32 Short Films About Glenn Gould (1993), a film directed by François GIRARD and written by Girard with Don MCKELLAR, offers 32 biographical insights into the life of Canadian pianist Glenn GOULD. Non-linear in its construction, the film is made up of 32 segments, each of which explains a facet of Gould's complex interior life (the title refers to the number of the Goldberg Variations, Gould's most famous interpretation). Gould's odd relationships with friends, his obsession with long phone calls, his ideas about music and the human voice are just a few of the themes dealt with in the film. Several segments deal with his celebrated 1967 radio documentary, *The Idea of the North*. Another sequence attempts to reconstruct the abstract symphony of human and mechanical sound as it might have struck Gould when he entered a truck stop on the edge of Toronto, a concept of sound and music that was central to Gould's radio work. One of the "short films" is an animated piece by Norman MCLAREN with Gould's piano playing on the soundtrack.

32 Short Films marked a shift in style for Canada's semi-commercial cinema. Although Canadian filmmakers David CRONENBERG, Atom EGOYAN and Patricia ROZEMA had gained significant international attention during the 1980s and early 1990s, *32 Short Films* departed from the narrative strategy of these filmmakers and turned instead to Canada's rich tradition of EXPERIMENTAL FILM and video for its inspiration. Experimental filmmaker Arthur Lipsett's innovative assembly of film fragments may have influenced the structure of Girard's film, while Michael SNOW's minimalism could have inspired the sequence in *32 Short Films* composed only of extreme close-ups of piano hammers hitting the strings. In *32 Short Films About Glenn Gould*, however, Girard made formal innovation widely accessible, leading the viewer gently along the path of non-narrative, and not so far from the avant garde.

32 Short Films About Glenn Gould, which featured a highly complex and subtle performance by Colm FEORE in the role of Gould, brought Canadian cinema exceptional visibility on the world's screens, playing to considerable critical acclaim in both the US and Europe. It was also critically successful within Canada, winning a number of Genies in 1993, including Best Picture.

Gould's notes on Bach's *Goldberg Variations*

by Glenn Gould Copyright/Source

These notes were included in the program for recital at Plateau Hall in Montréal, November 7, 1955 in which Gould played the Goldberg Variations.

The most casual acquaintance with this work -- a first hearing, or a brief glance at the score -- will manifest the baffling incongruity between the imposing dimensions of the variations and the unassuming Sarabande which conceived them.

We are accustomed to consider at least one of two prerequisites indispensable to an Air for variations, a theme with a melodic curve which veritably entreats ornamentation, or an harmonic basis, stripped to its fundamentals, pregnant with promise and capacity for exhaustive exploitation. Though there are abundant examples of the former procedure from the Renaissance to the present day, it flourishes through the theme-and-elaborative-variation concept of the rococo. The latter method, which, by stimulating linear inventiveness, suggests a certain analogy with the passacaille style of reiterated bass progression, is strikingly portrayed by Beethoven's 32 variations in C minor.

The present work utilises the Sarabande from Anna Magdalena Bach's notebook as a passacaille -- that is, only its bass progression is duplicated in the variations. Indeed, this noble bass binds each variation with the inexorable assurance of its own inevitability. This structure possesses in its own right a completeness, a solidarity which suggests nothing of the urgent longing for fulfilment which is implicit in the traditionally terse entry of a chaconne statement.

One might justifiably expect that in view of the constancy the harmonic foundation of the principal pursuit of the variations would be the illumination of motivic facets within the

melodic complex of the Aria theme. However, such is not the case, for the thematic substance, a docile but richly embellished soprano line, possesses an intrinsic homogeneity which bequeathes nothing to posterity and which, so far as motivic representation is concerned, is totally forgotten during the 30 variations. In short it is a singularly self-sufficient little air which seems to sun the patriarchal demeanour, to exhibit a bland unconcern about its issue, to remain totally uninquisitive as to its raison d'être.

Nothing could better demonstrate the aloof carriage of the Aria, than the precipitous outburst of Variation 1 which abruptly curtails the preceeding tranquillity. Such aggression is scarcely the attitude we associate with prefatory variations, which customarily embark with unfledged dependence on the theme, simulating the pose of their precursor and functioning with a modest opinion of their present capacity but a thorough optimism for future prospects.

With Variation 2 we have the first instance of the confluence of these juxtaposed qualities -- that curious hybrid of clement composure and cogent command which typifies the virile ego of the Goldberg.

With Variation 3 begin the canons which subsequently occupy every third segment of the work. In the canons, the literal imitation is confined to the two upper voices, while the accompanying part, which is present in all but the final canon at the ninth, is left free to convert the tema del basso, in most cases at least, to a suitably acquiescent complement.

Nor is such intense contrapuntal preoccupation solely the property of the canonic variations. Many of those numbers of "independent Character" expand minute thematic cells into an elaborate linear texture. Since the Aria melody, as afore-mentioned, evades intercourse with the rest of the work, the individual variation voraciously consumes the potential of a motivic germ peculiar to it, thus exercising an entirely subjective aspect of the variation concept.

The great cycle concludes with that boisterous exhibition of Deutsche Freundlichkeit, the Quodlibet. Then, as though it could not longer suppress a smug smile at the progress of its progeny; the original Sarabande, anything but a dutiful parent, returns to us to bask in the reflected glory of an aria de capo.

It is no accident that the great cycle should conclude thus. Nor does the aria's return simply constitute a gesture of benign benediction. Rather is its suggestion of perpetuity indicative of the essential incorporeality of the Goldberg, symbolic of its rejection of embryonic inducement.

It is in a short music which observes neither end nor beginning, music with neither real climax nor real resolution, yet music in which there exists a fundamental coordinating intelligence which we labelled "ego". It has, then, unity through intuitive perception, unity born of craft and scrutiny, mellowed by mastery achieved, and revealed to us here, as so rarely in art, in the vision of subconscious design exulting upon a pinnacle of potency.

■ Glenn Gould

Glenn Gould Interviews Glenn Gould about Glenn Gould

by Glenn Gould Copyright/Source

From High Fidelity*, February 1974.*

glenn gould: Mr. Gould, I gather that you have a reputation as a -- well, forgive me for being blunt, sir -- but as a tough nut to crack, interview-wise?

GLENN GOULD: Really. I've never heard that.

g.g: Well, it's the sort of scuttlebutt that we media types pick up from source to source, but I just want to assure you that I'm quite prepared to strike from the record any question you may feel is out of line.

G.G.: Oh, I can't conceive of any problems of that sort intruding upon our deliberations.

g.g.: Well then, just to clear the air, sir, let me ask straight out: Are there any off-limit areas?

G.G.: I certainly can't think of any -- apart from music, of course.

g.g.: Well, Mr. Gould, I don't want to go back on my word. I realize that your participation in this interview was never contractually confirmed, but it was sealed with a handshake.

G.G.: Figuratively speaking, of course.

g.g.: Of course, and I had rather assumed that we'd spend the bulk of this interview on musically related matters.

G.G.: Well, do you think it's essential? I mean, my personal philosophy of interviewing -- and I've done quite a bit of it on the air, as you perhaps know -- is that the most illuminating disclosures derive from areas only indirectly related to the interviewee's line of work.

g.g.: For example?

G.G.: Well, for example, in the course of preparing radio documentaries, I've interviewed a theologian about technology, a surveyor about William James, an economist about pacifism and a housewife about acquisitiveness in the art market.

g.g.: But surely you've also interviewed musicians about music?

G.G.: Well, yes, I have, on occasion, in order to help put them at ease in front of the mike. But it's been far more instructive to talk with Pablo Casals, for example, about the concept of the *Zeitgeist*, which, of course, is not unrelated to music --

g.g.: Yes, I was just going to venture that comment.

G.G.: Or to Leopold Stokowski about the prospect for interplanetary travel, which is -- I think you'll agree, and Stanley Kubrick notwithstanding -- a bit of a digression.

g.g.: Well, this does pose a problem, Mr. Gould, but let me try to frame the question more affirmatively. Is there a subject you'd particularly like to discuss?

G.G.: Well, I hadn't given it much thought, really -- but, just off the top, what about the political situation in Labrador?

g.g.: Well, I'm sure that could produce a stimulating dialogue, Mr. Gould, but I do feel that we have to keep in mind that HIGH FIDELITY is edited primarily for a U.S. constituency.

G.G.: Oh, quite. Well, in that case, perhaps aboriginal rights in western Alaska would make good copy.

g.g.: Yes. Well, I certainly don't want to bypass any headline-grabbing areas of that sort, Mr. Gould, but since HIGH FIDELITY is oriented toward a musically literate readership, we should, I think, at least begin our discussion in the area of the arts.

G.G.: Oh, certainly. Perhaps we could examine the question of aboriginal rights as reflected in ethnomusicological field studies at Point Barrow.

g.g.: Well, I must confess I had a rather more conventional line of attack, so to speak, in mind, Mr. Gould. As I'm sure you're aware, the virtually obligatory question in regard to your career is the concert-versus-media controversy, and I do feel we must at least touch upon it.

G.G.: Oh, well, I have no objections to fielding a few questions in that area. As far as I'm concerned, it primarily involves moral rather than musical considerations in any case, so be my guest.

g.g.: Well, that's very good of you. I'll try to make it brief, and then, perhaps, we can move further afield.

G.G.: Fair enough!

g.g.: Well now, you've been quoted as saying that your involvement with recording -- with media in general, indeed -- represents an involvement with the future.

G.G.: That's correct. I've even said so in the pages of this illustrious journal, as a matter of fact.

g.g.: Quite so, and you've also said that, conversely, the concert hall, the recital stage, the opera house, or whatever, represent the past -- an aspect of your own past in particular, perhaps, as well as, in more general terms, music's past.

G.G.: That's true, although I must admit that my only past professional contact with opera was a touch of tracheitis I picked up while playing the old Festspielhaus in Salzburg. As you know, it was an exceedingly drafty edifice, and I --

g.g.: Perhaps we could discuss your state of health at a more opportune moment, Mr. Gould, but it does occur to me -- and I hope you'll forgive me for saying so -- that there is something inherently self-serving about pronouncements of this kind. After all, you elected to abandon all public platforms some -- what was it? -- ten years ago?

G.G.: Nine years and eleven months as of the date of this issue, actually.

g.g.: And you will admit that most people who opt for radical career departures of any sort sustain themselves with the notion that, however reluctantly, the future is on their side?

G.G.: It's encouraging to think so, of course, but I must take exception to your use of the term "radical." It's certainly true that I did take the plunge out of a conviction that given the state of the art, a total immersion in media represented a logical development -- and I remain so convinced. But, quite frankly, however much one likes to formulate past-future equations, the prime sponsors of such convictions, the strongest motivations behind such "departures," to borrow your term, are usually related to no more radical notion than an attempt to resolve the discomfort and inconvenience of the present.

g.g.: I'm not sure I've caught the drift of that, Mr. Gould.

G.G.: Well, for instance, let me suggest to you that the strongest motivation for the invention of a lozenge would be a sore throat. Of course, having patented the lozenge, one would then be free to speculate that the invention represented the future and the sore throat the past, but I doubt that one would be inclined to think in those terms while the irritation was present. Needless to say, in the case of my tracheitis at Salzburg, medication of that sort was --

g.g.: Excuse me, Mr. Gould, I'm sure we will be apprised of your Salzburg misadventures in due course, but I must pursue this point a bit further. Am I to understand that your withdrawal from the concert stage, your subsequent involvement with media, was motivated by the musical equivalent of a -- of a sore throat?

G.G.: Do you find that objectionable?

g.g.: Well, to be candid, I find it utterly narcissistic. And to my mind, it's also entirely at odds with your statement that moral objections played a major role in your decision.

G.G.: I don't see the contradiction there -- unless, of course, in your view discomfort per se ranks as a positive virtue.

g.g.: My views are not the subject of this interview, Mr. Gould, but I'll answer your question, regardless. Discomfort per se is not the issue; I simply believe that an artist worthy of the name must be prepared to sacrifice personal comfort.

G.G.: To what end?

g.g.: In the interests of preserving the great traditions of the musical -- theatrical experience, of maintaining the noble tutorial and curatorial responsibilities of the artist in relation to his audience.

G.G.: You don't feel that a sense of discomfort, of unease, could be the sagest of counsellors for both artist and audience?

g.g.: No, I simply feel that you, Mr. Gould, have either never permitted yourself to savour the --

G.G.: -- ego gratification?

g.g.: -- The privilege, as I was about to say, of communicating with an audience --

G.G.: -- from a power-base?

g.g.: -- from a proscenium setting in which the naked fact of your humanity is on display, unedited and unadorned.

G.G.: Couldn't I at least be allowed to display the tuxedoed fallacy, perhaps?

g.g.: Mr. Gould, I don't feel we should allow this dialogue to degenerate into idle banter. It's obvious that you've never savoured the joys of a one-to-one relationship with a listener.

G.G.: I always thought that, managerially speaking, a twenty-eight-hundred-to-one relationship was the concert-hall ideal.

g.g.: I don't want to split statistics with you. I've tried to pose the question with all candour, and --

G.G.: Well then, I'll try to answer likewise. It seems to me that if we're going to get waylaid by the numbers game, I'll have to plump for a zero-to-one relationship as between audience and artist, and that's where the moral objection comes in.

g.g.: I'm afraid I don't quite grasp that point, Mr. Gould. Do you want to run it through again?

G.G.: I simply feel that the artist should be granted, both for his sake and for that of his public -- and let me get on record right now the fact that I'm not at all happy with words like "public" and "artist"; I'm not happy with the hierarchical implications of that kind of terminology -- that he should be granted anonymity. He should be permitted to operate in secret, as it were, unconcerned with -- or, better still, unaware of -- the presumed demands of the marketplace -- which demands, given sufficient indifference on the part of a sufficient number of artists, will simply disappear. And given their disappearance, the artist will then abandon his false sense of "public" responsibility, and his "public" will relinquish its role of servile dependency.

g.g.: And never the twain shall meet, I daresay!

G.G.: No, they'll make contact, but on an altogether more meaningful level than that which relates any stage to its apron.

g.g.: Mr. Gould, I'm well aware that this sort of idealistic role swapping offers a satisfying rhetorical flourish, and it may even be that the "creative audience" concept to which you've devoted a lot of interview space elsewhere offers a kind of McLuhanesque fascination. But you conveniently forget that the artist, however hermetic his life-style, is still in effect an autocratic figure. He's still, however benevolently, a social dictator. And his public, however generously enfranchised by gadgetry, however richly endowed with electronic options, is still on the receiving end of the experience, as of this late date at least, and all of your neomedieval anonymity quest on behalf of the artist as zero, and all of your vertical panculturalism on behalf of his "public," isn't going to change that -- or at least it hasn't done so thus far.

G.G.: May I speak now?

g.g.: Of course. I didn't mean to get carried away, but I do feel strongly about the --

G.G.: -- about the artist as superman?

g.g.: That's not quite fair, Mr. Gould.

G.G.: -- or about the interlocutor as controller of conversations, perhaps?

g.g.: There's certainly no need to be rude. I didn't really expect a conciliatory response from you -- I realize that you've staked out certain philosophical claims in regard to these issues -- but I did at least hope that just once you'd confess to a personal experience of the one-to-one, artist-to-listener relationship. I had hoped that you might confess to having personally been witness to the magnetic attraction of a great artist visibly at work before his public.

G.G.: Oh, I have had that experience.

g.g.: Really?

G.G.: Certainly, and I don't mind confessing to it. Many years ago, I happened to be in Berlin while Herbert von Karajan led the Philharmonic in their first-ever performance of Sibelius's Fifth. As you know, Karajan tends -- in late romantic repertoire particularly -- to conduct with eyes closed and to endow his stick wielding with enormously persuasive choreographic contours, and the effect, quite frankly, contributed to one of the truly indelible musical-dramatic experiences of my life.

g.g.: You're supporting my contention very effectively indeed, Mr. Gould. I know, of course, that that performance, or at any rate one of its subsequent recorded incarnations, played a rather important role in your life.

G.G.: You mean because of its utilization in the epilogue of my radio documentary "*The Idea of North*"?

g.g.: Exactly, and you've just admitted that this "indelible" experience derived from a face-to-face confrontation, shared with an audience, and not simply from the disembodied predictability purveyed by even the best of phonograph records.

G.G.: Well, I suppose you could say that, but I wasn't actually a member of the audience. As a matter of fact, I took refuge in a glassed-in broadcast booth over the stage, and although I was in a position to see Karajan's face and to relate every ecstatic grimace to the emerging musical experience, the audience -- except for the occasional profile shot as he might cue left or right -- was not.

g.g.: I'm afraid you're splitting subdivided beats there, Mr. Gould.

G.G.: I'm not so sure. You see, the broadcast booth, in effect, represented a state of isolation, not only for me vis-à-vis my fellow auditors but vis-à-vis the Berlin Philharmonic and its conductor as well.

g.g.: And now you're simply clutching at symbolic straws.

G.G.: Maybe so but I must point out -- *entre nous*, of course -- that when it came time to incorporate Karajan's Sibelius Fifth into "*The Idea of North*," I revised the dynamics of the recording to suit the mood of the text it accompanied, and that liberty, surely, is the product of -- what shall I call it? -- the enthusiastic irreverence of a zero-to-one relationship, wouldn't you say?

g.g.: I should rather think it's the product of unmitigated gall. I realize, of course, that "*The Idea of North*" was an experimental radio venture -- as I recall, you treated the human voice in that work almost as one might a musical instrument --

G.G: That's right.

g.g.: -- and permitted two, three, or four individuals to speak at once on occasion.

G.G.: True.

g.g.: But whereas those experiments with your own raw material, so to speak, seem perfectly legitimate to me, your use -- or misuse -- of Herr von Karajan's material is another matter altogether. After all, you've confessed that your original experience of that performance was "indelible." And yet you blithely confess as well to tampering with what were, presumably, carefully controlled dynamic relationships --

G.G.: We did some equalizing, too.

g.g.: -- and all in the interest of --

G.G.: -- of my needs of the moment.

g.g.: -- which, however, were at least unique to the project at hand.

G.G.: All right, I'll give you that, but every listener has a "project at hand", simply in terms of making his experience of music relate to his life-style.

g.g.: And you're prepared to have similar unauthorized permutations practiced on your own recorded output by listener or listeners unknown?

G.G.: I should have failed in my purpose otherwise.

g.g.: Then you're obviously reconciled to the fact that no real aesthetic yardstick relates your performances as originally conceived to the manner in which they will be subsequently audited?

G.G.: Come to that, I have absolutely no idea as to the "aesthetic" merits of Karajan's Sibelius Fifth when I encountered it on that memorable occasion. In fact the beauty of the occasion was that, although I was aware of being witness to an intensely moving experience, I had no idea as to whether it was or was not a "good" performance. My aesthetic judgments were simply placed in cold storage -- which is where I should like them to remain, at least when assessing the works of others. Perhaps, necessarily, and for entirely practical reasons, I apply a different set of criteria on my own behalf, but --

g.g.: Mr. Gould, are you saying that you do not make aesthetic judgments?

G.G.: No, I'm not saying that -- though I wish I were able to make that statement, because it would attest to a degree of spiritual perfection that I have not attained. However, to rephrase the fashionable cliché, I do try as best I can to make only moral judgments and not aesthetic ones -- except, as I said, in the case of my own work.

g.g.: I suppose, Mr. Gould, I'm compelled to give you the benefit of the doubt --

G.G.: That's very good of you.

g.g.: -- and to assume that you are assessing your own motivations responsibly and accurately.

G.G.: One can only try.

g.g.: and given that, what you have just confessed adds so many forks to the route of this interview, I simply don't know which trail to pursue.

G.G.: Why not pick the most likely signpost, and I'll just tag along.

g.g.: Well, I suppose the obvious question is: If you don't make aesthetic judgments on behalf of others, what about those who make aesthetic judgments in regard to your own work?

G.G.: Oh, some of my best friends are critics, although l'm not sure I'd want my piano to be played by one.

g.g.: But some minutes ago, you related the term "spiritual perfection" to a state in which aesthetic judgment is suspended.

G.G.: I didn't mean to give the impression that such a suspension would constitute the only criterion for such a state.

g.g.: I understand that. But would it be fair to say that in your view the critical mentality would necessarily lead to an imperiled state of grace?

G.G.: Well now, I think that would call for a very presumptuous judgment on my part. As I said, some of my best friends are --

g.g.: -- are critics, I know, but you're evading the question.

