the *Ithaca Journal*, and was tired of the job. He knew that I was interested in music, and shortly after the beginning of the semester he asked if I would like to review a concert of Bach’s keyboard music, played on harpsichord by Malcolm Bilson. I accepted happily, and ended up keeping the job for the next four years, writing one or two reviews a week.

The job got me two free tickets to every classical concert in town, along with a \$10 fee for each review. This helped me pay for records, books, beer, and other necessities. And it immediately gave me some kind of identity in my new community. It was the first time I had ever lived away from the house in Dallas where I grew up, the house where my mother had lived since she was sixteen. When I made the long ride to the Syracuse airport in December for my first trip home, I watched out the window, seeing mailbox after mailbox as we drove out into the countryside, almost every one with a white plastic box marked “Ithaca Journal.” My reviews went into each of those boxes. The sight was both reassuring and terrifying. For better or worse, I was known, in this strange way, in my new home.

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<sup>1</sup> This paper was written for the 1997 conference of the Society for Music Theory, meeting jointly with the American Musicological Society in Phoenix. I am grateful to Andrew Mead for proposing that I take part in a session, “Talking out of School,” on theorists’ relations to non-academic discursive settings.

I don't think there was anything unusual about my reviews, but there was no awkwardness in my first attempts. I had a reasonable conception of my task from the beginning. I was raised by professional classical musicians, and we always read and discussed John Ardoin's reviews in the Dallas newspaper. As I understood my task, in reviewing I had to address two audiences—those who had been at the concert and those who had not; of course my parents and I were familiar with both roles. For the first audience, I wanted to evoke memories of the concert and stimulate thoughts about the qualities of the experience; for the second audience, I wanted somehow to convey what it was like to be at the concert.

The reviews made demands on me quite different from those made in my college music courses. I had to focus on performance decisions, rather than writing primarily about compositions as I usually did in school. And I had to write about music based on my memories of live performance, which required that I develop my memory for performance style and nuance.

And most basically, I had to find my way quickly from musical experiences to language: I had to find language that was true to my experiences and that could also communicate with a wide range of readers. My readers seemed very real to me, even though I never saw most of them. (Actually I would have been terrified to meet them—I was shy, and frightened by unfamiliar adults.) I imagined my readers as vividly as I could, partly by drawing on my own experiences as a reader of reviews, partly by just trying to imagine a random group of ordinary people.

What kind of language could I use to address them? It was clear that the analytical vocabulary I used in theory classes would be inappropriate—most of my readers would never understand me. Historical information

about style could be useful, though much other music-historical information seemed irrelevant to the experiences I wanted to describe. But, while I avoided the types of language that I knew would fail, I did not feel any lack of words. I wrote partly out of the repertory of formulaic description that I knew from other writers' reviews, liner notes, and program notes, and sometimes I worked harder to find my own evocative language. Conversations about the concerts often stimulated my writing—if a good description came up in conversation with a friend, it would find its way into the review, and if I could not get something across in conversation, I would keep working at it later in my writing.

In my second year at Cornell, I was accepted to a week-long summer workshop on reviewing, held at Tanglewood. The faculty for the workshop included extraordinary writers on music—Edward T. Cone, David Hamilton, Robert Morgan, and Michael Steinberg. The class, which had about eight students, was also very fine. All the other students seemed alarmingly mature to me. I have forgotten now who they were, apart from Judith Shatin, attending as the critic for the *Princeton Town Topics*; she is now my colleague at the University of Virginia.

Steinberg, who organized the workshop, had also arranged for the humorist Roy Blount, Jr. to teach one class halfway through the week. He was to evaluate our reviews from his special perspective as a skillful writer with no musical background. He went through the reviews bit by bit, pointing out passages that worked and did not work for him, and repeating, again and again, that what worked was figurative language. Figurative language made the successful passages good, and when passages were weak, what they needed was figurative language. Reviewing, apart from the musically specialized aspects, was mainly a matter of figurative language. And

we students all needed more figurative language. I remember thinking that he said the phrase "figurative language" absurdly often, declaiming it each time with great excitement, but I also thought that he was right. Blount's class showed me something about my own writing that I knew but had never before taken as central. I was aware that my reviews contained figurative language, but I had never before thought of it as a kind of Essence of Reviewing.

