

Interviewer: Today is November 21st [...]. I am *** and I'm interviewing ***. Okay. *[Laughs]* [...].

Interviewee: Yeah. *[Laughs]*

Interviewer: Thanks again for coming today. We're just gonna talk about your—yourself as a writer, and some of your writing experiences here at school. Just to begin; how would you describe yourself as a writer?

Interviewee: Mostly, just recreational; since I'm a music student.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Interviewee: This year I don't have any required writing—

Interviewer: Mm-hmm.

Interviewee: - courses. I journal every once in a while. I don't write too much, I guess. *[Laughs]*

Interviewer: You mention having some classes in the past that required you to write?

Interviewee: Yeah.

Interviewer: Like what kind of classes? Or, like what kinds of writing do you do?

Interviewee: I had the freshman required writing class. That was mostly responses to books, and just analysis. Yeah, mostly off of books. I took a musicology course where we did kind of response-type things.

Interviewer: Mm-hmm.

Interviewee: To articles. Then, I took a social college humanities course last year that—where we did a weekly response to the internship experience that we were doing. Mostly reflectional 02:02, response-type writings.

Interviewer: How 'bout writing in your music life? Do you use writing in your music life or—

Interviewee: Hmm. I mean, eventually to write program notes, and things like that. I've written press releases. I've done some marketing for student orgs [organizations], and the place that I work. I've done press releases, which can apply to a recital, or a concert. Yeah. Program notes for recitals, also. I've done that. Yeah.

Interviewer: You write at work? Is that what you—

Interviewee: I used to. I was in the marketing department for the [Musical Society] last year.

Interviewer: Mm-hmm.

Interviewee: [...]. Yeah. I still do marketing for student orgs I'm involved in.

Interviewer: Okay. What organizations are you a part of?

Interviewee: [Awareness Program] [...]. Recently the past two years, I've done PR [Public Relations]. Then, [a music and business student collaboration]. I do marketing, mostly, for them.

Interviewer: Mm-hmm.

Interviewee: I did an internship [...], I guess; for a class last year that was [Community Organization]. I did marketing for them, also.

Interviewer: Those marketing activities required writing?

Interviewee: Yeah. Writing press releases, and just coming up with grassroots marketing campaigns.

Interviewer: Mm-hmm.

Interviewee: E-blasting marketing emails. Marketing plans. Things like that.

Interviewer: Those writing things you still do now? Or, was that more in the past?

Interviewee: Mostly now I just do press releases for events. Probably a couple a semester.

Interviewer: Mm-hmm.

Interviewee: That's mostly what I do now.

Interviewer: Thinking about yourself as a writer from when you began here at U of M [University of Michigan], to now; how would you say that you've grown as a writer? If at all?

Interviewee: Although I feel like I do less writing, I think I can have more of a clear voice in my writing now.

Interviewer: Mm-hmm.

Interviewee: I don't necessarily feel like I have to say a certain thing, you know? I feel like I have more freedom in my voice in my writing now.

Interviewer: Where did you find that voice? Or, how did you develop that?

Interviewee: Hmm. I think it was just from writing in a lot of different settings, and having to write a lot of different ways.

Interviewer: Mm-hmm.

Interviewee: I also had to do blog posts for the musicology class I was in last year. That was a different style than, obviously, like a press release. Just from the other things I've done, I think it was just from learning how to write in many different ways.

Interviewer: What would you say are your goals for yourself as a writer?

Interviewee: I guess to continue to be—have a clear and effective voice. Clearly state the purpose. Be able to just be persuasive, if I'm tryin' to be persuasive.

Interviewer: Mm-hmm.

Interviewee: Or, be concise if I'm tryin' to just be concise and get information out there. Just continuing, I guess.

Interviewer: Mm-hmm. *[Pause]* What do you think it means to write well?

Interviewee: I think to write well—I guess I said, things I'm working on. Just being able to hear a voice, and a personality in the piece. Being able to follow. There's a cohesiveness throughout the piece.

Interviewer: Mm-hmm.

