

Acknowledgements

I tend to link the appearance of my supervisor Jeremy Gibbons with that of Professor Smith in PhD Comics, but, very fortunately, Jeremy's personality is just the opposite of Smith's. I can't hope for a more supportive supervisor than Jeremy: he is always eager to help when I encounter various problems, quickly responds to my email even when he's away or on holiday, and patiently listens to me as I struggle to find the right word to use during our meetings. It is a great reassurance that he is there to offer advice — usually I can quickly get unexpected yet perfectly sensible and clear suggestions from him, which are really the kind of suggestions one needs.

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Just a few days after my arrival in Oxford, at the orientation programme for international graduate students I met Frank Chen 陳韋宇, who had given me a lot of support since then. I still remember those morning walks around Christ Church Meadow. Another person I met in my first year is Jackie Wang 王震維. Especially memorable are the days when we worked on our respective dissertations together in the office, with lunch at the Bangkok House. I also enjoyed many friendly chats with Lihao Liang and Di Chen.

During my second and third year, I lived in 45 Marlborough Road with

Yen-Chen Pan 潘彥丞 and Eric Liang 梁智超. (We were joined by Nien-Ti Tzou 鄒年棣 and Lilya Lee for a year and then Giovanni Bassolino and Chih-Suei Shaw 蕭植穗 for the other year.) With their kind consent and tolerance, I had the luxury of renting a Knight K10 piano — which has a beautifully bright and deep tone — and practising daily. Joined by Wilson Chen 陳煒昕, Yun-Ju Chen 陳韻如, Fu-Lien Hsieh 謝馥蓮, Tao-Hsin Chang 張道欣, and Duen-Wei Hsu 許惇偉, we had three unforgettable evenings which started with dinner, followed by thirty minutes of my piano playing (mostly Chopin's works), and ending with a cosy chat going on late into the night. Special thanks to Pan for keeping me company — in particular, patiently responding to my endless (and sometimes pointless) Skype messages and travelling with me to London for concerts.

The concerts. It's really a privilege to be able to live near London and regularly go to the superb concerts at the Southbank Centre, notably the performances of London Philharmonic Orchestra and Philharmonia Orchestra at the Royal Festival Hall. The lively culture of Southbank Centre is pleasant and healing, and the amazing musicians showed me how natural it can be to strive for beauty and perfection.

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On 18 March, when I was working on the last part of this dissertation, news about the Sunflower Movement in Taiwan swept through Facebook, causing quite some disruptions to my write-up plan. I have my doubts about nationalism, but I'm happy with the idea when the name Taiwan is simply used to collectively refer to the people on the island, many of whom have helped me as I grow up and become who I am. My experience in the UK has already shown how much advancement Taiwan still needs, and the Sunflower Movement revealed how urgent the advancement should happen. Perhaps I will be able to contribute towards that advancement, as a big thanks to Taiwan.

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