In writing a new review for the next day's class, I wrote as beautifully and artfully as I could, asking of each sentence what turns of figurative language could make it more vivid. The review was well received in class, highly praised by Morgan and Hamilton, and you can probably imagine that this praise reinforced Blount's lesson. (No doubt Morgan and Hamilton forgot this brief moment of their busy careers almost immediately; as you see, I still remember it.)

Over the next two years, I began to tire of reviewing. Being known in that way, having my judgments exposed in public, had its disadvantages. Other people had their opinions, too, and I found it painful to discuss disagreements with faculty, graduate students, audience members, and people completely unknown to me who occasionally wrote letters to the *Journal*. For a while my friend Martin Goldray heard weekly, in his lessons with Bilson, about the good and bad points of my latest reviews, and brought back reports to me. This was fascinating, but nerve-racking. (Actually, the interaction put all three of us in odd positions, something I appreciate now more than I did then.) I longed for the option of keeping my musical responses to myself, and I was relieved, by the time I graduated, to stop writing journalistic criticism. But the experience of writing reviews had consequences for me. I took reviews seriously—my parents and I always had, at home, and I saw no reason to regard

description of musical experiences as a trivial or unchallenging activity. And my teachers at Cornell allowed me to treat reviewing as a serious activity: they reacted thoughtfully to my reviews and gave me no reason to think of them as less serious or difficult than my school work. I took away from this a sense that there are different ways to write about music, with various goals and audiences, and that different achievements are possible in different genres, using the characteristic linguistic tools of those genres.

And of course I took away Blount's point about figurative language. I took it into an undergraduate thesis on figurative language in Debussy's journalistic criticism, with my supervisor Jim Webster's blessings. I traced Debussy's oppositions between natural and mechanical metaphors, tried to articulate the ambivalence in his recurring figures of spectacle, and identified passages where his figuration seemed to take flight, becoming itself a source of intense pleasure, an analog rather than a description of musical pleasure.

When I visited Princeton, in the course of choosing a graduate program, I told Harold Powers the subject of my thesis. He expressed consternation, and asked why a theorist was writing about someone as anti-theoretical as Debussy. I felt, but did not dare express, my own consternation in response. I thought of technical theory as one kind of theory, and I thought my work on Debussy's metaphors was another kind of theory, and I wondered whether some people thought that one kind somehow excluded the other. I had managed to complete my undergraduate education without accepting, or even fully noticing, the familiar hierarchies of composition over performance, of music-analytical language over more literary description, of academic writing over writing-out-of-school.



More recently, beginning in 1992, I have undertaken another kind of occasional writing, creating program notes for chamber music concerts, and have also sometimes guided graduate students in writing program notes.<sup>2</sup> As with reviewing, this requires me to find language that will be helpful in relation to live performances, but the specific tasks and audiences are different. As I understand it, my main task is to address members of the audience who will read my notes in the minutes before the performances; I also want the notes to be stimulating for those who read them only after the concert is over, but this is less important to me. I write assuming that my readers do not know the pieces they are about to hear, but also assuming that they will listen attentively. I try to give them words that will help them notice qualities of the music they hear. I want, somehow, to put the audience in a better frame of mind to follow and enjoy the events of the concert.

One consequence of this attitude is obvious: it is useless, in light of these goals, to give descriptions that most audience members cannot relate to the sounds they hear. So, as in reviewing, I try to minimize the vocabulary of technical analysis in my program notes.

Another consequence is subtler but, I believe, equally important. In general, I try to minimize sequential descriptions of events within a movement. This is partly because they might frustrate some listeners. But

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<sup>2</sup> The notes have been for Charlottesville's Tuesday Evening Concert Series, which sponsors several concerts by visiting chamber groups during the school year, and the Albemarle Chamber Music Festival, which, during the happy years of its existence, brought together local and visiting musicians for a short series each June.

actually, some listeners could undoubtedly retain simple sequential descriptions and match them to the music. For that matter, at the concerts I attend, a fair number of people read their programs during the performances, and they could easily read a sequential description as the music unfolds. However, to the extent that listeners match sequential descriptions to a performance, I think a certain pleasure of matching may replace the pleasures of surprise and discovery that characterize attentive listening.