G.G.: Not intentionally. I just don't feel that one should generalize in matters where such distinguished reputations are at stake, and --

g.g.: Mr. Gould, I think you owe us both, as well as our readers, an answer to that question.

G.G.: I do?

g.g.: That's my conviction; perhaps I should repeat the question.

G.G.: No, it's not necessary.

g.g.: So you do feel, in effect, that the critic represents a morally endangered species?

G.G.: Well now, the word "endangered" implies that --

g.g.: -- please, Mr. Gould, answer the question -- you do feel that, don't you?

G.G.: Well, as I've said, I --

g.g.: You do, don't you?

G.G.: [pause] Yes.

g.g.: Of course you do, and now I'm sure you also feel the better for confession.

G.G.: Hmm, not at the moment.

g.g.: But you will in due course.

G.G.: You really think so?

g.g.: No question of it. But now that you've stated your position so frankly, I do have to make mention of the fact that you yourself have by-lined critical dispatches from time to time. I even recall a piece on Petula Clark which you contributed some years back to these columns and which --

G.G.: -- and which contained more aesthetic judgment per square page than I would presume to render nowadays. But it was essentially a moral critique, you know. It was a piece in which I used Miss Clark, so to speak, in order to comment on a social milieu.

g.g.: So you feel that you can successfully distinguish between an aesthetic critique of the individual -- which you reject out of hand -- and a setting down of moral imperatives for society as a whole.

G.G.: I think I can. Mind you, there are obviously areas in which overlaps are inevitable. Let's say, for example, that I had been privileged to reside in a town in which all the houses were painted battleship grey.

g.g.: Why battleship grey?

G.G.: It's my favourite colour.

g.g.: It's a rather negative colour, isn't it?

G.G.: That's why it's my favourite. Now then, let's suppose for the sake of argument that without warning one individual elected to paint his house fire-engine red --

g.g.: -- thereby challenging the symmetry of the town planning.

G.G.: Yes, it would probably do that too, but you're approaching the question from an aesthetic point of view. The real consequence of his action would be to foreshadow an outbreak of manic activity in the town and almost inevitably -- since other houses would be painted in similarly garish hues -- to encourage a climate of competition and, as a corollary, of violence.

g.g.: I gather, then, that red in your colour lexicon represents aggressive behaviour.

G.G.: I should have thought there'd be general agreement on that. But as I said, there would be an aesthetic/moral overlap at this point. The man who painted the first house may have done so purely from an aesthetic preference, and it would, to use an old-fashioned word, be "sinful" if I were to take him to account in respect of his taste. Such an accounting would conceivably inhibit all subsequent judgments on his part. But if I were able to persuade him that his particular aesthetic indulgence represented a moral danger to the community as a whole, and providing I could muster a vocabulary appropriate to the task -- which would not be, obviously, a vocabulary of aesthetic standards -- then that would, I think, be my responsibility.

g.g.: You do realize, of course, that you're beginning to talk like a character out of Orwell?

G.G.: Oh, the Orwellian world holds no particular terrors for me.

g.g.: And you also realize that you're defining and defending a type of censorship that contradicts the whole post-Renaissance tradition of Western thought?

G.G.: Certainly. It's the post-renaissance tradition that has brought the Western world to the brink of destruction. You know, this odd attachment to freedom of movement, freedom of speech, and so on is a peculiarly Occidental phenomenon. It's all part of the Occidental notion that one can successfully separate word and deed.

g.g.: The sticks-and-stones syndrome, you mean?

G.G.: Precisely. There's some evidence for the fact that -- well, as a matter of fact, McLuhan talks about just that in the *Gutenberg Galaxy* -- that preliterate peoples or minimally literate peoples are much less willing to permit that distinction.

g.g.: I suppose there's also the biblical injunction that to will evil is to accomplish evil.

G.G.: Exactly. It's only cultures that, by accident or good management, bypassed the Renaissance which see art for the menace it really is.

g.g.: May I assume the U.S.S.R. would qualify?

G.G.: Absolutely. The Soviets are a bit rough-hewn as to method, I'll admit, but their concerns are absolutely justified.

g.g.: What about your own concerns? Have any of your activities violated these personal strictures and, in your terms, "menaced" society?

G.G.: Yes.

g.g.: Want to talk about it?

G.G.: Not particularly.

g.g.: Not even a quick for-instance? What about the fact that you supplied music for *Slaughterhouse Five*?

G.G.: What about it?

g.g.: Well, at least by Soviet standards, the film of Mr. Vonnegut's opus would probably qualify as a socially destructive piece of work, wouldn't you say?

G.G.: I'm afraid you're right. I even remember a young lady in Leningrad telling me once that Dostoyevsky, "though a very great writer, was unfortunately pessimistic."

g.g.: And pessimism combined with a hedonistic cop-out, was the hallmark of *Slaughterhouse*, was it not?

G.G.: Yes, but it was the hedonistic properties rather than the pessimistic ones that gave me a lot of sleepless nights.

g.g.: So you didn't approve of the film?

G.G.: I admired its craftsmanship extravagantly.

g.g.: That's not the same as liking it.

G.G.: No, it isn't.

g.g.: Can we assume, then, that even an idealist has his price?

G.G.: I'd much prefer it said that even an idealist can misread the intentions of a shooting script.

g.g.: You would have preferred an uncompromised Billy Pilgrim, I assume?

G.G.: I would have preferred some redemptive element added to his *persona*, yes.

g.g.: So you wouldn't vouch for the art-as-technique-pure-and-simple theories of Stravinsky, for instance?

G.G.: Certainly not. That's quite literally the last thing art is.

g.g.: Then what about the art-as-violence-surrogate theory?

G.G.: I don't believe in surrogates; they're simply the playthings of minds resistant to the perfectibility of man. Besides, if you're looking for violence surrogates, genetic engineering is a better bet.

g.g.: How about the art-as-transcendental-experience theory?

G.G.: Of the three you've cited, that's the only one that attracts.

g.g.: Do you have a theory of your own, then?

G.G.: Yes, but you're not going to like it.

g.g.: I'm braced.

G.G.: Well, I feel that art should be given the chance to phase itself out. I think that we must accept the fact that art is not inevitably benign, that it is potentially destructive. We should analyze the areas where it tends to do least harm, use them as a guideline, and build into art a component that will enable it to preside over its own obsolescence --

g.g.: Hmm.

G.G.: -- because, you know, the present position, or positions, of art -- some of which you've enumerated -- are not without analogy to the ban-the-bomb movement of hallowed memory.

g.g.: You surely don't reject protest of that kind?

G.G.: No, but since I haven't noticed a single ban-the-child-who-pulls-wings-from-dragonflies movement, I can't join it, either. You see, the Western world is consumed with notions of qualification; the threat of nuclear extinction fulfils those notions, and the loss of a dragonfly's wing does not. And until the two phenomena are recognized as one, indivisible, until physical and verbal aggression are seen as simply a flip of the competitive coin, until every aesthetic decision can be equated with a moral correlative, I'll continue to listen to the Berlin Philharmonic from behind a glass partition.

g.g.: So you don't expect to see your death wish for art fulfilled in your lifetime.

G.G.: No, I couldn't live without the Sibelius Fifth.

g.g.: But you are nevertheless talking like a sixteenth-century reformer.

G.G.: Actually, I feel very close to that tradition. In fact, in one of my better lines I remarked that --

g.g.: That's an aesthetic judgement if ever I heard one!

G.G.: A thousand pardons -- let me try a second take on that. On a previous occasion, I remarked that I, rather than Mr. Santayana's hero, am "the last puritan."

g.g.: And you don't find any problem in reconciling the individual conscience aspect of the Reformation and the collective censorship of the puritan tradition? Both motifs, it would seem to me, are curiously intermingled in your thesis and, from what I know of it, in your documentary work as well.

G.G.: Well, no, I don't think there's an inevitable inconsistency there, because at its best -- which is to say at its purest -- that tradition involved perpetual schismatic division. The best and purest -- or at any rate the most ostracized -- of individuals ended up in Alpine valleys as symbols of their rejection of the world of the plains. As a matter of fact, there is to this day a Mennonite sect in Switzerland that equates separation from the world with altitude.

g.g.: Would it be fair to suggest that you, on the other hand, equate it with latitude? After all, you did create *The Idea of North* as a metaphoric comment and not as a factual documentary.

G.G.: That's quite true. Of course, most of the documentaries have dealt with isolated situations -- Arctic outposts, Newfoundland outposts, Mennonite enclaves, and so on.

g.g.: Yes, but they've dealt with a community in isolation.

G.G.: That's because my magnum opus is still several drawing boards away.

g.g.: So they are autobiographical drafts?

G.G.: That, sir, is not for me to say.

g.g.: Mr. Gould, there's a sort of grim, I might even say gray, consistency to what you've said, but it does seem to me that we have come a rather long way from the concert-versus-record theme with which we began.

G.G.: On the contrary, I think we've performed a set of variations on that theme and that, indeed, we've virtually come full circle.

g.g.: In any event, I have only a few more questions to put to you, of which, I guess, the most pertinent would now be: Apart from being a frustrated member of the board of censors, is any other career of interest to you?

G.G.: I've often thought that I'd like to try my hand at being a prisoner.

g.g.: You regard *that* as a career?

G.G.: Oh, certainly -- on the understanding, of course, that I would be entirely innocent of all charges brought against me.

g.g.: Mr. Gould, has anyone suggested that you could be suffering from a Myshkin complex?

G.G.: No, and I can't accept the compliment. It's simply that, as I indicated, I've never understood the preoccupation with freedom as it's reckoned in the Western world. So far as I can see, freedom of movement usually has to do only with mobility, and freedom of speech most frequently with socially sanctioned verbal aggression, and to be incarcerated would be the perfect test of one's inner mobility and of the strength which would enable one to opt creatively out of the human situation.

g.g.: Mr. Gould, weary as I am, that feels like a contradiction in terms.

G.G.: I don't really think it is. I also think that there's a younger generation than ours -- you are about my age, are you not?

g.g.: I should assume so.

G.G.: - a younger generation that doesn't have to struggle with that concept, to whom the competitive fact is not an inevitable component of life, and who do program their lives without making allowances for it.

g.g.: Are you trying to sell me on the neotribalism kick?

G.G.: Not really, no. I suspect that competitive tribes got us into this mess in the first place, but, as I said, I don't deserve the Myshkin-complex title.

g.g.: Well, your modesty is legendary, of course, Mr. Gould, but what brings you to that conclusion?

G.G.: The fact that I would inevitably impose demands upon my keepers -- demands that a genuinely free spirit could afford to overlook.

g.g.: Such as?

G.G.: The cell would have to be prepared in a battleship-grey decor.

g.g.: I shouldn't think that would pose a problem.

G.G.: Well, I've heard that the new look in penal reform involves primary colours.

g.g.: Oh, I see.

G.G.: -- and of course there would have to be some sort of understanding about the air-conditioning control. Overhead vents would be out -- as I may have mentioned, I'm subject to tracheitis -- and, assuming that a forced-air system was employed, the humidity regulator would have to be --

g.g.: Mr. Gould, excuse the interruption, but it just occurs to me that since you have attempted to point out on several occasions that you did suffer a traumatic experience in the Salzburg Festspielhaus --

G.G.: Oh, I didn't meant to leave the impression of a traumatic experience. On the contrary, my tracheitis was of such severity that I was able to cancel a month of concerts, withdraw into the Alps, and lead the most idyllic and isolated existence.

g.g.: I see. Well now, may I make a suggestion?

G.G.: Of course.

g.g.: As you know, the old Festspielhaus was originally a riding academy.

G.G.: Oh, quite; I'd forgotten.

g.g.: And of course, the rear of the building is set against a mountainside.

G.G.: Yes, that's quite true.

g.g.: And since you're obviously a man addicted to symbols -- I'm sure this prisoner fantasy of yours is precisely that -- it would seem to me that the Festspielhaus -- the Felsenreitschule -- with its Kafka-like setting at the base of a cliff, with the memory of equestrian mobility haunting its past, and located, moreover, in the birthplace of a composer whose works you have frequently criticized, thereby compromising your own judgmental criteria --

G.G.: Ah, but I've criticized them primarily as evidence of a hedonistic life.

g.g.: Be that as it may. The Festspielhaus, Mr. Gould, is a place to which a man like yourself, a man in search of martyrdom, should return.

G.G.: Martyrdom? What ever gave you that impression? I couldn't possibly go back!

g.g.: Please, Mr. Gould, try to understand. There could be no more meaningful manner in which to scourge the flesh, in which to proclaim the ascendance of the spirit, and certainly no more meaningful metaphoric *mise en scène* against which to offset your own hermetic life-style, through which to define your quest for martyrdom autobiographically, as I'm sure you will try to do, eventually.

G.G.: But you must believe me -- I have no such quest in mind!

g.g.: Yes, I think you must go back, Mr. Gould. You must once again tread the boards of the Festspielhaus; you must willingly, even gleefully, subject yourself to the gales which rage upon that stage. For then and only then will you achieve the martyr's end you so obviously desire.

G.G.: Please don't misunderstand; I'm touched by your concern. It's just that, in the immortal words of Mr. Vonnegut's Billy Pilgrim, "I'm not ready yet."

g.g.: In that case, Mr. Gould, in the immortal words of Mr. Vonnegut himself, "So it goes."

Man, Musician, Myth and Mystique

by Rick Phillips Copyright/Source

Article published in Gramophone*, Vol. 80, no. 956 (August 2002), p. 27-29.*

Twenty years after his untimely death, the fascination with Glenn Gould's art is as intense as ever. Fellow Canadian Rick Phillips examines this unique musician.

The fact that Glenn Gould book-ended his recording career as a pianist with the *Goldberg Variations* by J.S. Bach -- one of the pinnacles of the variation form -- seems eerily appropriate. For Gould, communicating was his personal theme, and the way he achieved it during his lifetime was truly protean: pianist, composer, writer, critic, producer, broadcaster, conversationalist, conductor -- they were all Glenn Gould, all variations on his theme. They illustrate his incredible desire to communicate what interested him, to others -- to connect. Since his death in 1982, Gould's recordings, writings, videos, and radio documentaries have continued to fuel his fame and legacy, probably more than is the case for any other musician. This autumn marks the 70th anniversary of his birth and the 20th anniversary of his death. As the new century begins and a whole new generation warms to Gould, there is no sign of any diminishing of his popularity or reach.

Recently I met Natalie Webster, a young piano student at Birmingham Conservatory in England. She's bright, with a bubbling, vibrant personality and short-cropped hair, seemingly more punk-oriented. But don't let first impressions sway you. Natalie's two pianist idols are Sviatoslav Richter and Glenn Gould.

Shortly after discovering Gould a few years ago, she was so moved that she made a pilgrimage to Toronto, "fuelled with an eagerness to pay tribute to him somehow". On her first and final days in Toronto, Natalie visited the peaceful Gould gravesite, where she listened to the 1981 *Goldberg Variations* recording from beginning to end on a Walkman. To Natalie, the appeal of Gould is the fact that he was so much more than a pianist. She has been completely won over by the man, not just the musician. "He ensured he was bettering

himself and his art constantly, and his great humanist streak was a facet to this part of his personality. He possessed a type of genius that was invigorating -- like an outburst of rain after suffocating humidity."


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Glenn Herbert Gould was born in Toronto on September 25, 1932. His father was a successful furrier and a good amateur violinist. His mother played piano and organ; Edvard Grieg had been a first cousin of her grandfather's. At the age of three Gould could read musical notation, and at five he began to compose. He heard his first live performance, a concert by pianist Josef Hofmann, when aged six. After early lessons at the piano with his mother, Gould entered the Toronto (later Royal) Conservatory of Music, where he studied both organ and piano. But the man who had the most influence on him was the Chilean-born pianist and teacher Alberto Guerrero, with whom Gould studied until 1952. By the age of 12, Gould had earned the Associate Diploma, with highest honours -- a professional level of achievement.

His first public performance was in 1945 as an organist. The newspaper review that followed bore the headline, "Boy, Age 12, Shows Genius as Organist". The next year he made his orchestral début in Beethoven's Piano Concerto No 4 at a Royal Conservatory concert. A year later he gave his recital début in Toronto in a program of Scarlatti, Beethoven, Chopin and Liszt. Artur Schnabel, Rosalyn Tureck and Leopold Stokowski were all early influences on the teenage Glenn Gould. By the early 1950s he was known across Canada through his many concert appearances as well as CBC Radio and Television broadcasts.


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In January 1955 Gould made his US débuts with recitals in New York and Washington DC, and was immediately thrown into the American public eye. His unusual programmes of music by the likes of Sweelinck, Byrd, Bach, late Beethoven, Berg and Webern, the distinctive pianistic style and extraordinary interpretations, and his bizarre stage mannerisms (including humming and singing) marked him as an individual and original artist. The day after his New York début, Gould was offered an exclusive recording contract with CBS, and his first recording -- of the *Goldberg Variations* -- was released in 1956 to rave reviews from critics and audiences alike.


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The career began to blossom and he gave concerts across North America. In 1957, Gould embarked on his first tour of Europe, starting with two weeks in the Soviet Union. He was the first Canadian, and the first North American to perform in the USSR -- at the height of the Cold War. He is still revered in Russia today. During the next several years, Gould lived the life of a successful piano virtuoso, garnering praise wherever he performed, but also controversy. His personal mannerisms and eccentricities drew just as much attention as his performances. But if the adage of there being no bad publicity is true, it was never more true than in the case of Glenn Gould. Even at the height of summer,

Gould had a fear of catching cold. He would over-dress with multiple layers of clothing, hat, overcoat and gloves. Before sitting down at the keyboard, he would soak and massage his hands and forearms in warm water for 20 minutes. On stage, there was always a small carpet under his feet. As well as the vocalising while playing, Gould also quite often conducted himself at the keyboard. While one hand played alone, the other was often engaged in conducting. And there was the famous, squeaky, battered chair -- often heard in his recordings, and another Gould trademark, like the vocalising. The chair had been one of a set of folding bridge chairs, adapted by his father. It was quite low to the keyboard and each leg could be adjusted individually for height. Sometimes he hung low over the keyboard, sometimes his back would straighten, and he would play with closed eyes, looking heavenward.

Then in April 1964, at the age of 31 and the height of his concert career, he gave it all up and retired from public performance, never to return. For Gould saw himself as more than a pianist. He also had interests in writing, broadcasting, composing, electronic technologies, film -- even conducting. And he could see that the gruelling, taxing schedule of a concert artist was preventing him from realising these objectives. The live concert experience was demeaning in his mind, making him feel like a 'vaudevillian'.

Gould turned instead to the electronic media. Here, one could 'create' in a controlled environment and ultimately communicate better. Unlike most classical musicians at the time (and even today), Gould embraced all aspects of the studio recording art. He loved the 'Take two-ness' of the recording studio, as he called it. But as well as the many recordings, he also created radio and television programs for the CBC, the BBC and French and German television. He became a prolific writer, on both musical and extra-musical topics. His sleeve-notes, articles for periodicals, reviews, scripts, interviews, and public lectures show a writer of incredible talents and provocative thought. For the sleeve-notes to his own recording of Beethoven's *Appassionata* Sonata, Gould wrote: "I confess the reasons for its popularity elude me: it is not, surely, one of the formative works in Beethoven's canon, nor is it one of those tense, argumentative middle-period essays that, like the Violin Concerto, get by through a combination of guts and one good tune…I think that in the *Appassionata* Sonata, his method does not work." Extraordinary to find this in the notes to an artist's own recording -- but honest!

Composition had appealed to him since childhood, but after his String Quartet, Op 1 from the 1950s, he completed very few pieces of music. Instead, he turned to the radio documentary, which he viewed as a kind of contrapuntal form of audio, created much like a composer creates a piece of music. Gould's work in this area culminated in the *Solitude Trilogy* of documentaries for CBC Radio, a series dealing with people in isolation -- a topic that fascinated him. These radio programmes are colourful, tightly-knit fabrics of audio that weave together speech, information, drama and music. He also arranged music for two feature films: *Slaughterhouse Five* (1972) and *The Wars* (1982).

Then in 1981, Gould decided to re-record Bach's *Goldberg Variations*. He had never revisited any other music before. To any other artist, this would be tempting fate. Over a quarter of a century had passed since 1955 and both he and recording technology had changed dramatically. That must have been the appeal for him: the chance to make two

distinct and separate versions of a work that he loved deeply and with which he was so closely identified.

