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GOALS

Assignment Sequence

This assignment sequence represents approximately the first four-fifths of the semester and is designed to prepare students for taking up a final independent project.

In part, my goals in Music 111 overlap with the traditional goals of a college-level Music Appreciation course. As I introduce a varied collection of works from the canon of Western art music, I seek to turn passive listeners, who receive classical music as a collection of vaguely "pleasing" or "relaxing" sounds -- into active listeners, who listen attentively and can employ musicological terminology to describe this non-verbal medium. We therefore address formal and stylistic aspects of pieces while considering the social environments that shaped their composers and audiences; in short, students are expected to learn some of the "content" of music history. To this end, I've designed writing assignments in each unit that require participation in the "narrative" mode of discourse which musicologists use to explain historical events and works.

Meanwhile, I have further goals for the course which depart radically from the conventional materials of "Music Appreciation." With each piece of narrative the students produce, they rediscover that narratives are hardly irrefutable or innocuous; in fact, the very acts of ordering and shaping (which go into writing narrative) give writers the power to create historical meaning. Thus, later assignments in each unit give the students the opportunity to reflect back, approaching their own work from a "meta" perspective. In other words (as I put it to the students), the course involves both writing musicology and writing about the field of musicology.

More generally speaking, my overall goal is to help students become confident writers in their careers as college students and beyond. On the first day of class last semester, I asked students to provide written answers to the question "What do you see as your weaknesses as a writer?" Replies fell mainly in two categories: students felt insecure about expressing themselves clearly (from the level of the sentence to the organization of a paper as a whole) but also said they had trouble in the initial stages of formulating their ideas. The first category came as no surprise to me; indeed, I was well-prepared with a barrage of handouts and editing/revision exercises designed to strengthen students' writing "style." It has taken a whole semester of teaching, however, for me to fully appreciate the astuteness of the latter self-diagnosis. I found that even after completing a series of successful papers over the course of the semester -- papers for which I provided close guidance at numerous stages -- many students "regressed" when writing a final paper on an independently-developed topic. They doubted their ability to have original thoughts about music and were reluctant to believe that they could reapply some of the approaches we had used together earlier in the semester. Thus, the assignment sequence that I am submitting reflects several changes I've made after a semester's worth of experience. First, I am explicit about the ultimate purpose of informal writing assignments: to discover ideas for future extended development. Second, I push students to think of all their papers in terms of specific categories of paper-writing approaches. Finally, while I still feel strongly that the course should culminate in an opportunity to independently exercise skills acquired over the course of the semester, I've now decided to limit final independent projects to a list of pre-selected pieces, chosen by me on the basis of their direct susceptibility to approaches we used in earlier units.

Each unit focuses on one piece. The fact that each of the pieces covered had remarkable circumstances surrounding its premiere -- a "famous first performance" -- provides fruitful material for varied kinds of writing. As students read and write about the story of the first performance, they practice recognizing and using skills in summary, simple narrative, and even hyperbole (a favorite rhetorical style of CD liner notes or concert program notes). They then go on to consider what the story of the first performance (and its re-telling) reveals -- about societies, about listeners, about

musicologists' agendas -- thus making the leap to more complex analytical writing or argumentation from evidence. A more detailed description of each of the five units follows; it should be read in conjunction with the Assignments themselves. After the Roman numeral, I list the topic, the intended approach for the final paper of the unit (a possible approach for the independent paper at the end of the semester), and the technical writing issues covered. As I have described above, every unit focuses on rewriting for enhanced depth, interest, and clarity.

SPECIFIC RATIONAL FOR THE UNITS

- I. **Topic:** Hector Berlioz, *Symphonie fantastique*
Approach: taking a position in an ongoing debate
Writing issues: clarity, controlling ideas, counterarguments, conclusions

At the first performance of *Symphonie fantastique*, Berlioz astonished the audience by providing a written program, which explained in detail the "story" of his semi-autobiographical symphony. No one in attendance could have been more astonished, however, than the famous Shakespearean actress Harriet Smithson, who found herself cast as the story's heroine. This important example of program music serves as our entry into a centuries-old musicological debate between program music (which invokes anything extra-musical) and "absolute music" (supposedly free from any extra-musical associations): Is one superior to the other? Does the presence of a program enhance or impair the listening experience? Can music "mean" something outside itself? Can it ever not?