Interviewee: You know, not feeling like it's jumping all over the place. I guess, unless maybe you're trying to do that? *[Laughs]*

Interviewer: Yeah. *[Laughs]*

Interviewee: Yeah.

Interviewer: You mentioned "voice" several times. I heard voice and personality? Are there other ways that you would define voice? Or, how would you define voice?

Interviewee: Being able to, I think; identify like, “Oh, I know this is this person’s writing.” I don’t know how to describe it, I guess, outside of being able to recognize and identify a certain person’s style. I guess.

Interviewer: You mentioned your first-year writing course. Which one was that?

Interviewee: It was the fiction. I think there’s just non-fiction and fiction. It was like [English course], I think? Yeah.

Interviewer: What were your experiences like in that course?

Interviewee: Good. Yeah. I mean, lots of papers. There were probably six papers. Lots of reading and writing.

Interviewer: Mm-hmm.

Interviewee: Yeah, I think it was good to get exposed to different types of books. I remember we read a half-animated book, and just like things that I hadn’t really read before. It was good to be exposed to different things.

Interviewer: You wrote in responses to those books?

Interviewee: Yeah, in like, just the themes in the books. Just different questions on them, I guess.

Interviewer: Mm-hmm. What kinds of questions did you have to write about?

Interviewee: [Laughs] This is a long time ago.

Interviewer: That’s okay. [Laughs]

Interviewee: Yeah. Yeah, just mainly about thematic material.

Interviewer: Okay.

Interviewee: You know, I think probably questions about like—if they’re opinion questions, why we had those opinions? Or, why certain things struck us as they did? Or things like that.

Interviewer: Okay. Did these have an effect on you, or as a writer? Your growth as a writer at all?

Interviewee: I mean, I think so because I just did it so frequently, that it helped me get more comfortable doing that type of writing.

Interviewer: Mm-hmm.

Interviewee: I can't say I've done too much of that since. *[Laughs]*

Interviewer: Mm-hmm.

Interviewee: I mean, I think any experience really can help you become a better writer, so—

Interviewer: *[Pause]* You said you're not really writing in those ways.

Interviewee: Mm-hmm.

Interviewer: Nowadays. Are you making use of anything—any ways of writing nowadays, that you learned in that course?

Interviewee: I mean, they definitely emphasized to be able to clearly convey what you're trying to say. That's pretty much been drilled in my head from high school, and then that class. I think that's always in the back of my mind, you know? Making sure I'm staying on topic.

Interviewer: Mm-hmm.

Interviewee: Clearly saying what I'm trying to talk about.

Interviewer: Clarity.

Interviewee: Yeah.

Interviewer: Did you take [Writing course] before?

Interviewee: Mm-hmm.

Interviewer: You said you're a violinist? Your concentration is music? *[Laughs]*

Interviewee: Yeah. Performance. Yeah. *[Laughs]*

Interviewer: Performance? Music performance?

Interviewee: Mm-hmm. I have a Performing Arts Management minor, too.

Interviewer: Okay.

Interviewee: That's how I got into the marketing aspects of things.

Interviewer: Oh, I see. You've talked about doing writing within your student organizations, and last year, some in that musicology class.

Interviewee: Mm-hmm.

Interviewer: What effect have those experiences had on you as a writer?

Interviewee: I think it's been more like practical experience. Things that I'll probably carry with me, and use the rest of my life.

Interviewer: Mm-hmm.

Interviewee: I think those have been the most helpful types of things to learn how to write. Especially if I end up working for a non-profit, or something. Hopefully not, but—*[laughs]*. Eventually, you know, I'll already have experience doing that. The marketing aspect of stuff.

Interviewer: Mm-hmm. How confident do you feel writing in those ways? In music, and in marketing?

Interviewee: Mm-hmm. I feel pretty confident. I feel like I get a decent amount of practice with it. I feel like I had good instruction early on. I know I feel comfortable with syntax and vocabulary. Yeah, I feel like I have a pretty good—I feel pretty comfortable writing in a lot of different ways.

Interviewer: Mm-hmm. *[Pause]* How did you learn how to write in those different areas?

Interviewee: Well, I guess, just the traditional essay format. Just starting in middle school.