In the fall of 1982, Gould began a new phase, this time as a conductor. He would never have pursued the role of the public, live concert conductor. It was the recording conductor that appealed to him -- again the ability to make music in a controlled setting. He put together a chamber orchestra, including members of the Toronto Symphony Orchestra, and recorded the original chamber version of Wagner's *Siegfried Idyll*. The work had long been a favorite. He had even made his own piano transcription, and recorded it in the 1970s for CBS. Conducting *Siegfried Idyll* was his final recording. On September 27, 1982, not long after the release of the second recording of the *Goldberg Variations*, he suffered a stroke. He died in Toronto on October 4, a little more than a week after his 50th birthday.

Today in Toronto, the memory and legacy of Gould are strong. A partial list would include Glenn Gould Studio, a magnificent small concert hall and recording studio at the Canadian Broadcasting Centre of the CBC: a life-sized bronze statue of Gould sits on a bench outside. There's the Glenn Gould Professional School at the Royal Conservatory of Music, his alma mater -- a thorough training facility for young performers. Two international conferences have been held in Toronto, in 1992 and 1999, which have drawn fans and devotees from around the world. Novels, plays, poems, visual art, music, and the film *Thirty-Two Short Films About Glenn Gould* have all added to his stature, not to mention countless radio and television documentaries. CBC Radio Two is planning an entire broadcast day of tributes, memories and music on the 70th anniversary of his birth, September 25, 2002. The Glenn Gould Foundation was formed in Toronto in 1983 to co-ordinate and organise his legacy. The Foundation awards a triennial Glenn Gould Prize in music and communications.

So what is it about Glenn Gould that has not only kept him firmly in the public mind for 20 years after his death but has even made him increasingly popular? Pianist Emanuel Ax, who grew up in Winnipeg, can remember the hype around Gould in Canada during the 1950s. Today, he believes Glenn Gould and Vladimir Horowitz are two of the greatest pianists because of their individuality. Whether you agree with Gould or not, says Ax, every pianist since has been influenced by Gould in some way or another. His communicative strengths were unbelievable, but there was also an ecstasy in Gould's playing. He was exalted by the music he was performing, as was Alfred Cortot in Chopin. Ax was introduced to the piano music of Richard Strauss by Gould's landmark recordings, and now frequently performs selected Strauss works. He's also recently started to study the Bach Partitas, having previously been afraid to tackle them, because of the Gould legacy. But it's not only Gould's music-making that appeals to Ax. He believes that *The Glenn Gould Reader*, a compilation of Gould's writings, is one of the most powerful books on musical thought and opinion.

The Glenn Gould Reader's editor, Tim Page, agrees that the secret to the longevity of Gould's reputation is his originality. "Gould begins where other pianists leave off," he says, alluding to the famous George Szell quip. The love, ecstasy and intensity of Gould in music were infectious. Like Leonard Bernstein, Gould was great to watch. Both of them responded to music honestly and genuinely, and in the heat of performance there was an

unpredictable excitement. No two concerts were the same. There was an immediacy and spontaneity, creating an electric quality that kept audiences on the edge of their seats.

Not all of his recordings were stellar. Page believes that some were actually quite bad. But that's the appeal. Good or bad, Gould was always challenging, always fascinating. To Page, another reason for Gould's lasting power was his personality. He shunned the usual trappings of the piano virtuoso, although he could easily have accepted them. His cool, reserved charisma made him stand out even more.

This quiet, solitary character of Gould has caused some to label him a hermit and a recluse. But according to Stephen Posen, Gould's lawyer and friend, and now the sole executor of the Gould Estate, he was warm and fun, far from anti-social. He was a perfectionist, and sought complete control under his own terms. This, of course, was one of the reasons behind his retirement from public performance. The recording studio helped Gould get closer to musical perfection. But the goal of perfection was all through his life. Posen recalls frequent, long telephone conversations during which Gould would often stumble while speaking, struggling to get his thoughts and words just right. He also would often phone Posen, and read him thoughts and writings over the phone, after slaving to get them perfect on his own. To Gould, there was no point in doing anything the same as others. Be unique and do it your own way, or don't do it at all.

And Gould was heroic in the obstacles he overcame to achieve his goals, adds Posen. The fact that he had a very successful musical career, without having to appear publicly is as impressive today as it was 30 years ago. But perfection costs money, because it takes time. Gould wrestled over every note and word, regardless of the cost, sometimes raising the eyebrows and ire of studio crews, record executives and editors. For his 1955 recording of the *Goldberg Variations*, he recorded all the variations first, ignoring the opening theme. Then, when it came time to record the theme, he laid down over 20 takes of it, trying to find the right neutral character for it, that wouldn't give away the level of involvement emerging later in the work. The opening theme used was take 21.

During his lifetime, Gould was highly regarded in North America, especially in Canada, but his fame is more recent in the UK and parts of Europe. Like Bernstein, Gould was initially viewed as flashy and superficial. He was new, young, fresh and rebellious -- a kind of musical James Dean, according to Rob Cowan of *Gramophone's*. It was only after his death and through the phenomenon of the reissue that Gould made his mark. During his life, Gould wasn't trusted, breaking with time-honoured musical traditions and values. But today, through the reissues, a committed, fascinating artist has emerged with much to say. "He woke us up and opened our ears," says Rob Cowan, "similar to the conductor Sergiu Celibidache." The virtuosity, clarity, and rhythmic drive teamed with that almost manic element of Gould, continue to win new listeners.

Glenn Gould was so much more than a pianist, that to think of him in only one field is to do him an injustice. He was a brilliant mind. Glenn Gould forces us to see our world in different, often challenging ways. We may not always agree with him, or like the results, but we are always richer for the experience.

Rick Phillips is a writer, critic, teacher and broadcaster based in Toronto. He is the host and producer of *Sound Advice*, a weekly classical music programme on CBC radio.

The Ultimate Soloist

A Portrait of Glenn Gould

by Angela Addison Copyright/Source

Introduction

Friendship with genius can never be easy. It is perhaps the most fragile of human relationships. In Glenn Gould I had a friend who was elusive, enigmatic, private and solitary. I also had a friend who was loyal, generous, courteous, fun, and of course, stunningly brilliant. Above all Glenn was a perfectionist who possessed that rarest of human gifts: grace. By grace I mean quite simply a state of being divinely inspired and of being regenerated by the tensile inner strength which that inspiration provides.

This is not a biography of Glenn Gould's life. I follow no chronological order of events. Rather, I have attempted to draw a portrait, or a series of portraits of a Canadian who was strongly Northern in spirit. This was a large spirit, large as the land that shaped it. The themes that characterize it are closely interwoven with Northern images, Northern rhythms, which appropriately, run contrapuntally with Glenn's life and individuality.

On a certain level, in mythic terms, the North is to Canadians what the West is to Americans. As is evident in his documentary, "The Idea of North", Glenn was greatly influenced by the Northern Imagination. At the same time there were traits of Glenn's own personality which mirrored, in a fascinating sense, Northern Ideas. This magnetic pull to things Northern was apparent in Glenn's thoughts and in his behaviour. The North remains a strong source to be tapped on many levels. The coming together of a vast, mysterious space of timeless energy in metaphorical terms with one of the great dynamic minds of our age has always intrigued me. I have tried to illustrate this strange but natural interaction by relating shared experiences and remembered conversations.

On another, and perhaps less profound level, I have tried to anticipate and avoid the twin charges of idolatry and bearing false witness. It has been my concern to reveal Glenn's minor and often amusing flaws of character, in short his foibles, in order to contemplate the whole nature of the man. Also, I have taken my own tendency towards the impressionistic view firmly in hand, an effort which I am certain Glenn would himself enthusiastically applaud.

If I have succeeded in my aim, the reader may feel a little closer to the legendary figure, the visionary artist and the very human person that was Glenn Gould.

He led an extraordinary journey.
Glenn Gould about J.S. Bach.

Why, in a country so young, does hope come to us from desert spaces and the marvellous silence!
Gabrielle Roy: *Children Of My Heart*.

Uptergrove: The Other Shore

During the Fifties and Sixties it was noted that whenever Glenn Gould was asked where he was from he would almost inevitably reply, 'Uptergrove,' often spelling out the name for those who understandably thought he must be saying, 'Uppergrove.' If, as sometimes occurred, Glenn was reminded that it was a generally accepted fact that he came from Toronto, he rarely contradicted. After all, he had been born in Toronto, like it or not, and Glenn, always courteous, disliked punctilious disagreement about what he considered to be minor matters. What was definitely not minor, what was of major, even of essential concern to Glenn, was his sense of being secluded, free to make his own choices and decisions and, above all, completely at ease at Uptergrove itself.

It was part of Glenn Gould's artistic awareness to consciously promote and regenerate his emotional and mental energies. In his early twenties, he evidently recognized not only the need to do so, but also the means at his disposal. Possessing none of that tendency to fragment even unwillingly into other existences which has plagued so many with sensitive temperaments, Glenn was able to concentrate all his considerable powers on his work, allowing the quiet ebb and flow of rural life at Uptergrove to nourish his questing spirit.

Uptergrove was, and still for the most part remains, a small community north of Toronto, not so very north, a hundred miles or so, offering wooded walks, swimming, boating and fishing among its simple pleasures. Glenn liked to boast that his greatest achievement was to persuade his father to give up fishing. A serious boast. For Glenn Gould, like Albert Schweitzer before him, possessed a reverence for life that extended to bothersome insects, cold-blooded fish and even to reptiles, those most difficult of God's creatures to love. The people who belonged at Uptergrove tended to be plain-spoken, hard working, abstemious and caring. They were catered to by a country store of the vanishing kind which provided everything from postage stamps to gumboots thus tiding inhabitants over those periods of time when they felt disinclined to make the five mile journey into the nearest town of substance, Orillia. With its healing, undemanding ambience, Uptergrove at the head of Lake Simcoe, offered sanctuary and sanity. There, strained nerves could be soothed and temporarily clouded spirits revived. Indeed, as a child, Uptergrove provided Glenn with his first, and with the notable exceptions of the radio and the recording studios, his most valuable experience of that removed, cocoon-like state of being that was absolutely necessary to him and which he later tried to adapt in varying circumstances into a life that had become fraught with public demands and professional conditions.

Toronto, of course, was a required base for Glenn. He needed to meet the challenge of the growing city, to test his skills at its musical market places. Yet Toronto, while it stimulated, could grant nothing comparable to the restorative powers of Uptergrove. In fact Glenn

regarded the city of his birth with an ambivalent mixture of awe and irritation which he could never successfully reconcile. He did, however, produce a sort of wry descriptive jargon which he mastered and transmitted with ironic brilliance in articles and public addresses for the benefit of fellow Torontonians and others. Admiring Toronto, but failing as he said, 'to grasp it', in the end he did just that, projecting from the television screen a myriad of images suggesting a nearly great city taking itself a little too seriously.

In Glenn's earliest years the Gould family used the cottage at Uptergrove for leisurely summer occupations and for sequestered weekend escapes. Glenn liked particularly the winter weekends when, rescued from a school schedule which he could 'never quite control' (always an intolerable situation for him), he would burrow into the warmth of the cottage and play his favoured Chickering piano for as long as he liked. Donning boots, mittens, scarves and appropriate hat, he could emerge when he felt like it and saunter into the troughs of snow, stick in hand, a loved dog by his side. If he needed company of a different kind, there were the thoughts that were never out of his head. During the two hour drive back to Toronto on Sunday afternoons, it was the family's habit to listen to the Philharmonic on the radio. Glenn watched the white fields radiate from his moving line of vision and commented later, 'Beethoven never sounded so good!'

In the summer of 1945, Father Joseph H. O'Neill was posted as an assistant to the Church of Guardian Angels in Orillia. Glenn was twelve years old, nearly thirteen. During his stay there, Father O'Neill arranged for a group of teen-aged altar boys from Toronto to have camping privileges on a vacant lot next to the Gould property. Father O'Neill recalled Glenn as 'a rather reserved kind of person', but nevertheless he persevered with his notion of having a weiner roast with suitable musical accompaniment and Glenn agreed to perform on the rather unforgiving instrument provided by the church. The music Glenn insisted upon playing did little to promote jolly or even friendly feelings and Father O'Neill somewhat laconically notes, 'it was a tough job keeping restless young people quiet during a recital of this kind,' adding that the campers did not really have a very high opinion of Glenn.'

It is difficult not to suspect some understatement in Father O'Neill's assessment of the situation. That a boy of twelve, however brilliant, should be allowed to dictate what sort of music might be appropriate at an occasion of revelry (the weiner roast being the natural parent to the ubiquitous barbecue of today), must seem presumptuous, even arrogant, and as a childhood incident taken out of context, Glenn's behaviour indicates not only an unsociable spirit, but also a disinclination to be identified with his peers.

Yet observed through Glenn's eyes, in the context of the Uptergrove world, a predictable pattern emerges. Neighbours of the Gould family have affirmed that Glenn was a 'solitary child with strong opinions'. The strong opinions would certainly explain his unorthodox choice of music (i.e. Bach for a weiner roast), and the subsequent restlessness of his audience. No doubt Glenn regarded the occasion first as a performance and only secondarily as a party. Already he understood a great deal about the former, almost nothing of the latter.

Of greater consequence perhaps was the realization that Glenn's private retreat, indeed his personal privacy itself was being invaded. A continuing threat in Glenn's life, this pressing need for privacy came to demand the sometimes drastic measures taken in order to keep it intact. From his early childhood it is then quite possible to trace the development of two of the dominant leitmotifs in the life and thought of Glenn Gould. The first step towards monasticism. The first tentative *Idea of North*.

Solitude

The implications of the word are legion. It falls on the ear with a peculiar hushed finality not unlike a gentle yet persuasive thud. It has shape and weight but not colour. It conveys images of vastness, emptiness, silence, power and withdrawal. For some, unfortunately, it is synonymous with loneliness.

For Glenn Gould, solitude was a necessity. Insisting that one must be solitary in order to create, he was, nevertheless, quick to point out that being solitary was not to be confused with being lonely. If Uptergrove provided Glenn with solitude, it also gave him opportunities to be with people he liked and respected. The fact that most of these were neither professionals nor artists made them more approachable, attractive even, to Glenn. Certain musicians have occasionally complained about the impossibility of having a give and take conversation with Glenn. One suspects that the particular conversations recalled were in reality discussions of a serious and precisely musical sort, guaranteed to bring out the dogmatic in Glenn's nature. At Uptergrove, however, Glenn could and did converse genially and at length about natural phenomena, world affairs, books and current movies. Colleen Milligan, who grew up in the house next to the Gould cottage, remembers going for long rambles with Glenn when she was a child. To Colleen, Glenn seemed the ideal companion. He had an enormous knowledge of the scientific life of the woods and without being patronizing, he was able to lead her to make her own fascinating discoveries. He was, she muses, often silent, but it was a natural silence, without strain or artifice and therefore comforting for a child living in a world made noisy by adults.

Dogs always accompanied them, sticks and balls were thrown to be fetched back and thrown again, and Glenn, in his thirties, would sometimes stop to play a childhood game such as *statues* with the little girl. Without doubt, casual, undemanding, spontaneous relationships of this sort were renewal experiences for Glenn. Indeed spontaneity itself gradually became a necessary antidote to the steadily mounting pressures in Glenn's life. Before he was twenty he was able to identify and locate this desirable and very human quality within himself, most obviously and accessibly in his great natural rapport with children and animals. Based upon an immediate and recognizable trust, this rapport never deserted him and was frequently abetted by Glenn's strong inclination to tinker with mechanical apparatus, a genial pastime inherited from his genial father. Few things offered the young than the working out of a home-made recording system with all its perplexing tangle of wires and speakers, or the setting up of an unsophisticated camera for the purpose of taking unusual and imaginative prints.

Whenever Doris Milligan was unable to locate her three children, instinct urged her directly to Glenn's cottage where as often as not they could be found amidst clutter and chaos, faces

rapt with fascination as Glenn first recorded each individual voice, then dramatized a playback with satisfying, sometimes exciting predictions about their possible future activities and occupations.

Equally provocative were the recordings which included three, sometimes four separate voices which Glenn predictably arranged in the contrapuntal mode. When the children asked to hear their mother's voice on the machine, Glenn obliged, enlightening and even astonishing the family by declaring that Doris would have made an outstanding radio commentator. How proud were the Milligan children to possess a mother of such talent! Throughout his life Glenn was able to enter a child's world as easily as walking from one room to another. There existed apparent but no significant age barriers and for a time he could himself feel ageless. The children delighted in his inventiveness and his sense of fun and as adults, almost without exception, they thought of Glenn first as a friend and only in conscious remembering, as a great man and a famous musician.

Another and quite different aspect of Glenn's character manifested itself during these years. At eighteen, perhaps earlier, he began to suffer severely from bouts of sleeplessness. Later he became an incurable insomniac, a fact that greatly altered his way of life. At Uptergrove the sound of Glenn's Chickering could often be heard late into the summer night. Doris Milligan recalls with pleasure the sensation of drifting off to sleep, her bedroom window which faced the Gould cottage, opened wide to gather in the comforting sounds of variations on familiar hymn tunes. These tunes, deeply satisfying in themselves, remained always for Glenn a rich source of spiritual and moral consolation.

Uptergrove could not of course provide Glenn with total protection from the realities of his life nor could it completely fulfill the needs of his almost explosive genius. On the contrary, it was a necessary condition of Glenn's genius that it be tried, criticized, sometimes convicted, often almost hysterically applauded on the concert stages of Europe and North America. Controversies arose. They were not, could not be settled at Uptergrove. It became increasingly clear that they could not be settled in any particular place. Only in Glenn's own work and thought could they ever hope to be resolved. Yet, after each concert tour, after every recording session, Glenn returned to Uptergrove. The family, with generosity and perspicacity gave Glenn his seclusion and his opportunity to regenerate his energies by giving him the cottage.

I had met Glenn in 1948, but it was not until 1953 that I was invited to Uptergrove. The day of the visit was pleasantly lazy and autumnal and I think I offered to pack a picnic lunch. Whether I did or not, Glenn certainly declared that there were, as he put it, 'supplies' at the cottage and we might do as we pleased when we got there. On this optimistic note, full of somewhat carefree assumptions we went off and as Glenn was driving very fast and with typical insouciance, we arrived well before noon. After a quick look at the almost incredible disarray in the living room which, while obviously clean and comfortable, was littered with objects apparently abandoned wherever they had been put down, we agreed upon a temporary retreat and took a walk before lunch. The sun warmed us and I recall being both touched and amused as Glenn pointed out favoured places with a somewhat proprietary air. Returning to the cottage, Glenn waved me with great confidence in the general direction of the kitchen and immediately lost himself at the Chickering, oblivious of

time, food, mess and all the other practicalities that confronted me with a mounting sense of discomfort. The shy, sweet notes of Schubert pursued me into the kitchen where I searched in vain for some primitive necessities - cheese, bread, milk - almost anything would do for our improvised picnic. There was tea, an abundance of tea. Anything more substantial eluded me. Glenn was now playing Chopin, a sop, for me, as he disliked the composer's work at that time, and I walked back into the living room where I sat listening emotionally until he finished. Even then I thought that I must have failed to find those particular cupboards where 'supplies' were kept and that all would be well as soon as Glenn showed me where they were. I don't know which of us was more devastated by the certain knowledge that there simply were no 'supplies' to be had, but I remember the tone of surprise and undirected accusation in Glenn's voice as he said: 'but I'm starved!' Too stunned to retort I started for the car with the sensible intention of driving to Orillia to get some food. Glenn pelted after me looking hopelessly distraught. With his pre-eminent sensitivity he mistakenly concluded that I had taken umbrage and was about to storm back to Toronto, leaving him a prey to the severe hunger pangs which Uptergrove could not, in its present impoverished state, alleviate. When he realized that he had mistaken my motive, he began typically to laugh. He seemed to regard the whole episode as an enormous joke, a joke I was beyond sharing, and I was finally roused to something close to real anger. Yet one could never remain angry with Glenn for long, for at twenty-one he was not only completely genuine, but utterly disarming as well, without any realization of what powerful weapons these could be, nor the slightest notion that he himself possessed them to a fine degree. When we did return to Uptergrove it was to a sumptuous picnic of a high tea kind. Nothing was wanting. Glenn, having fastened his eyes on a small delicatessen shop in Orillia bought almost its entire stock without thought to how much it cost him or how much we could eat. We stayed at Uptergrove until after it became dark, content and replete. Glenn played the piano and drank too much tea and I recall how reluctant we were to leave.