Suppose, for instance, that a movement begins quietly and then abruptly enters a louder section. If someone reads, in the program note, that the piece begins quietly and then becomes noisy, I fear they may respond to the noisy section by thinking something like this: "Ah! Here it is, just when it should be! Now, what's supposed to be next?"—a response that seems unmusical to me. I would prefer, in such a case, to tell listeners that a movement uses extremes of volume, thereby identifying a certain aspect of the music as salient, and then to let the audience encounter the sequence of events though listening. Since common formal types such as sonata form and rondo involve sequential patterning of events, identification of the formal pattern of a movement invites listeners to engage in a kind of matching; I sometimes mention formal types, but I prefer not to emphasize them. Here is a description from 1993 that reflects these concerns overtly:

Despite its dissonance and chromaticism, [Ligeti's Quartet No. 1] moves through a sequence of simple, vivid gestures, and is not difficult to follow. Each section works almost obsessively with a basic idea and texture, and the contrasts are stark. One might think, early on, that the piece will consist entirely of lines moving in parallel major or minor seconds; but wait and see. It seems, a little way into the piece, that the structure will be familiar, moving from an opening al-

legro through a slow movement and scherzo and then, presumably, to a finale; again, wait and see.

This description tells listeners that they will hear a series of contrasting sections, and that the contrasts will be clear; that is, it tells them to listen for marked contrasts and to use them as cues to a change of section. It tells them to listen for some simple, strangely persistent relation of lines at the opening, and then to listen for some undescribed departure from that initial norm. And, dipping into chronology a bit, it invites them to notice the apparently ordinary pattern of movement-types at the outset, so that they can learn by listening how the piece goes on to deviate from the conventional pattern. The "wait and see" locution strikes me, now, as coarsely didactic, but it remains, inexplicitly, as an injunction that I hope my notes can always convey.

Intriguingly, given its centrality in academic analysis, the patterning of key relations is an aspect of music that many listeners find particularly elusive. Because I am trying to limit my language to words that can shape the readers' listening experiences, I mention key relations very rarely. The statement that a new theme is in the dominant, for instance, is a paradigm of the kind of description that most people cannot use as they listen.

For students attempting to write program notes, it is very difficult to break away from the habits of detailed sequential description and detailed enumeration of changes of key. Those are the descriptive resources they have learned in school and, deprived of those resources, they sometimes feel they have nothing left to say. But of course there is a lot to say.

In live performances of chamber music, it is especially easy to pay attention to interactions of instruments, and often my descriptions center on that aspect. Here is

my description of the Mozart Clarinet Quintet, almost all about texture:

Of course the clarinet will not blend with a string quartet,<sup>3</sup> and in the middle movements of the Quintet, Mozart mostly writes for clarinet solo with string accompaniment, occasionally giving a structurally subordinate passage to strings alone. But the first movement is brilliant in its integration of the clarinet into a chamber ensemble, allowing for its distinctness but permitting the strings to establish their individuality as well. A recurring strategy is to begin an important statement in the strings, thereby weakening the clarinet's tendency to dominate. The development section is almost schematically even-handed in its treatment of the five instruments. The recapitulation of the first movement contains many beautiful alterations of material, within the framework of a large-scale symmetry.

After the relaxed textures of the middle movements, the last movement, a set of variations, allows Mozart to dazzle with a rapid succession of different solutions for this combination of instruments.

This description reflects my sense that there is plenty to follow in Mozart's use of his ensemble, and that listeners can follow it easily. I learned more about the piece by writing about it primarily in terms of texture, as I have learned from writing textural descriptions of many other pieces.

I also find attribution of emotional or dramatic character useful in program notes. This is the kind of description stereotypically associated with program notes and liner notes. Such writing can be banal, but it need not be. Recently I wrote about the Brahms Horn Trio, describing a succession of mental states and, in particular, interpreting the second and fourth movements in

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<sup>3</sup> I wrote this on the basis of my general sense of the instruments, and as a description of Mozart's treatment. In particular, I wrote it without thinking about the Brahms Clarinet Quintet! Brahms, unlike Mozart, makes a special point of blending the clarinet in an astonishing range of complex textures, and so the Brahms Quintet shows that I was wrong to deny the possibility of blend.

light of their relation to the rest of the piece. I wanted to help listeners sense a persistent uneasiness in the first movement. I wrote that "Brahms was particularly skillful at evoking complex, ambivalent states of mind, and the first movement of the Horn Trio is a beautiful instance: its harmonic and rhythmic suspense continue through moods that fluctuate between something close to contentment, at the opening, and a more agitated, melancholy quality." I wanted listeners to respond to the syncopations and unresolved harmony, to hear them as undercutting the languid unfolding of the opening melody.