Interviewer: Mm-hmm.

Interviewee: Then, writing the press releases was just taught kind of on the job for my internship at [Musical society] [...]. A lot of it, too, you can explore online. There's different ways to do things. I had a class for my minor that gave us practice writing a strategic plan for a non-profit. You know, like a made-up non-profit organization. Mostly classes. Classes, and just work experience taught me.

Interviewer: When you were writing for [Musical Society], did you receive feedback from your peers there?

Interviewee: Not from my peers but from the—the director I was working under.

Interviewer: Mm-hmm.

Interviewee: She would edit, or—yeah. Review things before the final thing was sent off.

Interviewer: Mm-hmm. Did you learn from those experiences?

Interviewee: Mm-hmm. Yeah. You know, like being able to have an exciting—you know, like, topic on your press release is really important to grab the attention. I feel like she was really good at that. I learned from her about how to make things more interesting, and pull a reader in.

Interviewer: Mm-hmm. You mentioned that those kind of writing skills you would—you see yourself taking those with you for the rest of your life?

Interviewee: Mm-hmm.

Interviewer: What makes those writing skills so life-long for you?

Interviewee: Yeah. I think just given the profession I'm pursuing.

Interviewer: Mm-hmm.

Interviewee: It's really important to be able to market yourself. You're kinda running your own business as a performer. I think, you know, I'm not gonna be like a historian, or someone who'll be writing factual essays probably too often. In terms of concerts; writing program notes. Making press releases for the performances, or for a non-profit organization. I just think those types of things will be more practical for my profession.

Interviewer: Mm-hmm. Mm-hmm. As a violinist, do you ever compose? Or write music?

Interviewee: No. *[Laughs]* I had to *[laughs]* for a class. I took [Title of course], and we had to create a piece in that style based on a Bach—a Bach melody.

Interviewer: Interesting.

Interviewee: We had to compose on that. There were some like—it wasn't completely free composition. There were some guidelines, which I liked. *[Laughs]* I don't feel comfortable composing. Just because I guess I never really tried, and I never had instruction on it when I was young. It feels very foreign. *[Laughs]*

Interviewer: *[Laughs]*

Interviewee: My teacher had me compose a cadenza for a Mozart concerto because that's common. A lot of people make up their own. I did do that once. *[Laughs]* Pretty minimal experience.

[...]

Interviewer: How about your experiences out of the classroom? Have they had any effect on your writing? Other than what we've talked about thus far?

Interviewee: Yeah.

Interviewer: Any other?

Interviewee: Well, I used to journal pretty frequently when I was in high school. It just seems—it's like a—you know, just like a way to let everything out at the end of the day.

Interviewer: Mm-hmm.

Interviewee: I think that helps in more like—or that affects me in more like a—like a personal way, rather than benefiting my writing. It is helpful for finding your own voice. Because if you're just writing in your journal, you're not gonna be turning it in. You can kind of just say whatever you want, however you want. I think that can influence how you write other things.

Interviewer: Mm-hmm. Has your writing process changed as a result of any of your writing experiences?

Interviewee: *[Pause]* I don't know. I mean, for traditional like; essay, I feel like I've approached that the same way. I do remember being shown different tools on how to get started in my freshman writing class. Like, you know, just like putting words—kind of word-mapping, and figuring out your ideas. I don't use that too much but *[pause]* but it's helpful sometimes for getting—getting started.

Interviewer: Mm-hmm.

Interviewee: I don't think I've really changed too much. *[Laughs]*

Interviewer: *[Laughs]* How 'bout the other—like the press releases, and stuff? Has your process for that changed over time?

Interviewee: *[Pause]* I don't know. I think I probably do it a little differently every time.

Interviewer: Mm-hmm.

Interviewee: I think for the press releases, a lot of times I leave the head—or like the title for the end. After I get all the details written out, so I can have time to just think of what would make the most sense for an exciting headline, I guess.

Interviewer: Mm-hmm. It's different every time, depending on—on what?
[Laughs]

Interviewee: [Laughs] Yeah. Depending on probably the subject—

Interviewer: Mm-hmm.