Uptergrove then was the place where Glenn could be most privately and most simply, himself. There he became as uninhibited as it was possible for him to be. Nowhere else was he absolutely certain of being respected and accepted, not for what he did, not for the public persona, but for what he was. He was complex and many faceted - that was accepted. He was different, some might say eccentric - that was accepted. His musical genius which necessarily set him apart was, if not fully understood, accepted and even appreciated.

In 1959 Glenn made a documentary film for CBC in which he describes a recurring dream, a nightmare that disturbed him frequently and profoundly as a boy and a young man. In this dream he wakes up on an autumn morning to find Uptergrove and all its inhabitants vanished. There is not a sign of life anywhere, only naked rocks and dead leaves blowing. He feels mortally stricken and is unable for some time to shake off the effects of the dream. Perhaps because the dream only rarely visited him as an adult, Glenn, who enjoyed discussing it with friends, tended to interpret its meaning quite simply. It meant he once told me, the end of his summer hiatus at Uptergrove and a return to the hated regimen of school life and imposed musical study. It occurs to me now, that Glenn's understanding of this pattern in imagery, valid as far as it goes, leaves out the sense of total desolation that the loss of Uptergrove with all its inhabitants, all its innate security, might well have had upon him. Moreover, it seems likely that the death of every animate thing, the blight of the

entire dream landscape might signify the possible loss of creativity, of imagination even, i.e., the death of the artist himself.

For Glenn, the Uptergrove world was separated from the great world outside. Metaphorically it represented *The Other Shore* and in a very real and special sense it became a personal touchstone to which he could return again and again, certain in his belief that he was immeasurably enriched by its existence.

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François Girard tente de cerner l'univers du pianiste virtuose canadien Glenn Gould (1932-1982), personnage hors normes, exceptionnel et énigmatique, qui a marqué la musique du XX^{e} siècle et dont les interprétations de Bach demeurent des références absolues. Composé de 32 fragments — une structure inspirée des *Variations Goldberg* de Bach -, le film puise à tous les genres et forme une mosaïque s'attachant aussi bien à l'œuvre qu'à la vie du musicien. Soutenu par la musique omniprésente du piano, *Trente-deux films brefs sur Glenn Gould* laisse entrevoir les multiples facettes de l'esprit fécond de cet homme solitaire totalement dédié à son art, qui, très tôt dans sa carrière, voulut changer le rapport de l'auditeur à la musique en se consacrant principalement aux enregistrements en studio.

Biographie
Born in 1963, François Girard studied communication in Quebec City and Montreal. After working in video art, he branched out into other forms: short films and features, musical videos, dance-videos, films on architecture, commercials, fictions.

Filmographie
Das Brunch (1983) ; *Le train* ; *Monsieur Léon* (1986) ; *Montréal Danse, Mourir, Tango Tango* (1988) ; *Suspect no 1* ; *Vie et mort de l'architecte* ; *CCA* (1989), 8^{e} FIFA ; *Le dortoir* (1991), primé au 9^{e} FIFA ; *Cargo* (1990) ; *Le jardin des ombres* (1993), primé au 11^{e} FIFA ; *Peter Gabriel's Secret World* (1994) ; *Souvenirs d'Othello* (1994), 22^{e} FIFA ; *The Sound of the Carceri* (1998), avec Yo-Yo Ma ; *Le violon rouge* (1999).

Critique de Christian Boisvert

Pour les mélomanes et amateurs de Glenn Gould! ★★★★

Si, comme moi, vous ignoriez tout de Glenn Gould, ce film vous instruira, à condition que vous soyez le moindrement intéressé par la chose musicale! Glenn Gould, c'est un célèbre pianiste canadien qui a fait sa marque dans les années 60 et qui est décédé très jeune à 50 ans, en 1982. Il a aussi produit quelques séries documentaires pour la radio canadienne.

Ce film est un hommage à ce pianiste au talent, semble-t-il, extraordinaire au point que certains le surnommeront le plus grand musicien du 20e siècle. Je ne suis pas expert en la matière, alors je ne pourrais commenter! On apprend toutefois dans le film que dans les deux sondes "Voyager" envoyées au confin de l'espace et dans lesquelles on a inséré des messages de paix figurent une oeuvre de Bach ou Beethoven, je ne me souviens plus, mais interprétée par Gould.

Le film est en fait composé de 32 épisodes courts nous dévoilant les aspects de la vie de Gould ou de son travail. Par exemple, on pourra voir une radiographie montrant le squellette de Gould en train de jouer du piano. Puis il y a divers réflexions sur des thèmes qui lui sont chers, comme la solitude. Un acteur joue le rôle de Glenn Gould et les réflexions du personnage sont entrecoupés d'entrevues de personnages réels qui ont connus Gould. Ainsi, une dame nous avouera que Gould était un homme centré sur lui-même, qui pouvait tenir éveillé ses amis toute une nuit pour qu'ils puissent l'écouter parler. Évidemment, la musique est omni-présente au travers de chacune des séquences. À ce sujet, le film intéressera à coup sûr les mélomanes.

Le résultat se laisse bien regarder; c'est éducatif, c'est musicalement excellent et les moments de réflexions sont intéressants. Par contre, si vous n'aimez pas la musique classique, vous risquez de vous ennuyer.

23 janvier 2005

François Girard

Director/Screenwriter/Editor/Art Director/Set Designer: Born 1963

From All Movie Guide: A filmmaker armed with both intelligence and unique vision, French-Canadian writer/director Francois Girard managed to stake a claim for himself on the map of international cinema with only a handful of credits to his name. Girard, who was born in St-Felicien, Quebec, in 1963, started his career as a video artist, and eventually founded a company that became, in his words, his "film school" where he worked on experimental projects like architecture and dance films, as well as short dramas.

In 1990, Girard made his feature-film debut with Cargo, a French-language drama that was unable to get distribution outside of Quebec. Four years later, the director had his international breakthrough with Thirty-Two Short Films About Glenn Gould, which he also co-wrote with Don McKellar. Its structure inspired by Gould's famous rendition of the "Goldberg Variations," the film was heralded as a visionary

take on the life of the iconoclastic pianist that skillfully combined fact and fiction. It earned a score of Genies -- Canada's equivalent of the Oscar -- as well as particular acclaim for actor Colm Feore's title performance.

Girard, Feore, and McKellar again collaborated on The Red Violin (1998), Girard's most anticipated project to date. Starring Samuel L. Jackson as a violin expert who tries to establish the authenticity of the titular violin, the film, which spans 300 years and several narratives, manages to interweave music, drama, and linear fragmentation in the same manner as its predecessor. Although it received a mixed reception stateside, The Red Violin proved to be a great critical success in Canada, where it garnered eight Genies, including one for Best Achievement in Direction.

For his next project, Girard continued to use film as a means of exploring music. As the director of one segment of the six-part Canadian TV series Yo-Yo Ma: Inspired by Bach (1998), Girard captured the famed cellist in a performance of one of Johann Sebastian Bach's "Six Suites for Unaccompanied Cello. The segment, entitled "The Sound of Carceri," examined the relationship between music and architecture by having Ma perform in a virtual prison based on the work of the architect Giovanni Battista Piranesi.

~ Rebecca Flint, All Movie Guide

The Glenn Gould liner notes to the 1956 Bach Goldberg Variations

Columbia Masterworks ML 5060 (1956)
Bach: The Goldberg Variations - Glen Gould, Piano

The Goldberg Variations, one of the monuments of keyboard literature, was published in 1742 while Bach held the title of Polish Royal and Saxon electoral court-composer. That his apparent apathy towards the variation form (he produced only one other work of that cast--an unpretentious set in the "Italian manner") did not prevent his indulgence in an edifice of previously unequalled magnitude, provokes considerable curiosity as to the origin of this composition. Such curiousity, however, must remain unsatisfied for any data extant in Bach's time has long since been obscured

by his romantic biographers, who succumbed the the allure of a legend which, despite its extravagant caprice, is difficult to disprove. Briefly, for those who may not be acquainted with this, the story concerns a commission which was tended to Bach by a Count Kaiserling, the Russian ambassador to the Saxon court, who had as his musician-in-service Johann Gottlieb Goldberg, one of the master's most accomplished pupils. Kaiserling, it seems, was frequently troubled with insonia, and requested Bach to write some reposeful keyboards pieces which Goldberg could perform as a soporific. If the treatment was a success we are left with some doubt as to the authenticity of Master Goldberg's rendition of this incisive and piquant score. And though we harbour no illusion as to Bach's workmanlike indifference to the restrictions imposed upon his artist's prerogative, it is difficult to imagine that even Kaiserling's 40 Louis d'or could induce his interest in an otherwise distasteful form.

The most casual acquaintance with this work -- a first hearing, or a brief glance at the score -- will manifest the baffling incongruity between the imposing dimensions of the variations and unassuming Sarabands which conceived them. Indeed, one hears so frequently of the bewilderment which the formal outline of this piece engenders among the uninitiated who become entangled in the luxuriant vegetation of the Aria'a familiy tree that it might be expedient to examine more closely the generative root in order to determine, with all delicacy, of course, its aptitude for parental responsibility.

We are accustomed to consider at least one of two prerequisites indispensable to an Aria for variations, -- a theme with a melodic curve which veritably entreats ornamentation, Though there are abundant examples of the former procedure from the Renaissance to the present day, it flourishes through the theme-and-elaborative-variation concept of the roccoco. The later method, which, by stimulating linear inventiveness, suggests a certain analogy with the passacaille style of reiterated bass progression, is strikingly portrayed by Beethoven's 32 variations in C minor.

However, the vast majority of significant contributions to this form cannot be accurately allotted to either of these general classifications, which, to be sure rather describe the extremities of the working premise of the variation idea wherein the coalescence of these qualities constitutes the real challenge to the composer's inventive power. A definite textbook example could be found in Beethoven's Eroica variations, where each of these formulative elements is treated separately, their ultimate merger being consummated in a fugue in which the melodic motive acts a counter-subject to the 'tema del basso' of the variations.

The present work utilizes the Sarabande from Anna Magdalena Bach's notebook as a passacaille -- that is, only its bass progression is duplicated in the variations, where indeed it is treated with sufficient rhythmic flexibility

to meet the harmonic contingencies of such diverse contrapuntal structures as a canon upon every degree of the diatonic scale, two fughettas, and even a quodlibet, (the superposition of street-songs popular in Bach's times). Such alterations as are necessary do not in any way impair the gravitational compulsion which this masterfully proportioned ground exerts upon the wealth of melodic figurations which subsequently adorn it.

Indeed, this noble bass binds each variation with the inexorable assurance of its own inevitablility. This structure possesses in its own right a completeness, a solidarity, which largely by virtue of the repetitive cadential motive, make it unsatisfactory for the role of a chaconne ground. It suggests nothing of the urgent longing for fulfillment which is implicit in the traditionally terse entry of a chaconne statement; rather, it volubly covers so much harmonic territory that, with the exception of the three minor-key variations (15, 21, 25) where it is made subservient to the chromatic wont of the minor tonality, there is no necessity for its offspring to explore, to realize and intensify its constructive elements.

One might justifiably expect that in view of the constancy of the harmonic foundation the principal pursuit of the variations would be the illumination of the motivic facets within the melodic complex of the Aria theme. However such is not the case, for the thematic substance, a docile but richly embellished soprano line, possesses an intrinsic homogeneity which bequeathes nothing to posterity and which, so far as motivic representation is concerned, is totally forgotten during the 30 variations. In short, it is a singularly self sufficient little air which seems to shun the patriarchal demeanour, to exhibit a bland unconcern about its issue, to remain totally uninquistive as to its raison d'être.

Nothing could better demonstrate the aloof carriage of the Aria, than the precipitous outburst of variation 1 which abruptly curtails the preceding tranquility. Such aggression is scarcely the attitude we associate with prefatory variations, which customarily embark with unfledged dependance upon the theme, simulating the pose of the precursor, and functioning with a modest opinion of their present capacity but thorough optimism for future prospects. With variation 2 we have the first instance of the confluence of these juxtaposed qualities -- that curious hybrid of clement composure and cogent command which typifies the virile ego of the Goldberg.

I suspect I may have unwittingly engaged in a dangerous game, ascribing to musical composion attributes which reflect only the analytical approach of the performer. This is an especially vulnerable practice in the music of Bach which concedes neither tempo nor dynamic intention, and I caution myself to restrain the enthusiasm of an interpretative conviction from identifying itself with the unalterable absolute of the composer's will. Besides, as Bernard Shaw so aptly remarked, parsing is not the business of criticism.

With variation 3 begin the canons which subsequently occupy every third segment of the work. Ralph Kirkpatrick has imaginatively represented the variations by an architectural analogy. "Framed as if between two terminal pylons, one formed by the aria and the first two variations, the other by the two penultimate variations and the Quodlibet, the variations are grouped like the members of an elaborate colonnade. The groups are composed of a canon and an elaborate two-manual arabesque, enclosing in each case another variation of independent character."

In the canons, the literal imitation is confined to the two upper voices, while the accompanying part, which is present in all but the final canon at the ninth, is left free to convert the tema del basso, in most cases at least, to a suitably acquiescent complement. At times this leads to a deliberate duality of motivic emphasis, the extreme example being variation 18 where the canonic voices are called upon to sustain the passacaille role which is capriciously abandoned by the bass. Less extraneous counterpoint is the resolve of the two G minor canons, (15 and 21). In these the third voice partakes of the thematic complex of the canon, figuratively reproducing its segment in a dialogue of surpassing beauty.

Nor is such intense contrapuntal preoccupation solely the property of the canonic variations. Many of those numbers of "independent character" expand minute thematic cells into an elaborate linear texture. One thinks especially of the fugal conclusion to the French overture, (16) the alla breve, (22), and of variation 4 in which a blunt rusticity disguises an urbane maze of stretti. Indeed, this husbandly exploitation of intentionally limited means is Bach's substitute for thematic identification among the variations. Since the aria melody, as afore-mentioned, evades intercourse with the rest of the work the individual variation voraciously consumes the potential of a motivic germ peculiar to it, thus exercising an entirely subjective aspect of the variation concept. As a consequence of this integation there exists, with the dubious exceptions of variations 28 and 29, not one instance of motivic collaboration or extension between successive variations.

In the two part texture of the 'arabesques' the emphasis on virtuostic display restricts the contrapuntal endeavour to less ingenius pursuits such as that of inverting the consequent rejoinder.

The third G minor variation occupies a strategic locale. Having already been regaled with a kaleidoscopic tableau comprised of 24 signettes depicting, in meticulously calibrated degrees, the irrepressible elasticity of what was termed the "Goldberg ego", we are now granted dispensation to collect and crystallize the accumulative experience of depth, delicacy and display, while musing upon the languorous atmosphere of an almost Chopinesque mood-piece. The appearance of this wistful, weary cantilena is a master-stroke of psychology.

With renewed vigour, variations 26 to 29 break upon us and are followed by that boisterous exhibion of Deutsche Freundlichkeit - the Quodilibet. Then, as though it could no longer suppress a smug smile at the progress of its progeny, the original Sarabande, anything but a dutiful parent, returns to us to bask in the reflected glory of an Aria da capo.

It is no accident that the great cycle should conclude thus. Nor does the Aria's return simply constitute a gesture of benign benediction. Rather is its suggestion of perpetuity indicative of the essential incorporeality of the Goldberg, symbolic of its rejection of embryonic inducement. And it is precisely by recognizing its distain of the organic relevance of the part to the whole that we first suspect the real nature of this unique alliance.

We have observed, by means of technical dissection, that the Aria is incompatible with its offspring, that the crucial bass by its very perfection of outline and harmonic implication stunts its own growth, and prohibits the accustomed passacaille evolution toward a culminant point. We have observed, also by analysis, that the Aria's thematic content reveals an equally exclusive disposition, that the motivic elaboration in each variation is law unto itself and that, by consequence, there are no plateux of successive variations utilizing similar principles of design such as lend architectural coherence to the variations of Beethoven and Brahms. Yet, without analysis, we have sensed that there exists a fundamental co ordinating intelligence which we labelled "ego". Thus we are forced to revise our criteria which were scarcely designed to arbitrate that union of music and metaphysics -- the realm of technical transcendence.

I do not think it fanciful to speculate upon supra-musical considerations, even though we are dealing with possibly the most brilliant substantiation of a ground bass in history, for in my opinion, the fundamental variative ambition of this work is not to be found in organic fabrication but in a community of sentiment. Therein the theme is not terminal but radial, the variations circumferential not rectilinear, while the recurrent passacaille supplies the concentric focus for the orbit.

It is, in short, music which observes neither end nor beginning, music with neither real climax nor real resolution, music which, like Beaudelaires's lovers, "rests lightly on the wings of the unchecked wind." It has, then, unity through intuitive perception, unity born of craft and scrutiny, mellowed by mastery achieved, and revealed to us here, as so rarely in art, in the vision of subconscious design exulting upon a pinnacle of potency.

GLENN GOULD

Gould's Beliefs About Recording

Gould believed that his performances were not just readings of pieces of music but documents that reflected his entire world view. He thought (as had creators in the Romantic era) that artists had a "moral mission," and that art had enormous potential for the betterment of human life.

Gould became a leading exponent among classical performers of a true aesthetic of recording, which he passionately defended in articles and broadcasts, and practiced in dozens of albums for Columbia/CBS, developing a hands-on expertise in recording techniques.

A studio performer, he felt, need not be concerned with projecting musical effects into an auditorium for the purpose of catching and holding the attention of an audience; rather, he could subject the music to minute inspection of detail at every structural level. Moreover, he could allow the technology itselfplacement of microphones, splicing, overdubbing, reverb, etc.to influence the interpretation, and could defer many final interpretive decisions to the post-production process.

For Gould, recording had fundamentally altered the traditional relationship of composer, performer, and listener. He justified his interpretive experiments in part by arguing that there was no point in making yet another recording of, say, the "Emperor" Concerto without offering significant departures from conventional readings already available. Outside popular music, no artist to date has expanded the technological possibilities of recorded music, or explored its aesthetic and even ethical implications, more than did Gould.

Discography

The following is a chronological list of the principal albums released during Glenn Gould's lifetime, plus noteworthy additional recordings released posthumously.

With the exception of the first two entries, all recordings were made for Columbia (from 1973, CBS) Masterworks.

Dates of recording and release are given in parentheses and separated by a slash (e.g., "(1959-60/1961)").

Gould's albums were released in mono sound only up to the summer of 1958, in both mono and stereo formats from then until 1967, and in stereo thereafter; he made his first digital recordings (Haydn) in 1980.

Albums marked with an asterisk included Gould's own liner notes; publication details are given only for those notes not reprinted in The Glenn Gould Reader.

Berg, Sonata, Op. 1; transcriptions for violin and piano of Prokofiev's "The Winter Fairy" (from *Cinderella*, Op. 87), Shostakovich's *Three Fantastic Dances*, Op. 5, and Taneyev's "The Birth of the Harp" (from *10 Romances from Ellis's Immortelles*, Op. 26)with Albert Pratz, violin. Hallmark RS3 (recorded and released 1953). LP: *The Young Glenn Gould: In Memoriam, 1932-1982*, Vol. 1 (Turnabout (Canada) and Vox Cum Laude (USA), 1982). CD: *The Young Glenn Gould* (Fanfare, 1987); *The Young Glenn Gould, 1947-1953* (Mastersound, 1993); *Glenn Gould: His First Recordings (1947-1953)* (VAI Audio, 2001). Liner notes: *GlennGould*, Fall 2002, 61-2.