Rather than start by discussing the merits of the various arguments and then asking students to take up their own stance, I try immediately to give students "authority" from their own experience. The first assignment asks them to listen to the symphony as if it were absolute music (that is, prior to learning the program) and respond in one of three ways. This assignment led to one of the most lively class discussions of the semester; students were either eager to relate the stories that they had imagined unfolding as they listened, or (on the other hand) to argue that instrumental music can't really be "about" something -- all this before they became aware of the debate as it exists outside our classroom. My job in this discussion is to move students from relatively subjective comments about the music ("it sounds scary") to the use of specific musical terminology ("the sudden change from thin to thick texture, the wide leap in range, the string tremolo"). Other musical aspects (such as unification by *idée fixe* and incorporation of the *Dies Irae*) are discussed as well.

The second assignment grows out of engaging the "programmist" side of the debate. After reading Berlioz's program, we take up Kramer, Kerman, and Winter, who implicitly suggest that knowing the program is imperative for the listening experience. Uncovering this "agenda" is an important part of our classroom discussion, as is observing the readings' organization around a single controlling idea; students then rewrite their first papers, incorporating this new perspective as appropriate and mimicking this organizational method. This is the first writing to be subjected to editing -- in this case, one-paragraph rewrites based on techniques from Williams.

The next readings come from the "absolutists"; Cairns and Turner suggest that a program is like a crutch for the lazy listener, weakening the listening experience. Adding to our discussion of organization by controlling idea, we notice the way these authors strengthen their assertions by addressing counterarguments. By the third assignment, students have their own listening experience (unsullied by others' opinions), plus arguments from opposing sides to use as material for either support or refutation.

After I've read through the third assignment, I choose three or four class members to make copies of their papers and read them aloud in class. I select papers which will provide an opening for discussion of issues that come up in all the papers; in this case I'm particularly on the lookout for strong or weak conclusions. One final revision (usually relatively minor) is submitted, based on my comments.

II. Topic: Ludwig van Beethoven, Symphony No. 9

Approach: assessing a particular discourse by demonstrating the presence of implied values, attitudes, purposes

Writing issues: controlling and supporting ideas, transitions, topic sentences and topic strings, "point of view" (Williams ch. 6), quotations

Beethoven's behavior at the first performance of his Ninth Symphony is notorious: because of his deafness, his conducting phased in and out of synch with the performers, and (until he was forced by a chorus member to turn toward the audience) he went completely unaware of the wild ovation given to him by the Viennese public.

In this unit, students become familiar with the traditional image of Beethoven as a lion-maned, near-crazy genius, and the way in which this persona (especially with respect to his deafness) figures into discussion of his music. We begin in the Johnson Museum looking at portraits; Cathy Klimaszewski and I have designed a session which starts with two portraits of Goya (a near-contemporary of Beethoven who also went deaf later in life) and moves on to portraits (of both famous and common people) throughout the museum. The purpose is to encourage looking beyond content to discover artists' implied points-of-view and the "constructed" identities of the subjects: we take, for example, the aristocratic painter who portrays hungry peasants as content with their station in life. The first assignment asks the student to compare two imaginary portraits of themselves by different artists, demonstrating an understanding of how the artists use props, color, expression, brushstrokes, etc. to communicate something about the subject.

I then transfer this notion of image-making and the "creation of identity" to Beethoven himself, as we read Solomon, Comini, and Steblin, all of whom attempt to dispute certain supposed "Beethoven traits" while inadvertently reinforcing others. Assignments 2 and 4 explicate the texts through list-making and one-paragraph summary techniques. Assignment 3 involves listening to the symphony with an interactive listening guide designed to highlight aspects of the piece that will be useful for the students' eventual arguments; as with every unit, I emphasize acquisition of specific musicological terminology because it focuses their listening and gives them the means to convincingly express what they hear.