Interviewee: - I'm writing about. How familiar I am with the event, or the subject I'm writing about.

Interviewer: Mm-hmm.

Interviewee: If I need to do a lot of research on it, or if I just know things off the top of my head. If I'm familiar with the performer or the person, I feel like it's easier to capture the personality in the headline. If you just know random things about them, or things you wouldn't find on Wikipedia, I guess.

Interviewer: Mm-hmm.

Interviewee: I think those things could influence how I write them.

Interviewer: For [Musical Society]; caters to a lot of different demographics and audiences. Does that ever; like, say if you've ever written for an [Event], in comparison to—I don't know? Something more formal? [Laughs]

Interviewee: Right.

Interviewer: Does that affect your writing? Or, your writing process?

Interviewee: Yeah. I guess I did—I did emails for [Event]; [...]

Interviewer: Mm-hmm.

Interviewee: That was pretty much set, and there wasn't much room for improvisation. I mean, you could definitely make up the text, and why you should come.

Interviewer: Right.

Interviewee: Obviously, it will change with the details of the performance.

Interviewer: Mm-hmm.

Interviewee: Yeah. That's more like a template-style.

Interviewer: Mm-hmm. If I use the term "reflective writing," what does that mean to you?

Interviewee: Writing based on [pause] I guess how you feel about a certain thing? [Laughs] That's what I would think. You're reflecting on either an experience, or something you read, something you saw, something you—an event that you experienced in your own life.

Interviewer: Mm-hmm.

Interviewee: Depends on what; I would think.

Interviewer: Have you used reflective writing in your own writing processes?

Interviewee: Mm-hmm. I have. I think mostly probably in journaling is more reflective on, "Oh, this is what's happened to me lately."

Interviewer: Mm-hmm.

Interviewee: Yeah. I'm tryin' to think if I have incorporated it in any other types of writing. [Pause] I think mostly just journaling. Of course, if you're writing—I'm in the process of writing essays for grad school apps [applications]. Incorporating, obviously, personal experiences in those. A lot of 'em just ask for a personal statement. You know, your professional goals and your educational goals.

Interviewer: Mm-hmm.

Interviewee: I think reflecting on experiences I've had here, and other things related to my musical career is big in those.

Interviewer: Yeah. What are your experiences working with other writers in either your courses, or in other contexts?

Interviewee: I'm tryin' to think. Mostly, I don't feel like I've done too much collaborative. We did a lot of peer editing in my freshman class.

Interviewer: Mm-hmm.

Interviewee: I don't know if I felt like that was too effective. People just, I think, kinda didn't take too much time on that. It was kinda like an afterthought. It was more like "Oh, you shoulda put a comma here." Things like that, instead of in-

depth critiques. Probably because they didn't feel like they had to do that anyways; like the teacher would do that.

Interviewer: Mm-hmm.

Interviewee: Collaborating? I guess for the blog for my musicology course. I mean, we each wrote our individual blog post but it was part of a class blog.

Interviewer: Did you comment on each other's?

Interviewee: [Pause] I don't think we did. [Pause] I don't remember. [Laughs]

Interviewer: [Laughs] That's okay. Then, in creating the text for those blogs; did you give feedback, or work with each other at all?

Interviewee: We would share them after we wrote them with somebody. I don't think there were strict guidelines of what we needed to talk about. It was just like, "share what you wrote-type" thing.

Interviewer: With no expectation of revising after?

Interviewee: Yeah. Yeah, there wasn't any revisions.

Interviewer: Mm-hmm. [Pause] If you were going to give someone advice about their writing, what are some of the things that you would tell them to think about as they begin writing a paper?

Interviewee: For me, I mean, obviously, spelling [laughs] and grammar, and punctuation, and all that stuff; I feel like has come pretty naturally. When people aren't that great at it, it really sticks out to me. That's the first thing. 'Cause that's just distracting when you're trying to read something and things are spelled wrong, or it's a run-on sentence. That's probably the first thing I would notice.