3 transcription discs for Radio Canada International: Bach, *Partita No. 5 in G Major*, and Morawetz, *Fantasy in D* (Programme 120, 1954); Gould, *String Quartet*, with the Montreal String Quartet (Programme 142, 1956); Brahms, *Piano Quintet in F Minor*, with the Montreal String Quartet (Programme 140, 1957). CD: Bach, CBC Records (1993); Brahms, Glenn Gould Edition

Bach, *Goldberg Variations* (1955/1956)

Beethoven, *Sonatas in E Major, Op. 109*; *A-flat Major, Op. 110*; and *C Minor, Op. 111* (1956/1956)

Bach, *Concerto No. 1 in D Minor*; Beethoven, *Concerto No. 2 in B-flat Major* - with Leonard Bernstein, Columbia Symphony Orchestra (1957/1957)

Bach, *Partitas Nos. 5 in G Major* and *6 in E Minor*; and *Fugues Nos. 14 in F-sharp Minor* and *9 in E Major* from Book 2 of *The Well-Tempered Clavier* (1956-57/1957)

Haydn, *Sonata No. 59 in E-flat Major*; Mozart, *Sonata in C Major, K. 330*; Mozart, *Fantasia and Fugue in C Major, K. 394* (1958/1958)

Bach, *Concerto No. 5 in F Minor*; Beethoven, *Concerto No. 1 in C Major* - with Vladimir Golschmann, Columbia Symphony Orchestra (1958/1958)

Berg, *Sonata, Op. 1*; Krenek, *Sonata No. 3, Op. 92/No. 4*; Schoenberg, *3 Piano Pieces, Op. 11*; (1958/1959)

Beethoven, *Concerto No. 3 in C Minor* - with Leonard Bernstein, Columbia Symphony Orchestra (1959/1960)

Bach, *Partitas Nos. 1 in B-flat Major* and *2 in C Minor*; *Italian Concerto* (1959/1960)

Gould, *String Quartet, Op. 1* - Symphonia String Quartet (1960/1960)

Brahms, *10 Intermezzi* (1959-60/1961)

Beethoven, *Concerto No. 4 in G Major* - with Leonard Bernstein, New York Philharmonic (1961/1961)

Strauss, *Enoch Arden* - with Claude Rains, speaker (1961/1962)

Bach, *The Art of Fugue*, Vol. 1: Contrapunctus 1-9 - on the organ (1962/1962)

Mozart, *Concerto No. 24 in C Minor*, K. 491 - with Walter Susskind, CBC Symphony Orchestra; Schoenberg, *Piano Concerto* - with Robert Craft, CBC Symphony Orchestra (1961/1962)

Bach, *The Well-Tempered Clavier*, Book 1, in 3 volumes (1962-65/1963, 1964, and 1965)

Bach, *Partitas Nos. 3 in A Minor* and *4 in D Major*; *Toccata in E Minor* (1962-63/1963)

Bach, 6 *Partitas* (rereleased 1963). Liner notes: *GlennGould*, Fall 1998, 47-55

Bach, 2- and 3-Part *Inventions* (1964/1964)

Beethoven, *Sonatas, Op. 10/Nos. 1-3* (1964/1965)

Beethoven, *Concerto No. 5 in E-flat Major* ("Emperor")with Leopold Stokowski, American Symphony Orchestra (1966/1966)

Schoenberg: The Complete Music for Solo Piano: Opp. 11, 19, 23, 25, and 33 (1958, 1964-65/1966)

Schoenberg: Complete Songs for Voice and Piano, Vol. 1: Opp. 1 (with Donald Gramm, bass-baritone) and 2 (with Ellen Faull, soprano); and 15, *Das Buch der hängenden Gärten* (with Helen Vanni, mezzo-soprano) (1964-65/1966)

Beethoven, *Sonatas, Opp. 13 (Pathétique)* and *14/Nos. 1 and 2* (1966/1967)

Bach, *Concertos, Vol. 1: Nos. 3 in D Major, 5 in F Minor*, and *7 in G Minor* - with Vladimir Golschmann, Columbia Symphony Orchestra (1958, 1967/1967)

Canadian Music in the 20th Century: Morawetz, *Fantasy in D*; Anhalt, *Fantasia*; and Hétu, *Variations pour piano* (1966-67/1967)

Schoenberg, *Ode to Napoleon* (with John Horton, narrator, and the Juilliard String Quartet) and *Phantasy for Violin and Piano* (with Israel Baker) (1964-65/1967). Liner notes: *The Art of Glenn Gould*, 326-9

Beethoven-Liszt, *Symphony No. 5* (1967-68/1968)

Mozart, *Sonatas, Vol*. 1: K. 279 through 283 (1967/1968)

Bach, *The Well-Tempered Clavier*, Book 2, in 3 volumes (1966-67, 1969, 1971/1968, 1970, and 1971)

Prokofiev, *Sonata No. 7*; Scriabin, *Sonata No. 3* (1967-68/1969)

Mozart, *Sonatas, Vol. 2*: K. 284, 309, and 311 (1968/1969)

Bach, *Concertos, Vol. 2: Nos. 2 in E Major* and *4 in A Major* - with Vladimir Golschmann, Columbia SO (1969/1969)

Schumann, *Piano Quartet in E-flat Major* - with the Juilliard String Quartet (1968/1969)

Beethoven, *Sonatas, Opp. 13 (Pathétique)*, 27/No. 2 ("Moonlight"), and 57 ("Appassionata") (1966-67/1970)

Beethoven, *Variations*, WoO 80 and Opp. 34 and 35 ("Eroica") (1960, 1966-67/1970)

A Consort of Musicke Bye William Byrde and Orlando Gibbons (1967-68, 1971/1971)

Mozart, *Sonatas, Vol. 3*: K. 310, 330, 332, and 333 (1965-66, 1969-70/1972)

Schoenberg: Complete Songs for Voice and Piano, Opp. 3, 6, 12, 14, and 48, and Op. posth. (with Donald Gramm, Helen Vanni, and Cornelis Opthof, baritone) (1964-65, 1968, 1970-71/1972)

Handel, *Suites, Nos. 1-4* - on the harpsichord (1972/1972)

Grieg, *Sonata in E Minor*; Bizet, *Premier Nocturne* and *Variations chromatiques* (1971-72/1973)

Bach, *French Suites, Nos. 1-4* (1972-73/1973)

Beethoven, *Sonatas, Op. 31*/Nos. 1, 2 ("Tempest"), and 3 (1960, 1967, 1971/1973)

Hindemith, *Sonatas*, Nos. 1-3 (1966-67, 1972-73/1973)

Wagner-Gould, Prelude to *Die Meistersinger*; "Dawn" and "Siegfried's Rhine Journey" from *Götterdämmerung*; and *Siegfried-Idyll*. (1973/1973). Liner notes: *GlennGould*, Fall 1996, 51-55; reprinted *The Art of Glenn Gould*, 299-310

Mozart, *Sonatas*, Vol. 4: K. 331 and 545; K. 533, with *Rondo*, K. 494; *Fantasia in D Minor*, K. 397 (1965, 1967, 1970, 1972-73/1973)

Bach, *French Suites, Nos. 5 and 6*; *French Overture in B Minor* (1971, 1973/1974)

Bach, 3 *Viola da Gamba Sonatas* - with Leonard Rose, cello (1973-74/1974)

Beethoven, *Bagatelles*, Opp. 33 and 126 (1974/1975)

Mozart, *Sonatas*, Vol. 5: K. 457, 570, and 576; *Fantasia in C Minor*, K. 475 (1966, 1970, 1973-74/1975)

Hindemith: The Complete Sonatas for Brass and Piano - with the Philadelphia Brass Ensemble (Mason Jones, horn and alto horn; Abe Torchinsky, bass tuba; Gilbert Johnson, trumpet; and Henry Charles Smith, trombone) (1975-76/1976)

Bach, 6 *Violin Sonatas* - with Jaime Laredo (1975-76/1976)

Sibelius, 3 *Sonatines*, Op. 67; *Kyllikki* (1976-77/1977)

Bach, 6 *English Suites* (1971, 1973-76/1977)

Hindemith, *Das Marienleben*, original 1923 version - with Roxolana Roslak, soprano (1976-77/1978)

Mozart, *Sonatas*, complete (rereleased 1979)

Bach, 7 *Toccatas*, in 2 volumes (1963, 1976, 1979/1979, 1980)

Bach, *Preludes, Fughettas*, and *Fugues* (1979-80/1980)

Beethoven, *Sonatas, Opp. 2/Nos. 1-3* and *28* ("Pastoral") (1974, 1976, 1979/1980)

The Glenn Gould Silver Jubilee Album (released 1980), comprising: Scarlatti, *Sonatas, L. 463 in D Major, L. 413 in D Minor*, and *L. 486 in G Major* (recorded 1968); C. P. E. Bach, Würtemberg *Sonata No. 1 in A Minor* (1968); *Gould, So You Want to Write a Fugue?* (1963); Scriabin, 2 *Pieces, Op. 57* (1972); Strauss, *Ophelia-Lieder*, with Elisabeth Schwarzkopf, soprano (1966); Beethoven-Liszt, *Pastoral Symphony*, first movement (1968); and *A Glenn Gould Fantasy* (humorous self-interview, 1980). CD (incl. liner notes): Sony Classical, 1998

Haydn: *The Last Six Sonatas*, Nos. 56 and 58-62 (1980-81/1982)

Bach, *Goldberg Variations* (1981/1982)

Brahms, *Ballades, Op. 10; Rhapsodies, Op. 79* (1982/1983)

Beethoven, *Sonatas, Opp. 26 and 27/No. 1* (1979, 1981/1983)

Strauss, *Sonata in B Minor, Op. 5; Five Piano Pieces, Op. 3* (1979, 1982/1984)

Scriabin, *Sonata No. 5* (1970/1986)

Pentland, *Shadows/Ombres* (1967/1992)

Beethoven, *Sonata in F-sharp Major*, Op. 78 (1968/1993)

Wagner, *Siegfried-Idyll* - with a pick-up chamber orch. cond. Gould (1982/1994)

Bach, *Concerto in D Minor after Marcello*; 2 fugues on themes by Albinoni; *Aria variata alla maniera italiana; Chromatic Fantasy in D Minor*; 3 fantasies; *Prelude and Fugue in B-flat Major* on BACH (1971, 1979-80/1997)

Bach, *Italian Concerto* (recorded 1981). CD: Sony Classical, with *The Glenn Gould Silver Jubilee Album* (1998)

Posthumous Releases

Glenn Gould Edition (1992-7), 8 vol, Sony Classical. This edition comprises rereleases of the Columbia/CBS recordings, along with some previously unreleased studio recordings and selected broadcast and live performances.

Sony Classical has released several additional CDs: concerts in Salzburg and New York (see "Concert performances"), and *The Glenn Gould Silver Jubilee Album* (1998).

In addition, CBS Masterworks/Sony Classical rereleased many recordings before and after the Glenn Gould Edition, single CDs as well as thematic compilations and series, including: *The Glenn Gould Legacy* (4 vols., 1984-6), *Glenn Gould: Bach* (6 vols., 1984-7), *Glenn Gould: Images* (1995), *Glenn Gould at the Cinema* (1999), *Glenn Gould Plays Bach: Original Jacket Collection* (1999), *A Portrait of Glenn: Music from the Play Glenn* (1999), *The Gould Variations: The Best of Glenn Gould's Bach* (2000), *Glenn Gould Anniversary Edition* (2001-2), *Glenn Gould: A State of Wonder* (2002), *Glenn Gould: ... And Serenity* (2003), and *Glenn Gould: The 1955 Goldberg Variations: Birth of a Legend* (2005).

Concert Performances

Some recordings of important concert performances appear in the *Glenn Gould Collection* (video and laserdisc, Sony Classical) and *Glenn Gould Edition* (sound recordings, Sony Classical), and in live broadcasts (1951-5) released by CBC Records.

Sony Classical released two CDs of concert performances: recital, Salzburg Festival, 25 Aug 1959 (Festispieldokumente, 1994); and Brahms, *Concerto No. 1*, with Leonard Bernstein and the New York Philharmonic 6 Apr 1962, along with an excerpt from a related 1963 NY radio interview (1998).

Other authorized releases of live performances: the Brahms concerto (*Historic Brahms*, New York Philharmonic Historic Recordings, Vol. 7, "WQXR 1987 Radiothon Special Edition," 1987); a lecture-recital at the Moscow Conservatory, 12 May 1957 (*Glenn Gould: Concert de Moscou*, Harmonia Mundi/Le Chant du Monde, 1983); concert and radio performances in Stockholm, 30 Sep, 1, 5, and 6 Oct 1958 (*Glenn Gould in Stockholm*, 1958, BIS, 1986).

Pirate Recordings

Pirate recordings of live performances have been released since Gould's death by various labels, including Artistotipia, the Bruno Walter Society, Frequenz, King Record Co., Melodiya, Melodram, Memoria, Music and Arts Programs of America, Nuova Era, Price-Less, and Virtuoso.

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32 Short Films About Glenn GouldA-

The Canadian film 32 Two Short Films About Glenn Gould arrives in L.A. highly acclaimed, after playing the international film festival circuit and winning the l993 Genie (the Canadian Oscar) Award. Offering a detached, cerebral portrait of the noted piano player, the film shrewdly avoids a chronological approach to the man it celebrates. Instead, it borrowing its structure from Bach's Goldberg Variations, with each of the movie's 32 vignettes representing a variation on Gould's life and times.

Though most of the vignettes are elegantly constructed, some are more illuminating than others of the artistry and personality of the genius pianist who died in l982, at the age of 50. Writer-director Francois Girard and producer Niv Fichman take tremendous pride not only in Gould's great music but also in his Canadian descent; there's a bit of the hero-worship in their film. Their biggest problem, however, was how to distill 120 hours of recorded music down to a film's average running time.

Thirty Two Short Films About Glenn Gould never pretends to fully embrace or understand the pianist, who comes across as a complex artist totally devoted to his career. The film's strategy is to present many diverse fragments, each capturing one or two aspects of Gould, so that the cumulative effect would give a flavor or a glimpse of the man and his times.

We learn that Gould's mother was his only piano teacher until he was 10, and that at the age of 3 he already possessed exceptional musical gifts, absolute pitch and ability to read notation. A review after Gould's first public performance as organist, when he was 13, declared him a genius. We also get the impression that Gould was an eccentric in every sense of the term. Always protective of his talent and a bit of an elitist, he often felt uncomfortable playing to the audience. As Gould grew older, he became a recluse and his behavior more and more idiosyncratic.

Talented Canadian actor Colm Feore, who bears physical resemblance to the piano player, reads from Gould's writings, takes walks in the bleak landscapes of Northern Canada, which apparently were frequented by Gould in his quest for solitude. Making the movie was a bit like resolving a mystery: the filmmakers claim they were able to locate the piano Gould used as a child, a baby grand Chickering.

At times, the structure of 32 Short Films About Glenn Gould appears to be just a gimmick as there's no link among the disparate episodes. But the soundtrack is always glorious--a good reminder of the wonderful musical heritage that Gould left to the entire world.

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1. Goldberg Variations, BWV 988: Theme "Aria"

Composer	Johann Sebastian Bach (1685 - 1750)
Performer	Glenn Gould (Piano)
Genre	Baroque Period / Variations
Date Written	1741-1742
Period	Baroque
Country	Nuremberg, Germany
Recording	Studio

2. Tristan und Isolde: Act 1 Prelude

Composer	Richard Wagner (1813 - 1883)
Conductor	Arturo Toscanini
Genre	Opera / Prelude / Romantic Period
Date Written	1858
Ensemble	NBC Symphony Orchestra
Period	Romantic
Country	Germany
Recording	Studio

3. English Suite no 5 in E minor, BWV 810: Prelude

Composer	Johann Sebastian Bach (1685 - 1750)
Performer	Glenn Gould (Piano)
Genre	Baroque Period / Prelude / Suite
Date Written	circa 1715

Period Baroque
Country Weimar, Germany
Recording Studio

4. Sonata for Piano no 13 in E flat major, Op. 27 no 1 "Quasi una fantasia": 2nd mvt, Allegro molto
Composer Ludwig van Beethoven (1770 - 1827)
Performer Glenn Gould (Piano)
Genre Classical Period / Sonata
Date Written 1800-1801
Period Classical
Country Vienna, Austria
Recording Studio

5. Sonata for Piano in B minor, Op. 5: 2nd movement, Adagio cantabile
Composer Richard Strauss (1864 - 1949)
Performer Glenn Gould (Piano)
Genre Romantic Period / Sonata
Date Written 1880-1881
Period Romantic
Country Germany
Recording Studio

6. Sonatinas (3) for Piano, Op. 67: no 2 in E major - Andantino
Composer Jean Sibelius (1865 - 1957)
Performer Glenn Gould (Piano)
Genre Romantic Period / Sonatina
Date Written 1912
Period Romantic
Country Finland
Recording Studio

7. Sonata for Piano no 7 in B flat major, Op. 83: Precipitato
Composer Sergei Prokofiev (1891 - 1953)
Performer Glenn Gould (Piano)
Genre 20th Century Period / Sonata
Date Written 1939-1942
Period 20th Century
Country USSR
Recording Studio

8. Pieces (2) for Piano, Op. 57: no 1, Desir
Composer Alexander Scriabin (1872 - 1915)
Performer Glenn Gould (Piano)
Genre 20th Century Period
Date Written 1907
Period 20th Century
Country Russia
Recording Studio

9. Sonatas (3) for Piano: no 3 in B flat major - Finale
Composer Paul Hindemith (1895 - 1963)
Performer Glenn Gould (Piano)
Genre 20th Century Period / Sonata
Date Written 1936
Period 20th Century
Country Germany
Recording Studio

10. Suite for Piano, Op. 25: Gigue
Composer Arnold Schoenberg (1874 - 1951)
Performer Glenn Gould (Piano)
Genre 20th Century Period / Gigue / Suite
Date Written 1921-1923
Period 20th Century
Country Vienna, Austria
Recording Studio

11. French Suite no 1 in D minor, BWV 812: Sarabande
Composer Johann Sebastian Bach (1685 - 1750)
Performer Glenn Gould (Piano)
Genre Baroque Period / Sarabande / Suite
Date Written circa 1724
Period Baroque
Country Leipzig, Germany
Recording Studio

12. Prelude in D minor, BWV 926
Composer Johann Sebastian Bach (1685 - 1750)
Performer Glenn Gould (Piano)
Genre Baroque Period / Prelude
Period Baroque

Recording Studio

13. Well-Tempered Clavier, Book 1: Prelude and Fugue no 1 in C, BWV 846 - Prelude
Composer Johann Sebastian Bach (1685 - 1750)
Performer Glenn Gould (Piano)
Genre Baroque Period / Prelude
Date Written 1722
Period Baroque
Country Cöthen, Germany
Recording Studio

14. Art of the Fugue, BWV 1080: Contrapunctus no 9
Composer Johann Sebastian Bach (1685 - 1750)
Performer Glenn Gould (Piano)
Genre Baroque Period / Fugue
Date Written circa 1745-1750
Period Baroque
Country Leipzig, Germany
Recording Studio

15. Two-Part Invention no 13 in A minor, BWV 784
Composer Johann Sebastian Bach (1685 - 1750)
Performer Glenn Gould (Piano)
Genre Baroque Period / Invention
Date Written 1723
Period Baroque
Country Cöthen, Germany
Recording Studio

16. Variations (32) for Piano in C minor on an Original Theme, WoO 80: Variation no 26
Composer Ludwig van Beethoven (1770 - 1827)
Performer Glenn Gould (Piano)
Genre Classical Period / Variations
Date Written 1806
Period Classical
Country Vienna, Austria
Recording Studio
Notes This selection shares a track and timing with Beethoven's Variation no 27.

17. Variations (32) for Piano in C minor on an Original Theme, WoO 80: Variations no 27
Composer Ludwig van Beethoven (1770 - 1827)
Performer Glenn Gould (Piano)
Genre Classical Period / Variations
Date Written 1806
Period Classical
Country Vienna, Austria
Recording Studio
Notes This selection shares a track and timing with Beethoven's Variation no 26.