In describing the first movement as ambivalent, I also wanted to prepare my descriptions of later parts of the Trio. I went on to suggest that the second movement attempts to eliminate the sustained ambivalence: "the ambivalent mood gives way to an exaggerated contrast between vigor and yearning, separated into distinct sections of the movement. The first section offers harsh, percussive piano writing, in strident rhythms, from time to time admitting bits of songlike melody. The glaring clarity of this music contrasts sharply with the shadowy, slower middle section." I liked the psychological image of ambivalence giving way to an alternation between extreme states, but this description got me into trouble. Ascriptions of character are risky in program notes because an unanticipated performance decision can contradict the description. In writing of "vigor," I was expecting something like the beginning of the second movement in my favorite performance, a 1933 recording by Adolf Busch, Rudolf Serkin, and Aubrey Brain.<sup>4</sup> Instead, in the performance by David Golub, Mark Kaplan, and David Jolley, I heard something slower, less emphatic, more flexible—something that it would be odd to call

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<sup>4</sup> Now available on EMI CDH7 64495 2.

vigorous.<sup>5</sup> So part of my description was left behind by the performers' strange, imaginative playing.

After describing the extreme tension of the third movement, I gave only a brief comment about the Finale, writing that it "begins with cheer that seems to come from nowhere, but abrupt turns to minor soon darken the music, coming and going with disconcerting irrationality." I wanted listeners to hear the last movement beginning with something like a false start (this resembles Anthony Newcomb's account of Schumann's Second Symphony<sup>6</sup>), an unwarranted affirmation, followed by abrupt returns to the minor mode of the third movement. This description exemplifies another aspect of music that I often describe in my notes, the patterning of major and minor keys. Though I seldom describe changes of tonic, I expect many listeners can hear changes of mode easily, and changes of mode integrate readily into emotional or dramatic descriptions.

When I started writing program notes, I knew that I would enjoy thinking about the music, and I thought I could provide a useful service. And I still like having a public identity in my community as a writer about music. I did not expect that the writing would start to change my musical perceptions and my attitudes about analysis. But, after several years of trying to write for my amateur audience's perspective, trying to reconstruct experiences that they might have, I find that I like occupying that perspective and having those experiences. Of course I was already involved professionally with dramatic de-

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<sup>5</sup> Their 1989 recording (Arabesque Z6607) does not show those qualities nearly as much as the performance I heard.

<sup>6</sup> "Once More 'Between Absolute and Program Music': Schumann's Second Symphony," *19th-Century Music* 7 (1984): 233-50.

scriptions of music,<sup>7</sup> but it was new to me to write with no technical vocabulary, and in general my perceptions have developed as a result of writing without the standard academic language. I don't have trouble following key relations, for instance, or identifying the common formal patterns, but after minimizing those elements in so many descriptions of pieces, I am starting to find them less central to my own musical experience.

I can illustrate this change with the last movement of the Brahms Trio. My program note describes it in terms of a strangely cheerful opening, followed by an irrational fluctuation between major and minor modes. I did not comment on form or key relations. I could have done so, saying something like this: "It is a sonata form movement. The first passages of minor occur within the first theme, as motion to closely related keys, and the minor passages make up the middle section of a three-part theme. The next passages of minor occur in the long transitional passage to the brief second theme in the dominant." This description may seem unproblematic, but actually I find it distracting and misleading in relation to my experience of the passage. It implicitly hierarchizes the events of the passage, encouraging a reader to think of the first and second themes as the main structural elements, subordinating the middle section of the first theme and the transitional passage. In doing so, it suggests a reassuring containment of the minor mode passages, a complex but affirmative succession of events. This matches my experience very poorly. I find my other description more evocative—to me, the passage sounds like a violent, painful fluctuation between modes, with

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<sup>7</sup> See "Music as Drama," *Music Theory Spectrum* 10 (1988): 56-73, and "Music as Narrative," *Indiana Theory Review* 12 (Spring and Fall 1991): 1-34.

the minor passages feeling as though they might take over the movement.



You will have noticed one limit of the writing I have described, reviews and program notes alike: for the most part, it restricts itself to descriptions of the actual sounds that are presented in the concerts, along with bits of historical information. I have come to think of this as a reasonable, if somewhat disappointing, limitation.