In-class discussion returns to the analogous issue of "point of view" in writing -- that is, the ways in which choices about active and passive voice, nominalizations, and overall wordiness can affect meaning (and reveal something about the writer's purpose); here I find that the best way to reinforce this point is to look at examples of the students' choice, so they are asked to bring in items and present them to the class. As for paragraph structure, the Solomon excerpt is particularly fruitful for analysis of paragraph cohesion (consistency of topic strings) and transitions; I also provide an exercise in which students distort the topic strings of paragraph, then switch with a partner, trying to restore consistency.

In the final class discussion before Assignment 5, we look at six brief commentaries on the Ninth Symphony from diverse sources (a newspaper review, a friend's memoirs, contemporary historians, and a poet). Students should come away from class with a possible controlling idea (probably along the lines of "The traditional image of Beethoven's personality informs the way commentators discuss his Ninth Symphony") and three or four supporting ideas (analyses of how the six excerpts are based on personality traits such as violence, eccentricity, isolation). Students are

expected to reuse (in improved form) summary-writing material from assignments 2 and 4. This paper is subjected to peer review (assisted by a questionnaire that focuses the reader on the unit's main writing issues) and instructor review (in written commentary and personal conferences); thereafter, one revision is mandatory, but more are accepted. As I respond to the papers, I collect examples of successful or awkward quotations, and compile them for in-class discussion.

III. Topic: Antonin Dvorák, *New World Symphony*

Approach: contextualizing a work, describing how the context played a role in making it what it is, and what role the context plays in our understanding of it

Writing issues: introductions

In the last years of the 19th century, Czech composer Antonin Dvorák was brought to the United States by a wealthy patroness in order to establish a national conservatory. His *New World Symphony*, composed in New York and at a Czech enclave in Spillville, Iowa, received an enormous amount of advance "hype" from the press and rave reviews after the first performance. Dvorák, who had superficially incorporated Westernized versions of slave tunes and Indian melodies into the work, was hailed as the father of a new tradition of American composition. The irony of this situation grows out of its context: an inferiority complex on the part of American listeners, who rejoiced at hearing "their" lowly native materials "elevated" to the level of a European symphonic work.

To get at this context, we read three sociologists accounts of the process of "sacralization" in late-19th century American musical life, whereby a distinction grew up between "high" and "low" arts. The "scholarly discourse" of two of these excerpts provides an excellent opportunity to study what Lanham calls the "elevated style;" the third is more conversational. Asking students to translate one excerpt into the style of another shows that differences in style are due to concrete choices.

In order to further reinforce the somewhat constructed nature of a high/low dichotomy in music, we turn to recent articles from the New York Times, so that students start picking out valuing language for themselves. The "ambassadors" discussion technique works well here: four groups of students each have different articles. After discussion within these groups, groups remix such that each new group is made up from representatives from all former groups. Each student is thus an expert on new material to present to the group. As a wrap-up, students write "letters to the editor" responding to the issues raised in the articles.

We also take a trip to the Rare Books Library in order to see their scrapbooks of old concert programs -- and thus come as close as we can to witnessing a concert. Mainly as a result of time constraints, the bulk of the nitty-gritty leaning about the music occurs in classroom lecture and discussion, although an interactive listening guide assignment (as we see in other units) would also work serve this purpose.

Since the main writing thrust of the unit is successful introductions, I bring in several examples (not just Dvorák-related) and ask for student commentary in a prepared class discussion. Together, we compile a list of possible ways to "grab the readers' attention"; students are required to use at least one in the final Dvorák assignment; peer review focuses on whether the introduction sets forth and limits the topic of the paper effectively. One complete revision of the whole paper is required, more are accepted.

IV. Topic: Igor Stravinsky, *The Rite of Spring*

Approach: compositional analysis, demonstrating how the work produces its effect

Writing issues: continued practice of above

The riot at the first performance of *The Rite of Spring* makes it one of the most famous premieres in music history. On the first day of this unit, we acquaint ourselves with the plot (which Stravinsky claimed came to him in a dream) and view a documentary video of the ballet which assumes that the riot was caused by elements (in the music, choreography, plot, and set) which the Parisian public found too "progressive." Students complete a viewing guide designed to help them keep track of "what was new about the Rite?". This viewing guide, combined with another outside listening (with an in-depth listening guide focused on musical aspects of the work and new terminology) and an in-class lecture provide material for Assignment 1. In the form of a memo, it begins as a straightforward exercise in summary, and goes on to require analysis while leaving plenty of room for extra creativity. Not surprisingly, students took up the task of "flattering the boss" with relish!

