

**Program Note:**

Too much music is written by composers who are not aware of the precise musical result of their actions; from instrumental techniques and individual timbre to the context of these sounds, their combined texture, and the way they hang together. Even more severe than this is that the structure the composer conceives often has little or no impact on the formal experience of the listener.

Herein lies a significant question. Can the composer be asked to predict the cognitive process of the listener? The obvious answer is that he or she cannot. Yet it is crucial that they are aware of the musical impact their piece will have. The only way to assess this is to act as your own guinea pig - using your own mind as a model. The composer must be aware of the form of their piece as it exists in time, as well as on the page. Only when they are familiar with this, can they start writing music that they themselves would want to listen to; sounds and structures that appeal to their own musical ear.

The title, "Listen to Me Listening" comes from a discussion I had with a group of composers at the Darmstadt Summer Course in 2010, based loosely on the arguments outlined above. A question was raised about how the composer could be qualified to talk about their own experience of their music, as this would be drastically shaped by their familiarity with the material. In order to give a true representation of their listening process they would have to listen to a piece they could not remember having composed. While this is practically impossible, I argued that one might at least try to approach this idea by writing a piece where the material and structure was created within a short period of time; to be sketched out instinctively and filled in later. The composer would have to follow their initial instinct on every level of the compositional process, whether they liked the result or not.

If one follows this process, the resulting piece might well be based largely on the intuitive process of the composer's inner ear - a piece where the musical chronocourse unveils itself as a stream of consciousness, coming as close as possible to emanating directly from the composers unconscious musical mind. A piece where sounds and form result from an uncensored development in their imagination, from the opening, to the final bar. In performance, the listener is then merely asked to listen to the composer listening.