Then, other just basic things like, do I feel like I know that they're relating to their topic throughout the whole thing? Or is it going on tangents? Is it interesting to read? Am I getting bored? If I was, I would probably just suggest adding more; I guess, maybe like personal experience. Or, examples. Or, just different forms of information. Quotes. Make sure to not just paraphrase all the time, and have your own words, I guess.

Interviewer: Mm-hmm. If you were to like [pause] like, say, synthesize all of those things that you would notice into two or three suggestions, what would you say?

Interviewee: Well, grammar, punctuation and spelling; I guess would be the one thing. Staying focused on the topic, and having an interesting voice.

Interviewer: Have you had any experiences with new media writing? That would be, for example; you talked about writing for a blog. Or have you used sound, or video? Or even like PowerPoint in your writing?

Interviewee: I guess, I mean I've done PowerPoint presentations, but not about writing so much. The blog posts were—that was my first time ever really doing a blog, or participating in a blog. Way back when, I had a Xanga. That was like a blog, I guess. *[Laughs]*

Interviewer: Yeah.

Interviewee: I think that's kinda the only thing.

Interviewer: Writing the blog for musicology—that was for musicology?

Interviewee: Yeah.

Interviewer: What was learning that like?

Interviewee: It's definitely different because there's kind of less rules in terms of traditional sentence structure, I think. Just because you can talk more in like, slang. The internet slang.

Interviewer: Mm-hmm.

Interviewee: Or abbreviations. Or just shorter, almost like stream of consciousness; I feel like is a little more accepted online.

Interviewer: Mm-hmm.

Interviewee: Yeah, so it was definitely different.

Interviewer: Why do you think those differences exist?

Interviewee: I think because it's, you know; you can type so quickly. Way quicker than you can write.

Interviewer: Mm-hmm.

Interviewee: That there's just been a lot of shorthand that's come from that. In terms of the abbreviations.

Interviewer: Mm-hmm.

Interviewee: I think, I don't know. I mean, you can read at the same rate. If you're on the internet, I think people are used to being able to go through things really quickly. It has to be a little more condensed. People aren't gonna read a five-page article probably. If they're scrolling through Facebook and see a post, they'd be more likely to read something shorter and concise. I think you have to definitely be—you know; say what you wanna say in less time. *[Laughs]*

Interviewer: Who was reading your blog?

Interviewee: The teacher would read them, and whoever followed his blog post. He actually had followers from all around the world.

Interviewer: Uh huh.

Interviewee: I don't really know who, but I think a couple hundred people follow the blog, or something. Other students could read as many as they wanted.

Interviewer: His followers were other musicians? Or, who?

Interviewee: I think it was a variety. I don't know, I didn't—I don't know if there was any way to find that out. There probably is. *[Laughs]* Yeah. Probably mostly musicians 'cause it was for a musicology class. Anybody interested in music, probably.

Interviewer: In those blogs you were writing in response to—

Interviewee: I'm trying to remember the different prompts we had.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Interviewee: Yeah. One, I just remember writing about—one topic was like a song. Or, a piece that you'd either listen to, or learned, or played that has affected you in your life. That was one prompt. I think it was just mostly just like prompts based on musical topics.

Interviewer: Mm-hmm. *[Pause]* Anything about that kind of writing? Writing on blogs? That has affected you as a writer?

Interviewee: *[Pause]* It was only three posts, so I don't feel like I did a ton of it.

Interviewer: Okay.

Interviewee: It does make you think in a different way, in terms of being interesting, and different, and grabbing people's attention in a short amount of time.

Interviewer: Do you have to do those same things for the other writings that you do?

Interviewee: Yeah. I guess it does translate because press releases are only a page, or maybe two. You wanna definitely be concise, but interesting at the same time.

Interviewer: Mm-hmm.

Interviewee: Program notes is the same way. Nobody's gonna read a whole novel on one movement of music. *[Laughs]*

Interviewer: *[Laughs]*

Interviewee: It's good at, I think; making you pick the most interesting points, and highlighting those.

Interviewer: Mm-hmm. It seems like there's a difference in the ways that you make the writing concise? In blogs, and program notes?