By this stage in the semester, students are not surprised when I ask them to rewrite an assignment on the basis of new information. (Next semester I plan to frequently repeat that this sort of rewriting is exactly what they should expect to happen with their final papers, and I will take it as a point of pride if they tell me I sound like a broken record.) The Bullard article throws the facile assumptions of the video on their head, arguing instead (on the basis of contemporary journalism) that the riot was essentially a planned publicity stunt. Assignment 2 asks the students to rewrite the memo, taking into consideration this article, but without raising their word count significantly. This is a conscious maneuver on my part, designed to combat the sprawling, "blow-by-blow" nature of summary that students so often fall into. The assignment goes through some in-class peer review focused on paragraphs.

The third assignment is another rewrite based on new information -- in this case, the Taruskin article, which uncovers the source material for the *Rite*, thereby disputing Stravinsky's "dream" assertion. This final version should smoothly integrate summary and analysis; it goes through revision in the same manner as the Beethoven.

V. Topic: Concert review of live premiere performance

Writing issues: coordination and subordination, punctuation, metaphor

In this unit, we try our hands at a more popular form of musicology: music criticism. Last semester we attended a concert of premieres by the renowned American composer George Crumb and four Cornell DMA candidates. Seminar students prepared and carried out an interview with the composers and performers during the last class meeting before the concert and also attended a pre-concert lecture in order to gather "background" for their reviews. I imagine that I should be able to arrange my syllabus to incorporate some similar sort of event in future semesters.

As Assignment 1, the interview is written up in the form of a press release, which will be revised and reused in the concert review. (Fortunately, students seem willing to overlook the conflict of interest this dual responsibility represents!) The focus of the revision is trouble-shooting problems of coordination and subordination, using a peer-editing questionnaire.

In further preparation for writing their reviews, students take a collection of reviews from *Time*, the *New York Times*, the *New Yorker*, the *Ithaca Journal* and the *Ithaca Times* as their "texts," and complete a four-part style assignment (Assignment 2) which compels them to scrutinize journalists' choices -- of punctuation, of voice, of concision, etc. This is a good opportunity (late in the semester) to reassert that although there are plenty of guidelines for strong writing, there are few unbreakable rules. Thus we take up some examples of passive voice, nominalizations, "there is" constructions, and other "no-nos," to see when and why many excellent writers use them. We also notice that

the best reviews are unified creatively, often under some sort of catchy central metaphor; students are required to attempt this in their own reviews. Assignment 3 is the concert review; it is subjected to in-class, guided peer review and is submitted twice to me.

THE ASSIGNMENTS

(Note: This is meant as an outline of assignments, not a syllabus. Assignments may take anywhere from two days to a week.)

I. Berlioz

Berlioz Assignment 1

- Listen to Berlioz's *Symphonie fantastique*, following the score if you read music. Do NOT read about the piece in the CD liner notes or in any other source. The goal of this first listening is to get your own reaction to the music -- your own thoughts, feelings, and impressions -- independent of what others have said the music is "about."
- Write Berlioz 1, 1-2 pages informally
Take one of the following approaches (each is valid and potentially interesting):
 1. "This music evokes various abstract images and emotions. The mood of the first movement seems... (etc. etc.)"
 2. "This music seems to tell a story. The first movement is about..."
 3. "This music doesn't really suggest anything outside itself; rather, it is a collection of artfully arranged pitches, timbres, and rhythms. I especially like/dislike the part where.... because... "

Berlioz Assignment 2

- Read the program to the symphony.
- Read Kramer, Winter, and Kerman. Look up terms you don't know in your dictionary.
- Listen to Berlioz *Symphonie fantastique* again, this time with the program.
- Write Berlioz 2: Rewrite Berlioz 1, relating your "before and after" listening experiences. Be sure to organize your paper around a single idea. You might try agreeing or disagreeing with the comment: "Knowing Berlioz's program helped me appreciate his symphony."