18. Sonata for Piano no 17 in D minor, Op. 31 no 2 "Tempest": 3rd movement, Allegretto
Composer Ludwig van Beethoven (1770 - 1827)
Performer Glenn Gould (Piano)
Genre Classical Period / Sonata
Date Written 1802
Period Classical
Country Vienna, Austria
Recording Studio

19. English Suite no 2 in A minor, BWV 807: Gigue
Composer Johann Sebastian Bach (1685 - 1750)
Performer Glenn Gould (Piano)
Genre Baroque Period / Gigue / Suite
Date Written circa 1715
Period Baroque
Country Weimar, Germany
Recording Studio

20. English Suite no 2 in A minor, BWV 807: Prelude
Composer Johann Sebastian Bach (1685 - 1750)
Performer Glenn Gould (Piano)
Genre Baroque Period / Prelude / Suite
Date Written circa 1715
Period Baroque
Country Weimar, Germany
Recording Studio

21. Goldberg Variations, BWV 988: Variation no 19
Composer Johann Sebastian Bach (1685 - 1750)
Performer Glenn Gould (Piano)
Genre Baroque Period / Variations
Date Written 1741-1742
Period Baroque

Country Nuremberg, Germany
Recording Studio

22. Well-Tempered Clavier, Book 1: Prelude and Fugue no 14 in F sharp minor, BWV 859 - Fugue
Composer Johann Sebastian Bach (1685 - 1750)
Performer Glenn Gould (Piano)
Genre Baroque Period / Fugue
Date Written 1722
Period Baroque
Country Cöthen, Germany
Recording Studio

23. Little Pieces (6) for Piano, Op. 19: no 1, Leicht, zart
Composer Arnold Schoenberg (1874 - 1951)
Performer Glenn Gould (Piano)
Genre 20th Century Period
Date Written 1911
Period 20th Century
Country Vienna, Austria
Recording Studio

24. Well-Tempered Clavier, Book 1: Prelude and Fugue no 2 in C minor, BWV 847 - Prelude
Composer Johann Sebastian Bach (1685 - 1750)
Performer Glenn Gould (Piano)
Genre Baroque Period / Prelude
Date Written 1722
Period Baroque
Country Cöthen, Germany
Recording Studio

DVD Chapters

Side #1- WIDESCREEN
0. scene selections
1. Aria [2:49]
2. Lake Simcoe [4:20]
3. 45 Seconds and a Chair [:52]
4. Bruno Monsaingeon [1:54]
5. Gould Meets Gould [4:38]
6. Hamburg [4:19]
7. Variation in C Minor [:39]
8. Practice [3:35]
9. The L.A. Concert [4:03]
10. Cd318 [3:40]
11. Yehudi Menuhin [2:24]
12. Passion According to Gould [3:16]
13. Opus 1 [3:46]
14. Crossed Paths [6:04]
15. Truck Stop [3:36]
16. The Idea of North [3:22]
17. Solitude [2:51]
18. Questions With No Answers [4:32]
19. A Letter [:43]
20. Gould Meets McLaren [3:15]
21. The Tip [3:51]
22. Personal Ad [1:57]
23. Pills [2:28]
24. Margaret Pacsu [1:13]
25. Diary of One Day [2:07]
26. Motel Wawa [3:51]
27. Forty-nine [1:29]
28. Jessie Greig [2:18]
29. Leaving [2:30]

30. Voyager [:49]
31. Aria [2:30]
32. End Credits [3:08]

Résumé

Ce portrait du grand pianiste ontarien joue sur un collage de reconstitutions d'événements vécus par le pianiste, d'interviews, de dessins animés et, bien évidemment, d'une bande originale particulièrement riche.

Critique

L'entreprise était risquée. Comment, en effet, confier à un acteur - si bon soit-il - l'interprétation d'un personnage aussi médiatique que **Glenn Gould** ? Car le pianiste a enregistré de très nombreuses émissions télévisées, et sa figure d'original excentrique défie toute représentation (comme Artaud ou Proust...). Il faut avouer que ce patchwork offre au profane une vision inattendue d'un homme à tous égards anticonformiste. Il y a là une démarche très "moderne" de conjuration du documentaire, qui évite le docudrame ou la profusion, souvent fastidieuse, des témoignages. Mais, pourrait-on dire, le mystère musical de **Gould** reste entier. Car si ces fictions - toujours fondées sur des sources sérieuses - esquissent un personnage brillant, déroutant, polytoxicomane, névrosé et résolument moderne, quid de la relation **Gould**/Bach, par exemple ? Le meilleur côté du film réside certainement dans la description de ce que l'on pourrait nommer le "complexe ontarien (sentiment d'isolement dans une nature hostile) si bien décrit dans les **films** de Cronenberg et d'Egoyan, ainsi que dans l'association de ce dandy de génie avec les grandes figures de l'avant-garde canadienne (Mc Laren et Snow).
Cahiers du Cinéma n°486

Si **Gould** est incomparable, au sens premier du terme, et qu'il relève pour cette raison d'une autre échelle de comparaison, c'est que l'idée de musique l'intéressait davantage que la musique elle-même. La part du répertoire pianistique qu'il a interprétée est d'ailleurs très réduite : ni Liszt, ni Schumann, ni Chopin, ni Schubert. Il n'a joué, mais inlassablement, que les compositeurs qui l'attiraient par leur philosophie, leur spiritualité. Les pièces qui composent le puzzle du film, interviews, témoignages, reconstitutions plausibles d'instants de vie, aident à dégager progressivement la silhouette d'un mystique facétieux, cherchant dans l'ascèse, la quête spirituelle, à être pour ainsi dire le médium, le support d'un secret, d'une vérité, étrangers au monde sensible, mais que la musique pourrait un instant révéler et fugitivement fixer. En renonçant au concert, façon d'être dans la vie, comme le rappelle Menuhin qui figure comme l'antithèse absolue de **Gould**, au profit exclusif de l'enregistrement, ce dernier ne trahit-il pas ce désir même de saisir et de fixer l'indicible dissimulé dans le message musical ? Et le destin de **Gould** n'évoque-t-il pas, d'une certaine manière celui des reclus, manifestant dans leur chair les stigmates de leur quête spirituelle ? Plusieurs variations parlent du rapport de l'artiste à son corps : ce qu'il mange et surtout ce qu'il ne mange pas, ses affections dermatologiques, sa tension artérielle, ses réactions physiologiques aux variations thermiques, tous symptômes qu'il combat en s'isolant du monde extérieur grâce à une protection vestimentaire (manteau, cache-nez, les fameuses mitaines), grâce aussi aux adjuvants chimiques, médicaments dont il finit par devenir dépendant. Il y a du gnostique chez

Gould, et son rapport à ses semblables, aussi bien qu'à la nature, invite à y penser. Comme si le monde habitable, celui des cités (s'il avait pu fuir Toronto pour s'installer dans l'Arctique, il l'aurait fait) et de la nature domestiquée (il détestait les pêcheurs à la ligne, contrairement à l'assertion de Menuhin), ne l'intéressait, ne retenait son attention qu'en tant que matière à déchiffrer, simple lieu de passage entre deux états. **Gould** peut entretenir des relations privilégiées avec tel ou tel, humble ou notoire (Bruno Monsaingeon, sa femme de chambre), en définitive, il semble surtout y chercher le reflet de son interprétation du monde, du secret derrière la porte. Attentif, et même perméable à ces contacts humains, **Gould**, en réalité, ne se lie jamais. D'où l'impossibilité de reconstituer aucun aspect de sa vie intime, ce qui est bien le comble pour une biographie ! D'où ces questions sans réponse, fragment du film qui pose ironiquement à son propos toutes ces questions sans réponse, absurdes en l'occurrence, qui n'en font qu'une : avec qui couche-til ? Etait-il homo, hétéro ou simplement asexué ? Les trente-deux fragments du film constituent autant d'accès au mystère **Gould**. Accès dont les modes peuvent varier : un **Gould** réinventé, par le truchement de l'acteur shakespearien Colm Feore dont le travail du geste et de la voix dépasse le simple mimétisme, à l'aide de monologues ou de dialogues empruntés à ses écrits, et notamment à sa correspondance ; un **Gould** raconté en 1992 par divers témoins célèbres ou.obscurs ; un **Gould** diversement radiographié, au sens propre comme au figuré (image aux rayons X de son corps, entrailles de son piano, représentation formelle abstraite de son interprétation

de Bach visualisée par une animation de Norman Mc Laren, vision macroscopique de son écriture manuscrite) Le résultat ne permet plus de dire si c'est la vérité ou la fiction qui l'emporte, ce qui n'est pas pour embarrasser les auteurs qui rappellent que **Glenn Gould** était le premier à se "fictionnaliser".Il lui arrivait même d'écrire les questions et les réponses de ses interviews, qu'il soumettait aux journalistes pour les publier telles quelles. Dans une émission de télévision, *Music of Men*, de Yehudi Menuhin, ce dernier avait reçu de **Gould** avant l'enregistrement, le contenu de son entretien avec le pianiste, plein de questions très naturelles, d'anecdotes et de blagues. Sous un pseudonyme, **Gould** avait fait la **critique** d'un ouvrage le concernant, indiquant que la vie de "cet homme" ne méritait pas qu'on s'y attarde, mais que, si une biographie voulait s'approcher de la vérité, il faudrait qu'elle soit fictionnelle. Deux fragments montrent à quel point l'idée de la musique (et c'est sur l'idée qu'il faut mettre l'accent) dépassait dans la conscience de **Gould** la musique elle-même. Dans *The idea of north* (*L'idée du nord*), l'une de ses nombreuses émissions radiophoniques reconstituée pour les besoins du film, il donne (simplement) à entendre à ses auditeurs des voix en contrepoint, ouvrant sur d'autres voix, qu'il dirige au montage et au mixage comme un chef d'orchestre le ferait avec ses musiciens. Ailleurs, dans l'un de ces relais routiers où il avait coutume de descendre pour absorber quelque infame et frugal brouet végétarien, le film montre comment il percevait l'environnement, les conversations à partir de critères musicaux. On y perçoit le compositeur chez **Gould**, compositeur large-

ment virtuel, certes, mais dont on peut entendre le splendide *quatuor opus 1*, avec Bruno Monsaingeon au violon. Quels que soient ses mérites et son originalité, le film ne serait, bien sûr, pas tout à fait ce qu'il est sans la musique de **Gould**, sans ses interprétations, de Bach, de Beethoven, de Richard Strauss, de Sibelius, de Prokofiev, de Scriabin, de Schoenberg, de Hindemith, dont chaque pièce a été choisie en fonction de l'économie musicale du film lui-même, en termes de durée et de rythme. Dans les trente villes américaines où le film est sorti, la BOF s'est retrouvée en tête des ventes, derrière deux disques de Pavarotti. Au fait, quand vous aurez vu **32 short films about Glenn Gould**, cet objet étrange qu'il ne faut rater à aucun prix, n'oubliez pas que l'ermite de Toronto compte à son palmarès 110 heures de musique enregistrée, largement disponibles.
Positif (janvier 1995)

V021 (& Columbia 74356): Thirty Two Short Films about Glenn Gould:
The Sound of Genius

Back

Columbia Tristar Home Video, Rombus Media (1993), color, 94:00.
Laserdisc (NTSC): 74356
VHS (NTSC): 74353

Producer: Niv Fichman
Writers: François Girard and Don McKellar
Director: François Girard

Starring Colm Feore as Glenn Gould

Time	"Chapter Stops": Description, Background Music
00:00	Start
00:39	01: Opening title
00:59	02: "Aria" (Aria from The Goldberg Variations, Johann Sebastian Bach). GG walking across a frozen lake to musical accompaniment.
03:19	03: "Lake Simcoe" (overture from Tristan and Isolde, Richard Wagner). Dramatization of GG's childhood and youth. Voiceover narration by GG, dialogue of actors, and Wagner all play simultaneously.
07:40	04: "45 Seconds and a Chair" (Two-part Invention #13 from Two and Three-Part Inventions, Johann Sebastian Bach). Actor portraying GG sits in chair and stares into camera lens as Bach invention plays.
08:33	05: Interview with Bruno Monsaingeon, musician and collaborator (in French, with English subtitles).
10:28	06: "Gould Meets Gould" (Prelude from English Suite #5, Johann Sebastian Bach). Interviewer and GG conduct an interview on stage in semi-darkness as Bach plays in background; implication is that both men are GG.
15:10	07: "Hamburg" (Allegro, Sonata #13, Ludwig van Beethoven). GG in Hamburg hotel suite. Plays record of his Beethoven performance for German cleaning lady.cc
19:28	08: "Variation in C Minor" (Variation from 32 Variations in C Minor, Ludwig van Beethoven). Black and white sonograph while piece plays.
20:07	09: "Practice" (Allegro, Sonata #17 ("The Tempest"), Ludwig van Beethoven). GG in hotel room, studying a score. Piece plays in GG's mind, he conducts as he walks around, singing to himself here and there.
23:44	10: "The L.A. Concert". Dramatization of GG walking to stage for his last concert.

27:47 11: "CD318" (Prelude #2 from The Well-Tempered Clavier, Vol. I, Johann Sebastian Bach). Camera on interior of piano as piece plays. At end of piece, we see workman covering up piano, turning out lights in hall.

31:29 12: Interview with Yehudi Menuhin, violinist. In French with English subtitles.

33:52 13: "Passion According to Gould" (Gigue from English Suite #2, Johann Sebastian Bach). We see GG in the recording studio, listening to a take of one his own performances. He walks around conducting in the air, almost dancing. Switch back and forth tow 3 men in recording booth goofing around during playback.

37:12 14: "Opus 1" (Opus #1, Glenn Gould). We see a string quartet performing the work.

40:58 15: "Crossed Paths" (Adagio from Sonata in B Minor Op. 5, Richard Strauss). Interview with various people who knew GG as piece plays in background.

47:06 End of Side One

Side Two

00:00 16: "Truck Stop". GG driving. "Downtown" playing on the radio. GG overhears several conversations in a cafe.

03:38 17: The Idea of North". We see GG from above in a recording studio, conducting the air, looking at a pile of typed documents--as if he were conducting the conversation we hear. At the end, GG speaks into the radio microphone, announcing his show "The Idea of North".

07:04 18: "Solitude" (Andantino from Sonatina #2, Jean Sibelius). GG gives an interview to unseen interviewer as music plays in background, while standing on frozen lake.

09:56 19: "Questions with No Answers" (Prelude from English Suite #2, Johann Sebastian Bach). We see a reporter interviewing GG from a phone booth as music plays in the background. We see several interviewers, of various ages and sexes, asking him questions.

14:31 20: "A Letter" (Variations #19 from The Goldberg Variations, Johann Sebastian Bach). Voiceover of GG saying he is in love; we see the letter he has written about this.

15:14 21: "Gould Meets McLaren" (Fugue #14 from The Well-Tempered Clavier, Vol. I, Johann Sebastian Bach). Animation of spheres floating through clouds, "reproducing", as music plays. Eventually process reverses itself and spheres melt back into one.

18:30 22: "The Tip" (Precipitati from Sonata # 7, Sergei Prokofiev). We see several financial traders talking on the phone at music plays. One of the traders is speaking to GG. We see GG talking about the market to employees of the restaurant where he's eating.

22:22 23: "Personal Ad" ("Desir" from Two Pieces, Op. 57, Alexander Scriabin). GG types and reads aloud a personal ad he has written as music plays in background.

24:19 24: "Pills" (Sehr lebhaft from Sonata #3, Paul Hindemith). We see pictures of drugs, and hear GG describing their effects as music plays in the background.

26:48 25: Interview with Margaret Pacsu, friend. In English.

28:02 26: "Diary of One Day" (Gigue from Suite for Piano, Op. 25, Arnold Schoenberg). We see equations, then x-ray photos of heart beating, someone playing piano, then more numbers and fractions (blood pressure numbers) as music plays; can also hear heartbeats in the background.

30:10 27: "Motel Wawa" (Ruhig bewegte Viertel from Sonata #1, Paul Hindemith). GG gives a telephone interview as music plays. We can hear questions of interviewer. GG talks about his supernatural experiences.

34:01 28: "Forty-Nine" (Leicht zart from Six Little Pieces for Piano, Arnold Schoenberg). GG calls a friend from a phone booth. He talks about Schoenberg's superstitions regarding numbers and his death.

35:32 29: Interview with Jessie Greig, cousin. In English.

37:52 30: "Leaving" (Sarabande from French Suite #1, Johann Sebastian

Bach). GG drives in rain, in dark, as music plays. He stops and calls Jessie from a phone booth, and points out Bach tune playing on the radio his own performance. At the end, the radio announcers tells of GG's death at ago 50.

40:22 31: "Voyager" (Prelude in D Minor from Nine Little Preludes, Johann Sebastian Bach). Pictures of Voyager taking off as music plays.

41:12 32: "Aria" (Prelude #1 from The Well-Tempered Clavier, Vol. I, Johann Sebastian Bach). GG walks into the distance across frozen lake. Voiceover tells how one of the messages sent up on the Voyager was Bach's Prelude #1 from The Well-Tempered Clavier, Vol. I, playing in the background, as performed by GG.

43:41 33: End Credits (Contrapunctus #9 from The Art of the Fugue, Johann Sebastian Bach). Organ plays as credits run.

46:50 End

Friday, May 12, 2006

Thirty-Two Short Films About Glenn Gould

Interviewer: "l assumed we'd spend the bulk of
the interview on music-related matters."

Gould: "Do you think it's essential?"

I must begin by confessing that I am an admirer of the Canadian Pianist Glenn Gould. His 1980's version of Bach's Goldberg Variations is one of the supreme recorded documents ever produced. That being said, there is probably no more divisive musical figure in the 20th century, at least as far as the classical music world is concerned. With this in mind I turn to François Girard's work, "Thirty-Two Short Films About Glenn Gould".

The film is a deliberate attempt to expand the definition of biographical cinema. It consists of (what else?), 32 short pieces (or variations if you will), dealing many and various aspects of Gould's nature. They range from interviews with the man himself, to impressions of friends, revelations about his medical history and of course his musical performances. So is it a documentary? Well, no. Much of the short works feature the actor Colm Feore recreating Gould at various stages in

his life. But then other sequences are documentary interviews with those who knew the real life Gould such as Yehudi Menuhin, his cousin 'Jessie', right down to his house maid who opines that the other maids thought he was some sort of sexual deviant due to his eccentricities. Yet other sequences are purely abstract. Take for example the Norman McLaren animated sequence. A further element of confusion is introduced when one knows that much of Feore's dialogue is actually directly quoted from the real Gould's letters, interviews and articles.

Those with a previous knowledge of Gould's life will spot many small details that will be missed by more casual viewers. There in lies the question, does the film require a familiarity with it's subject to be fully appreciated? If so, is this fair? I do not see why not. Why should a film automatically be aimed at the lowest common denominator? Does every film need to be intended for every possible audience any more than a book, or a painting does? Should we admonish Saul Bellow because his novel "Herzog" is not understood by the average fan of "The Davinci Code"? And why can a film not aim for a narrow audience who can appreciate it's specific scope due to thier insider knowledge on the subject. This is a film, not a teaching aide.

That being said, I do not think a person unacquainted with Gould would find the film devoid of enjoyment or meaning, indeed many people have had their first exposure to the artist via this film. It contains some electrifying scenes as well as some wonderful humour. Take for instance the segment entitled "The Tip", in which Gould makes a killing on the stock market or "Gould meets Gould" in which he interviews himself in a most curious fashion. The self interview is incidentally real, written by Gould for a magazine. Another lovely scene has Gould playing one of his records for a German maid in his hotel room. The camera is content to watch her face react to the music while Gould looks on. Whether this sequence has any basis in fact is besides the point, it certainly expresses something the film makers wanted to say about Gould.

Some have said that the format is inadequate and that the picture of the subject it presents is incomplete. This is true but besides the point as the film attempts rather to give an impression of it's subject as opposed to a portrait of him. Besides, other biographical films only feel complete because of a tunnel vision approach to a single aspect of thier subjects lives. The Iris Murdoch biopic "Iris" is an extreme case in point. "Thirty-Two Short Films About Glenn Gould" is honest enough to acknowledge that a mere ninety-odd minute film can never truly capture a subject and instead is content to merely point in it's direction placing the film somewhere between Gould's public persona, the works he produced and finally the man himself. More than any other biographical film I have seen, it searches for the texture of a life as opposed to ideas or meaning.

A noble experiment? I would rather think of it as a successful one.

CINE Y MUSICA: GLENN GOULD Y EL CINE

Por Angel Riego Cue. Lee su Curriculum.

La relación de Glenn Gould con el cine ha tenido dos aspectos muy diferenciados. Por una parte, en vida se encargó de elegir la banda sonora de diversas películas. Una vez muerto, su propia vida ha dado origen a algún argumento cinematográfico. Dado que este mes se cumplen 20 años de la muerte del legendario pianista, al que recordamos también en la sección de Discos, parece que merecía también la pena traer esta vinculación con el cine a la presente sección de "Cine y Música".

Dadas las ideas pacifistas y antimilitaristas de Glenn Gould, era de esperar que una película que incidiera en esa línea podía contar con su colaboración, y de hecho aceptó el encargo del director George Roy Hill de seleccionar la música para *Matadero 5* (Slaughterhouse five, 1972), que adaptaba la novela de igual título de Kurt Vonnegut Jr. cuyo tema central era el bombardeo de Dresde por los aliados la noche del 13 al 14 de febrero de 1945, en los últimos meses de la Segunda Guerra Mundial.

El protagonista de *Matadero 5*, Billy Pilgrim, es un joven norteamericano que se casa con la hija de un óptico y comienza a trabajar en el negocio familiar hasta que es llamado a filas en la Segunda Guerra Mundial. Destinado a Europa, es hecho prisionero por los alemanes en la Batalla de las Ardenas y acaba siendo enviado a Dresde, a la que se considera ciudad abierta (que se rinde sin luchar) y por ello es el mejor sitio al que pueden enviar a un prisionero aliado.

