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## When an Oldie Is Only 11 Years Old

By **ALLAN KOZINN**

The [Locrian Chamber Players](#) have several quirky policies, and they usually honor them to the letter. One is a 10-year rule: the ensemble, founded 17 years ago, performs only music that is no more than a decade old — which means, at this point, pieces composed in the 21st century. Another is that the group does not provide program notes, on the theory that listeners are better off focusing on these works without preconceptions.

But at their concert on Thursday evening in the 10th-floor performing space at Riverside Church, the Locrians bent their rules slightly. Two of the seven works were composed in 2000. And there were program notes, but they were made available only at the end of the concert.

The two oldies from 2000 — [Robert Paterson's](#) “Embracing the Wind,” for flute, harp and viola, and [Julia Wolfe's](#) “Earring,” for piano — were good enough, and rarely heard enough, to justify the group's decision to relax its policy (and, perhaps, to make you wonder whether there really is much point to the decade rule).

At the beginning of Mr. Paterson's work, each instrument inhabits its own distinct sound world: the harp produces rolling arpeggios; the flute plays graceful, slightly exotic melodies; and the viola offers brusque, combative counterpoint. But Mr. Paterson gradually alters each line, having each take on characteristics of the others at first, eventually softening the edges to create a tightly knit (if not quite homogenous) dreamlike wash.

In [Ms. Wolfe's](#) brief, moodily atmospheric “Earring,” a repeating, rhythmically steady, slowly descending figure played at the top of the keyboard creates a crystalline, jangling backdrop for a gentle, midrange melody. [Jonathan Faiman](#), the pianist, mined the contrasting imagery of these two elements carefully, creating a miniature portrait of the bauble in the title.

Mr. Faiman also gave a lovely account of Eve Beglarian's "Night Psalm" (2009), an appealing meditation in which velvety descending arpeggios morph into a quietly rumbling harmonic haze. Ms. Beglarian's "I'm Worried Now, but I Won't Be Worried Long" (2010), though composed only a year after "Night Psalm," inhabits a different universe: electronic sound, a droning cello line and tactile, rhythmically solid harp writing form the backdrop for a soulful, almost folk-song-like soliloquy for the violin, played here with a rich, deep sonority by Miranda Cuckson.

The two sections of David Macdonald's "Ostinati" (2009, 2011), for string quintet, seem more like distinct pieces than like movements of a larger work. The first, "Loops and Squiggles," is a mechanistic study of lively, slightly squeaky sounds; the second, "Dear John," is slow and richly harmonized, with hints of Vaughan Williams's lushness, though with a mildly acerbic, modernist twist.

Colin Holter's string quartet "There's No Place" (2008-11) has a dense, dark, churning quality that creates the impression of a restless, though at times hypnotic, seascape. And Dan Visconti's "Black Bend" (2003), for string quintet, closed the concert with a quirky evocation of a jazz jam in which the viola, cello and bass create a rich fabric and a steady rhythmic bed against which the two violins (played with energy and spirit by Curtis Macomber and Ms. Cuckson) spin out dueling, bluesy solo lines.