Berlioz Assignment 3

- Read entries on "absolute music" and "program music" in Randel, ed., *The New Harvard Dictionary of Music*, in the music library reference collection. (Note: this is not the same as the concise dictionary you purchased for the course.)
- Read Cairns and Turner.
- Prepare for class discussion and pre-writing. Consider the following questions. What is the difference between absolute music and program music? Is familiarity with the program necessary for understanding the music? Or is it actually detrimental to the musical experience? Where do the various authors stand on this question? Where do you stand?
- Write: Berlioz 3
In this unit we have:

- Listened to *Symphonie fantastique* with and without its program and compared the two experiences
- Discussed and read about various musical aspects of the work
- Read, discussed, and compared various authors' views on the importance of the program
- Become familiar with the terms "absolute music" and "program music" and considered their usefulness
- Focused on improving the clarity of our writing and the importance of picking and adhering to a central, controlling idea

You should now write a three- or four-page paper taking a position in this ongoing historical debate over absolute and program music. Are the terms useful? Is familiarity with the program necessary for understanding the music? Or is it actually detrimental to the musical experience?

To support your position:

- draw upon your experience listening to the Berlioz under two very different circumstances
- refer specifically to the musical devices Berlioz uses
- use the positions of the various authors to support your position directly or to set up a counter-argument

You should use, in improved form, material from Berlioz 1 and 2, your listening journal, and in-class writing.

By now you should be maintaining a writing portfolio; it contains all your papers and revised papers and should be turned in at the end of each unit.

II. Beethoven

Beethoven Assignment 1

- Write, using the worksheet from the museum session, a two-page paper comparing two imaginary portraits of you, done by two different artists who know you (for example, your mom, your roommate, your chemistry professor...). How do the portraits differ, and how do those differences reflect the painter's points of view?

Beethoven Assignment 2

- Read: Solomon
- Write 1-2 pages, informally. What sort of person was Beethoven? This pre-writing exercise may be done in the form of list making -- make a list of words and phrases that describe Beethoven's personality and behavior.
- Read: Comini
- Continue your list of Beethoven's characteristics, based on Comini's article. Describe the Stieler, Waldmüller, and Decker portraits, giving special attention to the circumstances of their origins.

Beethoven Assignment 3

- Listen to Beethoven's Symphony No. 9 and complete the listening guide handed out in class.

Beethoven Assignment 4

- Read: Steblin
- Write one paragraph: what is Steblin's contribution to discourse on Beethoven's image? Focus on the *results* of her discovery.

Beethoven Assignment 5

- Read straight through this assignment and the accompanying brief commentaries on Beethoven's Ninth.
- Listen to the symphony again, considering what you are being asked to do in the essay. Use your listening guide and journal to keep track of passages in the symphony that want to describe or refer to in your paper.

In this unit we have:

- Focused on the writer's "point of view" and how it affects the meaning in a passage of prose
- Considered, during our museum visit, how the painter's "point of view" created the identity of the subject of the portrait
- Seen, in our readings, ways in which Beethoven's identity has been reflected in, and shaped by, portraits by artists such as Stieler, Waldmüller, Decker, and Hochenecker.

Now, in a four-page essay, consider the question: How are "points of view" about Beethoven's personality or character reflected in the way people listen to or talk about the Ninth Symphony? Your audience is a group of intelligent people who are interested in music but unfamiliar with the symphony and the composer. A certain amount of summarizing with therefore be necessary; you'll need to fill your reader in on common images of Beethoven ("points of view" on who he was and what he was like). But the purpose -- the central argument -- is that these "points of view" inform the way we listen to music and what we say about it. I will provide you with several examples of commentary on the Ninth Symphony.

As you write the paper, be sure to

- give attention to issues of clarity we have discussed in class
- make topic strings of paragraphs easily identifiable
- include graceful transitions between paragraphs
- summarize quotes; don't expect them to stand for themselves as a supporting idea

Please bring two copies of this assignment to class.