In the first program notes I wrote, in 1992, I tried to reflect on chamber music in a more socially-contextual way. The notes were for the Albemarle Chamber Music Festival, a summer chamber music series consisting of four concerts. Since there was a longish program booklet, I had the space to include some general comments on chamber music along with descriptions of individual pieces. I had just taught a seminar with social and political emphases. I wanted the chamber music audience, like my students, to reflect on their experiences of classical music in ethical and political terms. Here, long and earnest, is the relevant passage of my notes. I began with some discussion of Donald F. Tovey's definition of chamber music, and then turned to Adorno to begin a series of socially-oriented reflections:

*The Marxist philosopher Theodor Adorno made some intriguing speculations on the social meanings of this style, emphasizing the close relation between chamber music and domestic performances. The synthesis of individuals into a whole occurs in a setting that is relatively private, in contrast to the public discourse of orchestral music. Chamber music can be played in a home, just for the satisfaction of the performers and whatever small audience may be present. The intimacy of chamber music*

*contrasts with the effect of orchestral music, in which individual players merge into sections, under the direction of a conductor, with the music normally addressed to a large audience in a markedly public space. Symphonic music is like oratory; chamber music is like conversation, combining elements of contest and politeness. For Adorno, these qualities gave chamber music a precise historical identity:*

*Chamber music is specific to an epoch in which the private sphere, as one of leisure, has vigorously parted from the public-professional sphere. Yet neither are the two embarked on irreconcilably divergent courses nor is leisure commandeered, as in the modern concept of "rest and relaxation," to become a parody of freedom.<sup>8</sup>*

*With Schoenberg's music, according to Adorno, the fragile balance was lost, and the cultivation of an intimate world, private but accessible, gave way to the challenging assertion of an intricate coherence that was neither domestic in character nor intelligible to large audiences.*

*Pessimistic and dialectical, Adorno focused on paradoxical or contradictory aspects of chamber music. While chamber music evokes an image of free, coherent interaction in a setting of private leisure, the development of the chamber music style actually coincided with a sharp reduction in opportunities for improvisation. And chamber music, though shaped by the contrast between private and public, presents an image of a complete, self-sufficient musical world—that is, a world in which such a contrast does not exist. (As Adorno puts it, "The old-style bourgeois interior wished on its own to be the world once again.") With such tensions in mind, Adorno marveled that chamber music had a long, productive history.*

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<sup>8</sup> Theodor W. Adorno, *Introduction to the Sociology of Music*, trans. E. B. Ashton (New York: Continuum, 1976), 86.

Having paraphrased Adorno, I wanted to suggest a contemporary transposition of his ideas. Here is my continuation:

*Perhaps some meanings of chamber music are less obvious to us than to writers of Adorno's or Tovey's generations. In terms of musical experience, the "generation gap" is stunning. Adorno studied composition with Berg; Tovey, as a young pianist, performed in public with Brahms's friend Joachim. Unlike Adorno or Tovey, none of us is likely to remember homes without radios, which, as Adorno emphasized, change everything; television, of course, changes everything even more. A few people still play chamber music at home. My parents did; they and some of their friends chose or remodeled their homes in order to have good spaces for chamber music. But my parents were professional musicians, and in terms of general social norms their cultivation of chamber music was willful, even eccentric, like their refusal to have a television. For most people now, there is nothing especially domestic about chamber music.*

*Most people hear chamber music in a public setting, away from home. The atmosphere is often museum-like or academic. What are the social meanings of chamber music in this setting? Of course chamber music's link with expertise, its reputation for being "musicians' music," creates the possibility of an audience motivated partly by snobbery. [I knew, as I wrote it, that this comment was pushing things a bit in notes for the Albemarle Festival!] More attractively, an interest in chamber music might be a relatively undifferentiated part of a more general interest in 18th and 19th century European art music. But chamber music retains a special capacity to create images, and instances, of relatively unhierarchical intimacy (separated, now, from any specific evocation of the bourgeois home),*

*and no doubt that is an important part of what many listeners enjoy.*

*It is possible to revive Adorno's paradoxes, slightly adjusted, as intriguing questions for contemporary listeners. What is the relation between the interactive "society" of the performers and the composer's ultimate control over the details of their interaction? What is excluded from the self-contained, orderly worlds of chamber compositions, and what is the relation between those boundaries and the listener's pleasure? And, for contemporary Americans, there is another paradox, or at least a remarkable fact. Many contemporary American listeners, like me, find some of their most moving models of intimate interaction in the products of an elite, European (mostly Germanic) compositional tradition, strongly marked by nationalism and, with very few exceptions, exclusively male; perhaps one might expect products of such a culture to seem more foreign.*