En Dresde, Billy es encerrado junto a otros prisioneros y sus guardianes en un subterráneo que sirve como almacén de carne de un matadero de animales (el "Matadero 5" que da título al film) y eso le salvará cuando la ciudad caiga bajo el fuego devastador de la aviación británica y norteamericana. Poco después, los rusos entrarán en Dresde y Billy podrá volver a América. Pero ya nunca será el mismo, quedará toda la vida marcado por Dresde. Y la desgracia se seguirá cebando sobre él: es el único superviviente de un accidente de aviación donde muere su suegro; su mujer muere también por inhalación de monóxido de carbono cuando se dirigía al hospital a visitar a Billy; su hijo es enviado a Vietnam.

La presión es ya más de la que puede soportar Billy, y su evasión será el "ser abducido por extraterrestres del planeta Trafalmadero", cuyos habitantes pueden viajar al pasado y al futuro, y donde él tomará otra esposa, la despampanante "Montana Wildhack". En la Tierra dará conferencias contando su historia, y su

capacidad para ver el futuro le permitirá ver al francotirador que acudirá a matarle al estadio donde el ya anciano Billy ha acudido a hablar al público; sin tener miedo, llegará a animar a su asesino.

El argumento de *Matadero 5* mezcla presente, pasado y futuro en una dislocación temporal, que nos sugiere que quien ha vivido un horror tan sobrehumano como el que tuvo lugar en Dresde ya no podrá llevar una existencia ordenada y racional. En realidad, la acción no es lineal, sino que las escenas de Estados Unidos, de Dresde y de Trafalmadero se mezclan en continuos saltos temporales. Ciertamente, la parte "extraterrestre" es hoy día lo más fácil de ridiculizar, pero las imágenes de la película hacen un impacto duradero en el espectador, y por ello este inconveniente se tiene menos en cuenta.

Las escenas de Dresde son especialmente memorables: la llegada del convoy de prisioneros a la bella ciudad barroca (fue llamada "la Florencia del Elba"), que parece un oasis en medio de la guerra, el recorrido por las calles escoltados por soldados alemanes adolescentes, con uniformes que les quedan grandes, y donde uno de ellos aprovecha para mostrarse con orgullo como "hombre valiente" ante su chica, que le contempla desde una ventana; el encierro en el subterráneo, donde reciben la visita de un americano que se ha pasado a los nazis, y que vistiendo un ridículo uniforme les intenta convencer para que se unan a los alemanes y luchen contra los rusos, "que son el verdadero enemigo"; luego la noche del bombardeo, y al día siguiente cuando la ciudad está arrasada, parece haber llegado el fin del mundo, el muchacho alemán busca a su chica y tanto ella como su casa han desaparecido, la ciudad es un montón de escombros y por todas partes hay cadáveres o trozos de cadáveres que deben ser quemados, incluyendo de numerosos niños. Otro prisionero americano, Edgar Derby (que antes se había portado como un padre para Billy), será fusilado por "pillaje" por el mero hecho de recoger del suelo un objeto sin valor de una casa en ruinas.

La novela original de Kurt Vonnegut (llamada *Matadero cinco, o la cruzada de los niños*) contaba en realidad experiencias autobiográficas, pues él mismo estuvo en el papel de Billy, fue hecho prisionero en las Ardenas y no fue fusilado, como otros soldados americanos en su misma situación, sino que acabaría siendo enviado a Dresde, donde viviría el bombardeo. La novela se publicó en 1969, cuando estaba en su auge en movimiento pacifista americano debido a la guerra de Vietnam, y se convirtió en todo un icono cultural para las nuevas generaciones. Según declaró Vonnegut, el bombardeo de Dresde (cuya cifra de víctimas oscila entre 35.000 y 135.000, según las fuentes) fue absolutamente inútil puesto que no hizo que la guerra terminara medio minuto

antes, ni libró a una sola persona de los campos de la muerte. El único beneficiado sería él mismo, que recibiría gracias a su libro un promedio de unos 5 dólares por cada víctima.

La adaptación al cine de *Matadero cinco* fue elogiada por Vonnegut como la única vez que una obra suya se llevó satisfactoriamente al cine, y consiguió expresar las mismas sensaciones que la novela. Gran parte del mérito se debe a la dirección de George Roy Hill, que aquí cambió de tercio respecto a las películas más "comerciales" por las que es más conocido, como *Dos hombres y un destino* (Butch Cassidy and Sundance Kid, 1968) o *El golpe* (The Sting, 1973), ambas con Paul Newman y Robert Redford. Hay que mencionar también la fotografía de Miroslav Ondrícek, que convirtió las calles de Praga en el Dresde de la época (más tarde también filmaría en Praga la Viena de *Amadeus*), la interpretación de Billy por Michael Sacks (cuyo papel más recordado es el del policía Maxwell en en *Sugarland Express* de Spielberg, en España, "Loca evasión") y, por supuesto, la música elegida por Glenn Gould, toda ella compuesta por Johann Sebastian Bach, aparte de algunos pasajes que se deben al propio Gould.

De las músicas de Bach utilizadas en el film, la primera es el Largo del *Concierto para piano nº 5* (originalmente concierto para clave nº 5, se entiende), que más tarde utilizará Woody Allen en *Hannah y sus hermanas*, y que puede decirse que es "el tema de Billy": aparece en los títulos de crédito, cuando Billy deambula por las Ardenas antes de ser capturado, y en las dos ocasiones en que será tentado de dejar la Tierra para irse a Trafalmadero. El paseo de los prisioneros por las calles de Dresde (música barroca para una ciudad barroca) se nos muestra acompañado del Allegro final del *Concierto para piano nº 3* y del Presto final del *Concierto de Brandenburgo nº 4*. El incendio de Dresde es acompañado por la la nº 25 de las *Variaciones Goldberg*; otra de las Variaciones, la nº 18, aparecerá más tarde, cuando Billy conoce a la extraterrestre "Montana": aparte de describir su carácter, hará que Billy la relacione con lo que vivió en Dresde. Por último, el preludio coral para órgano *Komm, heiliger Geist, herre Gott* (Ven, Espíritu Santo, Señor Dios), BWV 651, suena en las escenas finales cuando "Montana" da a luz a su hijo.

Las grabaciones utilizadas son, obviamente, las de Glenn Gould, y en el caso de los conciertos para piano está acompañado por la Sinfónica Columbia dirigida por Vladimir Golschmann. Sin embargo, en el *Concierto de Brandenburgo nº 4* y en el del Preludio coral para órgano no se disponía de grabaciones interpretadas por Gould, por lo que se recurrió, respectivamente, a Casals con el Festival Marlboro y a Lionel Rogg.

Matadero 5 fue la primera colaboración de Gould con el cine, si se exceptúa un corto de animación de 7 minutos de duración llamado *Esferas*, dirigido en 1969 por René Jodin y Norman McLaren, del que más adelante se volverá a hablar. A pesar de ser su trabajo para el cine más conocido, Gould no quedó satisfecho de *Matadero 5*, tal vez por tratarse de un encargo y no de un proyecto en el que estuviera personalmente involucrado.

En cambio, se llegó a implicar a fondo en la realización de otra película, aunque no llegaría a vivir para verla terminada. Se trataba de la adaptación de la novela de Timothy Findley *The Wars* (Las Guerras) que llevaría al cine con el mismo título el realizador canadiense Robin Philips, y que se estrenaría finalmente en 1983, obteniendo una difusión más bien escasa (no tenemos noticia de que haya llegado a España).

The Wars nos presenta la historia de Michael, un joven canadiense que tiene muchos puntos con común con el propio Gould: es solitario, amante de los animales (Gould se negó a participar en el film hasta que se le garantizó que ningún animal sufriría daños), vive cuidando de su hermana enferma... y un día es reclutado para luchar en la Primera Guerra Mundial, llegando a vivir los horrores de las trincheras. Las músicas que seleccionó ahora Gould fueron la nº 3 de las *Cinco Piezas Op. 3* de Richard Strauss y los Intermezzi de Brahms Opp. 117,1 y 118,6 ; aparte, compuso algunos pasajes (uno para cellos y contrabajos, otro para coro).

La propia vida de Glenn Gould podía dar pie a un argumento tan interesante como el de cualquiera de las películas donde participó, y la ocasión llegó en 1993 cuando un director canadiense entonces casi debutante, el quebequés François Girard, presentó su film *Thirty-two short films about Glenn Gould* (32 cortometrajes sobre Glenn Gould, aunque en la limitada distribución española se prefirió rebautizarla como *Sinfonía en soledad*). El título ya era toda una declaración de intenciones: hacer un film en 32 fragmentos distintos, que obviamente representarían los 32 movimientos de las celebérrimas *Variaciones Goldberg* (Aria, 30 variaciones y Aria final).

Hay que decir ante todo que esos 32 cortos, de variable duración, mezclan temáticas muy diferentes: los hay que recrean determinados momentos de la vida de Gould, mediante el trabajo de actores; otros son entrevistas a personajes reales que trabajaron con él; otros aportan algún dato sobre Glenn Gould o simplemente

son montajes de imágenes acopladas con música. Hay que advertir que, aunque en la película aparecen personajes reales, nunca vemos imágenes del Gould auténtico, siempre que aparece el personaje de Gould es interpretado por un actor.

Así, la película empieza y termina de la misma forma, al igual que las *Variaciones Goldberg*: la secuencia inicial (nº 1) es la figura de Gould, con su abrigo y su gorra, acercándose a nosotros en un paisaje nevado; la secuencia final (nº 31, porque la nº 32 son los créditos del final) es, obviamente, la misma figura alejándose.

Además de estas dos "Arias", encontramos también "dramatizados" los siguientes episodios de la vida del pianista: "Lago Simcoe" (nº 2), donde una voz en off (la del propio Gould, mejor dicho, la del actor que hace de Gould) narra cómo fue su infancia, dominando ya a los 10 años el Libro I del *Clave bien temperado* de Bach, y quedándose abstraído por cálculos matemáticos; sus padres un día le descubren emocionado al pie del receptor de radio de casa, escuchando el *Tristán e Isolda* de Wagner. En el nº 6, "Hamburgo", durante una de sus giras está enfermo, encerrado en un hotel de dicha ciudad, y obliga a la mujer de la limpieza a escuchar un disco que le acaba de llegar. La mujer primero escucha "por obligación", luego le va interesando lo que oye, va moviéndose al ritmo de la música y termina por levantarse a mirar la portada del disco, a ver qué música era esa. "El concierto de Los Angeles" (nº 9) fue la última actuación "en vivo" de Gould, en 1964; vemos el ritual de sumergir las manos en agua caliente, los ajetreos propios del concierto (su ayudante le recuerda la agenda de ese día), y un viejo trabajador del teatro, próximo a jubilarse, que le pide a Gould un autógrafo; él se lo firma y le dice que es el último que firmará en su vida.

Una vez retirado de los conciertos, continuamos asistiendo a episodios "dramatizados" de la vida de Gould. En "La Pasión según Gould" (nº 12) vemos a una sesión de grabación en el estudio; Gould ha terminado una toma y pide que se la pongan en play-back; mientras la escucha danza al compás suyo, se pone a "dirigirla" y finalmente dice a los ingenieros de sonido que puede servir, y que se la pongan otra vez. En "Parada de camiones" (nº 15), Gould viaja en coche hasta un restaurante de la carretera, donde paran a comer muchos camioneros, y escucha sus conversaciones. En "Anuncio personal" (nº 22), Gould redacta un texto para la sección de "Contactos" de un periódico, buscando a su "media naranja" o como la llama él tras describirse a sí mismo, "una polilla de similares características". No pide que se envíe foto, pero sí una cassette con una muestra grabada de su conversación.

En "El soplo" (nº 24) contemplamos otra de las aficiones de Gould, la de especulador en Bolsa: difundiendo el rumor de que un príncipe saudí, de visita en Canadá, piensa comprar acciones de una empresa desconocida, consigue que las acciones de esa empresa suban como la espuma... no hará falta decir que el propietario de esas acciones es el propio Gould. En "El adiós" (nº 29), Gould llama por teléfono a su prima Jessie, como hacía casi a diario, y le pregunta qué música está sonando por la radio de su coche, a la que acerca el auricular del teléfono (está en una cabina); es una *Suite Francesa*, sí, pero ¿cuál? Esta conversación será prácticamente la última que sostenga antes del infarto que le llevará a la muerte.

La dramatización con actores sirve no sólo para representar episodios de la vida de Gould, sino también para exponer sus opiniones. Así, en "Soledad" (nº 17) vemos a Gould en el mismo escenario "ártico" de las Arias inicial y final, hablando sobre sus programas de radio, de la importancia que tiene la radio para él puesto que se duerme con ella, y de sus ideas sobre la soledad (aquí es cuando dice aquella famosa frase suya, una persona necesita "compensar" cada hora que pase en compañía de otros con X horas de soledad, aunque no sabría decir cuánto es X). En "Práctica" (nº 8), en la época en que aún daba conciertos, hace un balance de una de sus giras, las pocas veces que encontró una habitación cómoda o un piano adecuado.

En "Motel Wawa" (nº 26) le escuchamos disertar sobre la posibilidad de la "percepción extra-sensorial" o sobre las coincidencias inexplicables, basándose en una ocasión en que de niño, él y su madre tuvieron el mismo sueño, que Glenn cogía el sarampión (unos días antes de que ocurriera realmente). Unas inquietudes similares aparecen en "49" (nº 27), cuando Gould cumple 49 años y, supersticioso con las cifras, piensa en cuál será la edad de su muerte; hablando por una cabina, cuenta una anécdota de Schoenberg, que estaba obsesionado con que su muerte tendría relación con el nº 13, y así temía los cumpleaños que fueran múltiplo de 13; cuando cumplió 65 (13 x 5), un adivino le dijo que no tendría problemas hasta volver a encontrarse con el 13, aunque más tarde matizaría que tal cosa no ocurriría a los 78 años (13 x 6) sino a los 76 (7+6=13); esa edad tenía entonces Schoenberg, 76, y a esa edad murió.

Otras apariciones de Gould interpretado por un actor nos permiten conocer textos suyos. En "Gould entrevista a Gould" (nº 5), que reproduce una auto-entrevista concedida a "High Fidelity" en febrero de 1974, entrevistador y entrevistado son ambos Glenn Gould. No se piense que el hecho de entrevistarse a sí mismo le hace ser "complaciente", al contrario, las preguntas (sobre por qué se retiró de los conciertos, qué busca con esa vida "apartada del mundo") son lo más duras

posibles hasta que Gould debe pedirse tregua a sí mismo al no poder soportar el acoso que él mismo se hace. "La idel del norte" (nº 16) es un programa radiofónico donde varios personajes hablan de lo que significa para ellos viajar al Norte, desde la mujer que se muestra fascinada hasta el burócrata engreído que dice que todo eso son bobadas; las distintas voces (hasta 5) se mezclan formando un "contrapunto" como en una fuga de Bach.

Más información relativa a Gould (esta vez sin su presencia como personaje) la encontramos en "Una carta" (nº 19) donde cuenta la historia de una mujer que no se quiso casar con él, permite contemplar su escritura, que atraviesa la hoja en la dirección de la diagonal, a pesar de tener los renglones marcados. El nº 23, "Píldoras", es una enumeración de los tipos de píldoras usados por Gould, y las contraindicaciones de cada una. "Voyager" (nº 30) nos recuerda con imágenes de archivo documental la historia de la nave espacial lanzada en 1977 con una muestra de los sonidos de la Tierra, que incluía el primer preludio de "El clave bien temperado" en la versión de Glenn Gould.

En la parte dedicada a entrevistas podemos ver y escuchar a personas reales. Entre ellas, el cineasta Bruno Monsaingeon (nº 4), que tantas veces filmó a Gould, y que también es músico, nos habla de las rarezas y extravagancias del genio: presentarse abrigado en verano, encerrarse en una habitación y no salir ni para comer, etc.; el célebre violinista Yehudi Menuhin (nº 11), que declara que no sería capaz de vivir en la soledad de Gould, y que al pianista le perjudicó su elevado sentido moral; la presentadora de radio y amiga suya Margaret Pacsu (nº 24), quien cuenta que mantenía con Glenn charlas de 6 ó 7 horas, y que una vez que vio la cantidad de frascos de fármacos que él tenía en su cuarto de baño, y le preguntó si tomaba de todo eso, la respuesta fue: "No de todos a la vez"; o su prima Jessie Greig (nº 28), contando las conversaciones de Gould una semana antes de su muerte, cuando se preguntaba si iría mucha gente a su funeral.

Además de las entrevistas individuales, el nº 14, "Senderos cruzados", consiste en una entrevista múltiple, a otras 10 personas. En el campo de las entrevistas no realizadas al propio Gould estaría asimismo el nº 18, "Preguntas sin respuesta", donde como su nombre indica se dejan planteadas preguntas que Gould se negó a contestar (este último fragmento está hecho con actores).

Por último en la parte que podríamos llamar "video-clips", consistentes sólo en música sincronizada con imágenes, tenemos "Variación en do menor" (nº 7) cuya única imagen es la visión de la banda sonora "física" (un recurso que ya se había usado en la primera *Fantasía* de Walt Disney); "CD318" (nº 10), que es el

modelo de piano Steinway que usaba Gould, muestra el mecanismo interno de un piano en acción; "Diario de un día" (nº 25) consiste solamente en anotaciones numéricas escritas y radiografías de cuerpos humanos, donde vemos huesos, aparatos digestivos, etc. (los cuerpos pertenecen a los que hicieron la película, por cierto). De la tónica general se apartan algo la animación que hiciera en 1969 Norman McLaren (nº 20), recuperada para la ocasión, aunque solamente consista en esferas que "nacen, crecen, se reproducen y mueren"; y el "Opus 1" (nº 13), un cuarteto de cuerda compuesto por Gould que escuchamos interpertado por un conjunto cuyo primer violín es el mismísimo Bruno Monsaingeon. También hay un único "video-clip" con la presencia de la figura de Gould, sentado, que es lo único que vemos en pantalla en el episodio 3º, "45 segundos y una silla".

Con una estructura semejante, lógicamente existe la posibilidad de incluir muchas músicas distintas en la banda sonora. He aquí una lista de todo lo que suena en *32 short films about Glenn Gould*:

De Bach, escuchamos el Aria de las *Variaciones Goldberg* (el comienzo suena casi imperceptible, luego va subiendo de volumen) en la grabación de 1955 la primera vez que vemos a Gould acercándose entre la nieve, en el "Aria" inicial; curiosamente el "Aria" final no repite la misma música, sino el Preludio nº 1 del *Clave bien temperado*. También del *Clave bien temperado* se escucha el Preludio nº 2 del Libro I (en "CD 318") y el Preludio nº 14 del Libro I (en la animación de McLaren), y de las *Goldberg* oímos la nº 19 como fondo de la lectura de la carta manuscrita. De las *Suites Inglesas* escuchamos el Preludio de la nº 5 en la auto-entrevista, el Preludio de la nº 2 en "Preguntas sin respuesta" y la Giga de esa misma nº 2 en "La pasión según Gould". De las *Suites Francesas*, sólo la Sarabande de la nº 1 en "El adiós". De las *Invenciones a 2 voces* la nº 15 es la que se usa en "45 segundos y una silla". El preludio en re menor (de los *9 pequeños preludios*) acompaña las imágenes del lanzamiento del "Voyager", aunque en realidad lo que viajó dentro del Voyager fue, como ya se ha dicho (entre otras cosas) una grabación del primer preludio del *Clave bien temperado*. Y para terminar con Bach, el Contrapunctus 9 del *Arte de la Fuga* (interpretado al órgano) acompaña los títulos de crédito finales.