III. Dvorák

Dvorák Assignment 1

- Read Levine, Broyles, DiMaggio
- Write 1-2 pages, informally. What are these authors' central ideas? What is sacralization?
- Complete the style translation exercise, begun in class

Dvorák Assignment 2

- On the basis of the NYT articles we discussed in class, consider ways in which Levine's ideas about the last turn-of-the-century in America carry over to beginning might carry over to the next. What are the results of the process Levine describes? What do you think of possible remedies? Prepare your ideas for class discussion.
- Write a letter to the editor of the NYT, responding to the articles. You'll have to keep it succinct and to the point; letters that are unnecessarily wordy won't be printed. Bring two copies to class.

Dvorák Assignment 3

- Read Kramer's program notes
- Read the two articles by Dvorák
- Listen to the symphony
- Write one page, informally: What is the composer's opinion about the most appropriate sources of inspiration for American music? Do you believe they are reflected in his symphony? How? To what extent? Be specific, using notes from class lecture/discussion. Is this how you would go about writing an "American" symphony?

Dvorák Assignment 4

In this unit we have:

- Observed a "high" and "low" dichotomy in discourse about music. Classical music is "sacralized;" folk or popular music is set up in opposition to it. (*New York Times* articles)
- Considered the causes of this process of sacralization. (Broyles, DiMaggio, Levine)
- Listened to Dvorák's *New World Symphony* and read about the composer's efforts to mix "high" and "low" in his symphony. (Kramer and Dvorák articles)
- Given attention to the elements of successful introductions

Now, in a 3-4 page paper, describe the context of the New World Symphony's success. Go on to say how this context affects our understanding of the work.

You should:

- reuse, in improved form, your informal writing on the readings
- include an introduction that grabs the reader while setting forth and limiting the topic.

Bring one copy of the paper to class and a separate copy of the introduction.

IV. Stravinsky

Stravinsky Assignment 1

- View the documentary of the ballet and fill out the viewing guide
- Listen to the music for the ballet filling out the listening guide
- You are a low-level copy editor in the music history division of XYZ textbook publishing company. This is the week when your division makes final decisions about what pieces to include in its newest textbook on famous first performances. You have just learned that the head of your division (a well-known musicologist) has

taken ill. With such an important deadline pending, the CEO of XYZ decided to appoint a temporary replacement.

Here's what you know about your new boss:

Name: S. C. Uffle, Ph.D. Columbia University, 1980

Field: Sociology, with a specialization in crowd behavior and violence

Current position at XYZ: head of sociology textbook division

Knowledge about music: none

Dr. Uffle is known to be very arrogant; and in fact, his relative ignorance about the field of music history has not stopped him from proceeding with his own ideas about which pieces should be included in the forthcoming textbook. His first action was to eliminate coverage of Stravinsky's *Rite of Spring* on the basis of its being "just another ballet."

Your job is to write a memo to Dr. Uffle, urging him to reinstate coverage of the Rite. Remember, he knows nothing about the music -- it appears that he doesn't even know why the Rite is considered a "famous first performance" -- but his ego is huge. You must therefore fill him in on the importance of including the piece in the textbook. Be sure to engage his interests -- don't just describe the work, but explain how it produces the effect it does. Also, be sure to do so without offending him -- or risk losing your job.

Company policy states that interoffice memos must be no more than three pages long. You decide, due to the importance of the task and the space limitations, to do some pre-writing (in class). You brainstorm the question "what was new about the Rite of Spring?" and outline your main points. Using this warm-up, you draft the memo.

Stravinsky Assignment 2

- After drafting the memo, you come across an article that you believe sheds an interesting new light on the circumstances of the first performance: (Read: Bullard.) You decide that including the information in this article will help your case with Dr. Uffle, but that you must nevertheless stick to the original space limitations. You practice succinctly summarizing the article in class, then you redraft the memo at home.