It was strange, having written the notes, to attend the concerts. I knew many members of the audience, and had many pleasant conversations about the music and the performances, but almost no one mentioned my notes to me. (The chair of Women's Studies did say she liked them a lot. Also, a faculty spouse asked me, a little grumpily, what "dialectical" means; and a politically conservative English teacher told me, a little grumpily, that I had succeeded in quoting the only intelligible sentences that Adorno ever wrote. Otherwise, silence.) Looking around the concert hall, I realized I had badly underestimated the age and conservatism of the audience. The next year, I left out the more speculative and political remarks, and was rewarded with numerous compliments. Of course this confirmed my sense that it was natural for people I knew to say something to me about my notes, and that the prevailing silence the previous year had reflected some kind of disapproval or embarrassment. This

limit of the discourse that seems possible in program notes, compared to the marvelous openness that I sometimes find in the classroom, is one more thing I have learned from my “occasional” writing.<sup>9</sup>



I'll end by mentioning another limitation I have become aware of in the program notes I have been writing, and in the genre of program notes generally. Recently, in my thinking about musical performance, I have wanted to emphasize the incompleteness of compositions or “musical works” before performance brings them to sonic reality. I have been urging my students to think of music-in-performance, not works, as the central object of interpretation and evaluation, and I've written an essay advocating this idea (and contrasting it to common conceptions of performance in professional music theory).<sup>10</sup>

This view, which has come to seem commonsensical to me, is in an uneasy relation to the writing of program notes. On one hand, when I write program notes, I try to direct the listeners' attention to what they can hear in the musical sound; on the other hand, when I

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<sup>9</sup> This comment about the openness of the liberal arts classroom needs contextualization. I am a tenured faculty member, in a department with a strong, if not unwavering, commitment to intellectual exploration and individual freedom of inquiry. I am well aware that adjunct or nontenured faculty cannot always experience their classrooms as “marvelously open,” and that many departments and schools of music subject the thought in their classrooms to stringent discipline, through course assignments and curricular planning (and these may affect tenured as well as nontenured faculty). In other words, my comment comes from a position of privilege that requires acknowledgment.

<sup>10</sup> “Musical Performance as Analytical Communication,” in *Performance and Authenticity in the Arts*, ed. Salim Kemal and Ivan Gaskell (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999).

talk about musical performance, I argue that musical scores are starting points for collaboration between composers and performers, and that many aspects of the musical sound are indeterminate until performers bring them to determinacy.

When I want to make my collaborative conception of performance seem attractive, I find it useful to draw attention to several sharply contrasting performances of the same composition. "Listen!" I say: "you can hear how important the differences are in the effects of these performances! It is reckless to make statements about the qualities or meanings of a musical composition as such, when fine performances make such important and unexpected contributions to those qualities and meanings!" But on those other occasions when I write program notes, I try to offer vivid descriptions of the music even though I have no knowledge of the upcoming performances. As I mentioned, this sometimes gets me into trouble, as when I expected that the second movement of the Brahms Trio would begin vigorously. More often, I get by with it, which perhaps reflects the sameness of so much classical performance these days. But whether or not the performance belies my description, I have started to think that my program notes share an ideology of the concert hall as a museum in which compositions are displayed, in which performance has a relatively modest role of execution rather than co-creation.

If I offer confident descriptions of musical qualities, without having heard the performances, the procedure implies that knowledge of the performances is peripheral for knowing the music, understood as the compositions themselves. This problem, for which I do not presently see a solution, is special to the genre of program notes for concerts: obviously, it does not arise in concert reviewing or in another genre of occasional

writing, notes for recordings. It was a relief and an intense pleasure, in writing notes for Martin Goldray's CD of Milton Babbitt's piano music, to work from a knowledge of his performances.<sup>11</sup> I was able, as I am not in notes for concerts, to draw attention to special qualities of the playing, and to the ways Goldray's performances make the music something quite distinct from the Babbitt-sounds, beautiful in their different ways, of Robert Taub or Alan Feinberg.

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<sup>11</sup> *Milton Babbitt: Piano Music since 1983*; Martin Goldray, piano. CRI CD 746 (1997). The notes also appear at <http://www.composersrecordings.com/cd/746.html>.