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## SUNDAY Arts & Entertainment

### CDs aim at helping concertgoers

You know the drill: Run to the concert, race to your seat and catch your breath, sit down, pull out the program notes and then — the lights go down. Oh, no! Whose music are they playing tonight? Stravinsky? Schnittke? Who's Schnittke?

To help frustrated concertgoers, Music @Menlo is offering a digital alternative to program notes: AudioNotes. For each of its five programs, the festival has produced an AudioNotes CD to guide listeners through the music with commentary and excerpts from every piece on the program.

Available free to advance ticket buyers, the AudioNotes are intended for listening in the car or at home before the concerts.

"The car is the ideal place to listen," says cellist David Finckel, the festival's co-artistic director. "You can take it in in smaller chunks. It gets some musical terms and ideas into your head. Because by the time you get to the concert, it's almost too late."

As an example, the disc for the festival's third program, "Emotion Unbound," tells how Felix Mendelssohn, adored throughout Europe as the Mozart of his time, had his reputation ruined by the anti-Semitic tracts of Richard Wagner. Disc 5, "Music Now: Voices of Our Time," features an interview with the Chinese-born composer Bright Sheng, who sings a Tibetan love song that he incorporated into "Four Movements for Piano Trio."

Finckel hopes the discs will help people who are intimidated by classical music or frustrated by the typical concert ritual. "They run in off the street after having driven to a performance and finding parking and maybe having been dragged there by a spouse," he says. "It's happened to me so many times. I go to a concert and I don't really know the pieces or the composers and I find the program notes and there's column after column of eight-point type. And then the music starts."

For information on how to obtain the discs, call (650) 330-2000.

— Richard Scheinin