Stravinsky Assignment 3

- Based on class discussion, you become suspicious about Stravinsky and his tendency to re-write his autobiography in order to "improve" his legacy. You research the composer's claim that the plot for the *Rite* came to him in a dream ("I was the vessel through which *Le Sacre* passed") and find an article that disputes this claim. (Read: Taruskin.) This appears to be another way to engage Dr. Uffle and strengthen your position, so you revise the memo accordingly.

V. Premiere Concert Review

Concert Review Assignment 1 (done in three parts)

- Read the packet of concert reviews and write answers to the following questions:

(Part one)

1. Jesse Birnbaum, "A Lamentable Debut" *Time* (17 March 1997): 66. Mark off the sentence lengths in the first paragraph. What does Birnbaum accomplish by varying these lengths?
2. Rewrite the second sentence here with different, though grammatically correct punctuation. What is the effect?
3. The term "parallelism" refers to putting parallel ideas in parallel grammatical form. See, for example, paragraph four: "His technical performance was wildly erratic, the phrasing disjointed, the rhythms unreliable." In this case, the parallelism may be outlined:

technical performance	was	erratic
phrasing	(was)	disjointed
rhythms	(were)	unreliable

Outline the parallelism in paragraph 3.

4. What is the effect of the dashes in the final paragraph? What are two other ways of setting off the phrase "or to music" and how do they differ? What happens if you take out the word "since"?

(Part two)

1. James R. Oestreich, "Resonances Nearly All Over Tanglewood" *New York Times* (27 August 1997): C16. Phrases that start "It was..." (paragraph 1) or "This was..." (paragraph 7) often sound weak. Why does Oestreich use them here?
2. What purpose do nominalizations in paragraph 8 serve?
3. Donal Henahan, "Helping George Crumb Celebrate His Birthday" *New York Times* (26 October 1989): C20. Why does the author use a colon in paragraph 6?
4. What is the unifying idea behind the article as a whole? List the words used to convey that idea.
5. Allan Kozinn "Just One Little Problem" *New York Times* (19 March 1998): E5. In the last paragraph, why does Kozinn use dashes instead of commas?
6. Write the final phrase of the last sentence in active voice instead of passive. What is the result for the sentence as a whole?

(Part three)

1. Paul Griffiths, "Telling Vivid Stories Through Sound" *New York Times* (24 February 1998): E3. Rewrite paragraphs 3 and 4, using sentences as short as possible.
2. Now, without looking back at the article, rewrite those two paragraphs using subordination wherever possible.
3. Look back at the original and make one observation about a difference between Griffiths' version and your own.
4. Look over the all the reviews. What elements (in terms of content) do they all have in common?

Concert Review Assignment 2

- Based on the interviews held with composers and performers in class, write a (1-2 page) press release for the concert. Include all the important information: who, what, when, where; also encourage attendance by providing interesting background information on the people and music involved.

Concert Review Assignment 3

In this unit we've read several concert reviews and gleaned several "rules of thumb" for writing music criticism:

- Reviews should address three things: the music and the performers, the way the music was performed or interpreted, and the nature of the occasion or event itself. It's important to understand the distinction between the first two categories; disliking the piece (as it exists in musical notation) and disliking the performance are two different things. The third category is also important; your review should contain description of the purpose or type of the concert, and if anything extraordinary happens (did the pianist break a string or the singer trip on her dress?) you should mention this, too.
- Criticism involves reacting and expressing opinions. But like other types of writing, good musical criticism should have factual content backing up the critic's opinions. Writing "I liked this, I disliked that" doesn't add anything to the review and is useless to the reader.
- Criticism may not stick overtly to a single controlling idea that is more specific than the three categories listed above. But successful reviews often make use of a unifying theme or metaphor (see, for example, the "creativity" theme used by Henahan or the "home" theme by Day).

This unit has also been an opportunity to review the qualities of strong sentences. Here's a checklist – refer to it as you write and use it again as you revise.

- punctuation to help readers see connections and separations
- parallelism and subordination to relate ideas
- avoid overuse of nominalizations
- passive/active voice where appropriate
- concision – elimination of redundant pairs or meaningless categories/modifiers

Your review should be no more than three pages, including revised material from your press release. Your audience is readers of *The New York Times*. (You may choose to write in shorter paragraphs, as in "newspaper style.")