Interviewee: Yeah. Yeah, I guess so. I think on the internet you can use more slang, and abbreviations to make things concise. *[Pause]* I guess you just have—for the other stuff it's more the way you would—you would talk about it. For program notes, I know it's—it'd be easy to go into too much technical detail. You know, this chord is here because of this reason.

You have to just remember to keep things simple for people who don't have a music theory background. While keeping things interesting enough that; things that they necessarily might not know just from googling the piece. Maybe fun facts about what the composer was going through when they wrote it, or where they were living. I think more personal details make things like that more interesting.

Interviewer: Mm-hmm. You've been uploading writing onto CTools [learning management system]?

Interviewee: I did last year. I haven't had any that they wanted this year, I don't think. I haven't gotten an email about it.

Interviewer: What was that like for you? Maybe, like what pieces did you choose?

Interviewee: Yeah. I think I uploaded one from my freshman writing class. I don't remember exactly what they were asking for me to upload. Then, I think I did upload one blog post. I think it asked me to do like two—maybe two different kinds of writing, or something. I did more like a response essay, and then a blog post, I think.

Interviewer: Mm-hmm. Any other reasons why you chose these? You uploaded just the two? Or one?

Interviewee: I think so.

Interviewer: Mm-hmm.

Interviewee: I think, yeah. Just the two. Mainly because *[laughs]* those are my only two pools to choose from. 'Cause I'm using my *[inaudible 35:09]*. Yeah. *[Laughs]*

Interviewer: Would you consider them some of your better pieces of writing?

Interviewee: I mean, I think I chose ones that I felt like I put time into.

Interviewer: Mm-hmm.

Interviewee: You know, and was a representative example of my writing for those styles.

Interviewer: Mm-hmm. *[Pause]* Do you remember what they were about?

Interviewee: I think I uploaded the blog post about a musical piece, or—that either evokes a strong memory or *[pause]* yeah. The prompt was something like that.

Interviewer: Okay.

Interviewee: Then, I don't remember what the responses though for the essay that I submitted. It was some book, or article that we read. I don't remember. *[Laughs]*

Interviewer: *[Laughs]*

Interviewee: Yeah, I read a lot. *[Laughs]*

Interviewer: Did the response to the piece of music—did it further your understanding of analyzing music, or like—

Interviewee: I actually chose to write about a pop song. *[Laughs]* It wasn't like a classical—it wasn't a classical piece.

Interviewer: Like appreciating music?

Interviewee: Yeah. I mean, I feel like I have a pretty good appreciation for a lot of different kinds of music.

Interviewer: Mm-hmm.

Interviewee: Yeah. It does make you remember, and put things in perspective. Realize that a lot of the time, I only hear classical music all day long.

Interviewer: Mm-hmm.

Interviewee: I definitely like to have my radio not on classical. *[Laughs]*

Interviewer: *[Laughs]*

Interviewee: To get a break from it. *[Laughs]* Other types of music can have the same emotional effect and response on me that classical music can.

Interviewer: Mm-hmm. Any other comments about writing or your writerly self?

Interviewee: *[Laughs]*

Interviewer: *[Laughs]* Any other kinds of writing that we didn't touch on today?

Interviewee: *[Pause]* Besides Facebook comments, I don't think so. *[Laughs]*

Interviewer: *[Laughs]*

Interviewee: Emails. I write a lot of emails, I guess. *[Laughs]*

Interviewer: Yeah. Does that; those experiences influence your writing?

Interviewee: I mean, just in terms of social media; that's such a growing field.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Interviewee: Marketing, for sure. That can affect kinda the same stuff as the blogs. Just being able to be interesting and exciting on the web, where you're getting so much information thrown at you.

Interviewer: Mm-hmm.

Interviewee: Emailing; same type of thing, I guess. As more like the formal web-related stuff like marketing—you know, press releases and just being able to be concise and clear. Without writing five pages. *[Laughs]*

Interviewer: *[Laughs]*

Interviewee: Yeah. *[Laughs]*

Interviewer: Alright. *[Pause]* Yeah. Anything else?

Interviewee: I don't think so. *[Laughs]*

Interviewer: *[Laughs]* Well, thank you so much.

Interviewee: You're welcome.

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