En cuanto a otros compositores que no sean Bach: de Beethoven podemos escuchar el Allegro de la Sonata nº 13 en el episodio de Hamburgo (es lo que hace escuchar a la criada), la "Variación en do menor" pertenece a las 32 Variaciones sobre un tema original WoO 80, y el Allegretto de la *Sonata nº 17* "La tempestad" se escucha en "Práctica". De Richard Strauss, el Adagio de su *Sonata en si menor* es lo que suena en "Senderos cruzados". De Sibelius, el

Andantino de su *Sonata nº 2* en el episodio "Soledad". De Scriabin, "Deseo", la primera de las *2 Piezas* Op. 57, es lo que escuchamos como fondo a la redacción del "Anuncio Personal". De Schoenberg, la Giga de la *Suite* Op. 23 ilustra las radiografías de "Diario de un día" y la 1ª de las *6 piezas para piano*, Op. 19 suena en el episodio donde Gould cuenta por teléfono los temores superticiosos del compositor. De Prokofiev, el Precipitato de su *Sonata nº 7* acompaña las maniobras especuladoras en Bolsa de Gould. Y de Hindemith, el 2º movimiento de su *Sonata nº 3* acompaña la visión de las píldoras que tomaba Gould y el primer movimiento de esa misma obra se oye en el episodio del Motel Wawa, mientras a Gould le hacen por teléfono preguntas trascendentes sobre el Más Allá.

No hará falta decir que toda la música anteriormente mencionada está interpretada por Glenn Gould. Hay, sin embargo, tres fragmentos musicales en la película donde no toca él: el Preludio del *Tristán* de Wagner que escucha por la radio (en realidad Gould contó que lo que le emocionó fue el Liebestod), interpretado por Toscanini y la Orquesta de la NBC; la canción *Downtown*, cantada por Petula Clark (una cantante "pop" por la que se interesó Gould) que suena en el episodio del restaurante de camioneros; y el "Opus 1" del propio Gould, tocado por el cuarteto que forman Bruno Monsaingeon (primer violín), Gilles Apap (2º violín), Jean Marie Apap (viola) y Marc Coppey (cello).

Una mezcla tan heterogénea de estilos era difícil que diera buen resultado, y ese es el fallo principal de esta *Sinfonía en soledad*. Para empezar, los episodios con actores son insulsos, no dicen nada, no logran remontar la rutina (en parte debido a la escasa duración de que dispone cada uno, pero el propio director es responsable de haber elegido esa estructura y no otra); para poder dar interés a una estructura así debería tenerse tras la cámara a un verdadero "mago", lo que obviamente no es François Girard. Director que, por otra parte, dentro de un estilo más "tradicional" nos ha dejado una buena película de tema musical como es *El violín rojo*, ya comentada en estas páginas, y en la cual apuntábamos defectos (lo superficiales que resultan las evocaciones de épocas del pasado) que aquí se manifiestan con toda su crudeza. El propio actor que representa al Gould adulto, Colm Feore, no da ni por asomo su personaje, ni siquiera se parece físicamente, con su nariz afilada, al chato Glenn Gould. Por otro lado, en la "prueba de fuego" donde se reconoce a un gran actor (saber mantener el interés de un plano exclusivamente con su rostro), Feore fracasa estrepitosamente (véase el episodio "45 segundos y una silla"). Solemente en los paisajes "árticos" donde aparece abrigado con gorra y bufanda es creíble que Colm Feore sea Glenn Gould.

Por desgracia, los defectos de la película no se acaban en los de sus escenas "dramatizadas". Un fallo fundamental es la mezcla de imágenes de personajes reales con las tomas con actores, que hacen bueno el tópico de que se mezclan tan mal "como el agua y el aceite". O se hace una película o se hace un documental, los híbridos suelen dar mal resultado. Y aún queda lo peor: al parecer, Girard no debía saber con qué llenar sus 32 historias, porque algunas son verdaderas estupideces, como la docta enumeración de pastillas o la visión de radiografías, en general la mayoría de las que he denominado "video-clips" valen bien poco (se agradece el rescatar la animación de McLaren, aunque tampoco encaje mucho en el conjunto).

En fin, que mejor le hubiera ido a Girard si hubiera planteado una película al estilo tradicional o bien un documental propiamente dicho, en vez que querer ceñirse por narices a la estructura de las *Variaciones Goldberg*. Episodios de la vida de Gould que tuvieran "gancho" cinematográfico, y con los que se hubiera podido hacer una gran película, no faltaban.

Por ejemplo: un Gould de 7 años, recoriendo el lago Simcoe en barca junto a su padre y otras personas, pesca un pez con su caña, pero se horroriza al verle dar coletazos e intenta devolverlo al lago; el tumulto que organiza casi hará volcar la embarcación. Tras 10 años de pedirle a su padre que abandone la pesca, por fin lo consigue. Ya adulto (y famoso) seguía recorriendo el lago con un fueraborda, mientras los pescadores increpaban a ese loco que les ahuyentaba la pesca mientras aullaba cantos ininteligibles. El Gould gran amante de los animales, que tenía en su casa peces, perros, conejos, tortugas e incluso una mofeta, y que repartiría su herencia entre la Sociedad para la Prevención de malos tratos a animales y el Ejército de Salvación.

Otro: el Gould imitador de voces de distintos personajes, que llamaba por teléfono haciéndose pasar por Leonard Bernstein y otras figuras de la época, y que creaba personajes para la radio que "dialogaban" entre sí, como "el musicólogo y director de orquesta Sir Nigel Twitt-Thornwaite", a quien prestaba un típico acento británico de la época victoriana, o "el compositor y musicólogo alemán Karlheinz Klopweisser" que hablaba, lógicamente, con un acento alemán perfectamente reconocible, o "el crítico neoyorkino Theodore Slutz", con su acento típico del Bronx.

Otro más: las extravagancias escénicas de Gould en los años que duró su vida como concertista, tales como presentarse con atuendos tan poco convencionales para una sala de conciertos como un jersey de punto, ponerse a beber un vaso de

agua en los pasajes de un concierto donde solamente tocaba la orquesta, la eterna lucha por subir la altura del piano o bajar la de su silla...

En fin, que Girard ha hecho una película que interesará a los que ya sean aficionados a Gould, pero que difícilmente conseguirá ni un solo nuevo adepto para la causa, al no ser atractiva como cine. En su difusión en España tuvo una importancia destacada su emisión en Canal+ al mismo tiempo que se estrenaba (de forma muy limitada) en cines, aunque en dicha emisión fue acompañada por una modesta producción catalana (*Las Variaciones Gould*, de Manuel Huerga) de bastante más interés, que la hizo quedar en evidencia. La película de Huerga es un documental hecho totalmente con imagen real en blanco y negro, sin actores, con imágenes de la época donde se ve a Gould tocar y explicarse en televisión (inenarrable, muy gran actor hay que ser para acercarse a eso), y una entrevista al pianista húngaro Zoltan Kocsis donde este explica cuánto aprendió del Mozart de Gould o por qué prefiere su 2ª grabación de las *Goldberg* a la primera.

11/32 Short Films about Glenn Gould - Yehudi Menuhin

¿Cómo defines en términos percianos el reflejo del entrevistado en el cristal de la ventana?

7/32 Short Films about Glenn Gould - Variation in C Minor

Representante: Audiovideogramas. Fundamento: Glenn Gould tocando el piano.Intérprete: quienes montaron la película como emisor y quiénes la recibimos ahora.
Índice visual de sinsignos auditivos con dicente de segmento para piano de coral de Bach.
Primeridad: audioclip. Segundidad: lo que se ve y se oye. Terceridad: un homenaje aquí, allá y en todas partes para el alma noble de Glenn Gould.

1. Triada Ontológica (sobre el Ser y el ente):

Primeridad. Corresponde a la cualidad de la cosa y el Ser, la comprensión de las partes. Es la expresión inmediata del signo en el tiempo, su presencia.

Segundidad. Corresponde a la actualidad de la cosa y el Ser, la comprensión de los todos en tanto que conjuntos relativamente cerrados o sistemas. Es la expresión del signo dentro del conjunto de la memoria interpretante.

Terceridad. Corresponde a la relación de las partes con el todo, la comprensión del todo en tanto conjunto general o sistema universal (cósmico, político y psíquico).

2. Triada Epistemológica (sobre el conocimiento y los métodos):

Inducción. Acceder por el estudio de las partes al conocimiento de los todos que integran.

Deducción. Acceder desde el estudio de los todos a la comprensión de las partes que los integran.

Abducción. Acceder a nuevas figuras de conocimiento mediante la superación crítica de procesos inductivos y deductivos. Es el pleno ejercicio del pensar libre de auténtico carácter científico y humanista.

3. Triada de la Autocrítica Situacionista Concreta (sobre el discurso específico de este Curso de Semiótica para principiantes y su relación con la obra de Charles Sanders Peirce):

Peirce. Es evidente que toda interpretación o síntesis es una malinterpretación; no hay ni habrá otro modo de relacionarnos con las teorías y las personas, es el costo de la libertad, debemos comunicarnos desde la malinterpretación autocrítica que produce la razón científica y estética de la democracia libertaria. Una malinterpretación inevitable; pero que podemos controlar de algún modo. Por eso es conveniente reconocer que esta versión del pensar de Peirce sobre la semiótica tiene que ser muy subjetiva y de muchos modos incompleta en tal dirección. Sin embargo, desea ser válida, legítima, auténtica. Ciencia de verdad porque transmite de verdad la ciencia.

Semiótica. Aquí ya contamos con una visión sintética de dos teorías sobre el ser y deber ser de la SEMIÓTICA. Ya tenemos noticia del modelo dualista de Saussure y el triádico de Peirce, más un puente de interrelación entre ambas teorías, el punto de vista de Umberto Eco. Comenzamos a tejer una visión múltiple sobre nuestro tema, para manifestar, ya de forma completa, su carácter de ciencia "blanda", es decir, que trabaja sin la dureza

innecesaria de los dogmas y las heterodoxias. Pues todo lo funda en el consenso real entre diversas conciencias –los comentarios.

Chillys Willys. De un modo más próximo, aquí ya también creemos expresar el pensar transdisciplinario y con voluntad historiográfica de Juan Magariños de Morentin y el de Salvador Mendiola, dos pensares que, entendemos, se integran de forma postlatinoamericana y ultrabarroca dentro de un retablo diferente de uso e intercambio de semiótica.

16/32 Short Films about Glenn Gould - The Idea of North

¿Quién les puede explicar a quienes sólo oyen música de banda que esto también es música?

Red violinists

An interview with Francois Girard and Don McKellar.

By Sean Axmaker

DIRECTOR FRANCOIS GIRARD AND screenwriter Don McKellar accompanied their recent collaboration, *The Red Violin*, to the 1999 Seattle International Film Festival, talking to audiences and journalists alike in their weekend visits. With a little cajoling, I managed to find a time to sit down with the collaborators together. Their first joint effort was *32 Short Films About Glenn Gould*, and they worked in *The Red Violin* on and off for over five years. The interview was as much a conversation between the two of them as with me, as if they couldnt wait to compare insights.

Sean Axmaker: How did *The Red Violin* get started as an idea?

Francois Girard: After *Glenn Gould*, the three of us[producer] Niv Fichman, Don and mewe were looking for something else to do together, so for a long while weve been discussing many ideas and trying to find something. One day I was in London and I had this idea of telling a story of a violin and a few days after I was in Berlin with Don and Niv where we were presenting *32 Short Films* and we talked about this idea and it became alive very quickly. A few days after, we were already building the shape of the story and we got caught up in the idea, for years. That was five years and a half ago and were still talking about it.

Don McKellar: Francois is brilliant with coming up with these ideas. I remember when Niv and Francois first approached me about doing *32 Short Films About Glenn Gould*, or rather doing a biography about Glenn Gould, I was very skeptical because I knew Glenn Goulds life a little and I knew that it was very undramatic, but when I realized the implication of this *32 Short Films* idea was very provocative and I got excited by it. I think the same is true about *The Red Violin*. I didnt want to do another biography film but when

Francois suggested we do a biography of an instrument it was an exciting challenge and it was such a challenge to the idea that it would cross so much time and so many languages that I couldnt resist.

SA: Where did you get the idea of suturing the stories together with the fortune teller of the first episode and the auction of the last episode? Its like its bookended by these two events, one which predicts whats going to happen and one which draws back the history from what already happened and ties it all together.

FG: That came very early. I guess that the biggest challenge of *The Red Violin* is to give life to an inanimate object, and I would say that the other big challenge is to turn those five stories into one, make them feel like one story, so almost every structural idea, including the double narrator idea, is totally in response to that problem. We have two narrators bridging the whole thing and tying things together and then you have the convergence at the auction at the end where all the stories are represented, and you have the progression through age. The whole film is based on the lifetime progression thematically. You have the unborn child and then the child and the young adult and then maturity and then eventually youre back to the age of the master, so all those things are there in an effort to tie the stories together and build one story, the life of the violin, and escape from the five episodes as much as you can.

SA: How did you handle all those different languages in all those different countries?

FG: If were talking about the shoot or working with actors, I came to the conclusion that its actually an advantage. (Laughs.) Truly, I have this whole theory. It has to do with distance. If you work in Mandarin with Sylvia Chang and she reads the text in Mandarin, first of all you know exactly what shes talking about because youve been living the text for so long, so you know exactly where we are, youre never lost in what shes saying. And when youre not caught in the word-by-word and the wording, the accenting, it sort of forces you out

DM: You cant do line readings.

FG: Yes, exactly. Youre forced to talk to the actors in essential terms like energy, emotion, musicality, all of that transpires really clearly, even more clearly if youre working in a different language. So I really thought it was not a handicap at all. But the writing part (both laugh), like when we came work with all the writers, it was very complicated.

DM: I found it really fascinating because as Ive said before, we realized at one point that we were just writing the subtitles for the film, we had written the text and slaved over the exact wording and realized that thats not what they were going to be speaking, so we went to these different countries and chose writers, real writers, from each country. Not just translators, but writers that we trusted and who knew the period, who could write dialogue that was convincing. Actually it was really exciting for me to be able to meet these different writers and hand it over and discuss nuances. It was really complicated and was probably hellish for Francois because a lot of it was happening during the shooting.

FG: I remember the prep time, Don, where I was traveling all around. That was the time I would check into 20 hotels in 25 days and I would get the text from those writers and send it back to Don so we could talk about it. I found myself often surrounded by rolls of faxes.

DM: It was exciting for me because the faxes would come in and you see once they came in the languages, we would have to translate them word by word into English so that we knew exactly what they meant and I could judge whether that was what I meant by my English expression. It was very complicated but

FG: Very challenging intellectually.

SA: So putting it all together, you were a producer at the same time you were a writer trying to wrangle the pieces together.

DM: Kind of.

FG: We did have a producer who was doing his job and more

DM: But there was that sort of diplomatic side. Were quite a tight unit with Niv, and I think theres overlap in every area. I was brought to China and was there for five days trying to clear the script on a sort of diplomatic mission and that kind of thing. It was a pretty rare opportunity.

FG: There was an incredible story about the Chinese refusing us at one point to shoot in Shanghai.

DM: At many points.

FG: Well, actually what happened is the first time we went there, Niv, Don and I, we were not na to the point of not knowing that this was going to be difficult. We were dealing with the cultural revolution shot in Shanghai. Of course we knew it would be difficult at one point. But we went there the first time, the three of us, and connected with actors and crews and studios and everything went really well. We even chose locations to start with. And then six or seven months later I went back with my keys, DP and designers and we continued the work and everything was very, very smooth. I was actually surprised, but I was not totally calm about because I thought problems might come later, and they came. A few days before the shooting of principal photography, I was in Montreal and we received this letter saying, "We have 3,000 years of history and you have 300 in your film, and why did they have to cross in 1969?" Basically they were saying: Youre welcome in Shanghai as long as youre not dealing with cultural revolution scenes. I couldnt handle that because I had to shoot Montreal and then Europe and Niv and Don went the first time, and I think Niv went back four times.

DM: It was really grueling.

FG: It became like a diplomatic negotiation.

DM: It really was. We were sitting around the table with the Minister of Culture, the Canadian Cultural Attach 鬠 head of the Film Commission in China, head of the studio, back and forth. I never experienced anything like it. At first they denied the cultural revolution existed. They hadnt shot a co-production there in over two years. No foreign film company had shot in China for that long and they were quite angry with America because *Red Corner* had just shot and had sort of cheated them by sneaking into China, and theyre not the biggest fans of Richard Gere anyway, so for a long time we had to convince them we were not Americans, that we understood their history.

FG: Build mutual trust. And this went on and on and after Don went there to discuss the script they were still asking a few things. First of all they helped us get a few details more accurate, but Niv had to bring the script higher and higher and eventually it went up to the Propaganda Minister who brought it home and called his people the day after and said, "Okay, fine, they can come in." So I came in. Don had done the big work of getting them to understand our intentions, but still they wanted changes. For two weeks I got myself involved in the negotiations. One day I would take two days out of a scene.

DM: All strategic.

FG: You take two lines out and you say, "Fine, all right, all right," and two days later you bring it back and you say, "I moved it here, I think it sounds quite different." I remember the day I called you in Toronto and said, "Don, we have all the lines in. A couple have moved but theyre all there." So it was great because eventually they really were.

DM: In the end we got everything we wanted and we got stuff shot in China that even the Chinese havent been allowed do.

FG: They really wanted it to happen, the really supported the project.

DM: Once it was allowed, the people we were working with were really exciting to work on a project that dealt with things that they had all experienced.

Sophomore director Francois Girard stayed atune to blending symphony, cinema for 'Red Violin'

By Rob Blackwelder

Francois Girard looks a lot like one of those coffee shop guys who sit around sipping $4 lattes, chain smoking and reading philosophy books with very large type on the cover so everyone in the cafe takes note of how smart they must be.

His tousled, neck-length hair and black-on-black wardrobe reinforce the stereotype, and after introducing himself, his takes a tousled position -- much like his hair -- in a leather board room chair at San Francisco's Prescott Hotel, reinforcing my first impression by asking "Do you mind if I have a cigarette?"

"No problem. Go right ahead," I reply, and he lights up then cradles a newly poured cup of coffee in front of him.

But if Girard is a coffee shop wanna-be philosopher, he's going to have to work on being more aloof. While he definitely comes off as serious and pensive, the young, music-minded director of the piano-centric 1993 festival circuit hit "Thirty-Two Short Films About Glenn Gould" is just too impassioned about his new film, "The Red Violin," to succeed as an apathetic, corner-lurking caffeine hound.

In town promoting this sensual symphony of music and masterful movie-making, Girard seems genuinely excited -- if a little reserved -- about the enthusiastic (and deserved) reception his picture has been receiving.

The biography of a finely crafted musical instrument and its globetrotting passage through centuries of owners -- including a 19th Century orphan prodigy in France, a rakish, aristocratic virtuoso in England and a Chinese musician torn between Communism and her penchant for Western orchestrations -- "The Red Violin" is a film overflowing with fervent movements of pathos. Its seductive tempos of passion and tragic refrains of sorrow are tied together in a riveting, recurring modern day linchpin story about an expert strings appraiser (Samuel L. Jackson), working for a Montreal auction house, who is trying to substantiate his suspicion that the flawless fiddle is in fact a legendary and long-lost instrument called the Red Violin, created by a 17th Century master.

Girard resourcefully framed the story of the violin set adrift in time by setting the modern story in his home town of Montreal, where the tattered yet magnificent instrument is being sold at auction, with emotional bids ardently exchanged by several interested parties with ties to the each of the film's historical vignettes.

Once he was comfortably nicotined and caffeinated, we started our conversation talking about the movie's central character -- the Red Violin.

SPLICEDwire: *Tell me about the violins that you used in the film. I know you used six violins. Were you going for a prop with a certain visual quality or were you going for a genuine instrument?*

Francois GIRARD: It was a little bit of both, but of course the visual characteristics were the main target. But it was quite an extensive process. I was introduced by Yo-Yo Ma to Charles Beare and his son Peter because they are the top experts in ancient instruments and they take care of Yo-Yo's cellos. I ended up in their office in London, telling them the story, and they eventually became script consultants and my teachers for a number of things. Eventually they created the Red Violin from six different violins that were created especially for the film.

SPLICED: *Did you use any of the playing from the shoot, or was everything dubbed over in post?*

GIRARD: I think the only time you hear violin that was not recorded by (famous violinist) Joshua Bell is when Ruselsky (one of the auction's bidders) is trying the Strat (i.e. Stradivarius, the most famous string craftsman in history). He's not trying the Red Violin, that's the main reason we kept the location sound. Otherwise the voice of the Red Violin is Joshua Bell. The boy in France could have been able to play those pieces. He's not as mature as Josh as a virtuoso, but he's certainly an incredible prodigy and he was able to play those pieces. But we gave him an instrument that was not necessarily fitting his knowledge.

SPLICED: *He probably plays a child's violin in real life.*

GIRARD: Exactly. The violin was too big and what you see in the film are gut strings, and the boy had never played on gut strings before. He could get the sound out of it. The sync sound was sometimes quite awful.

SPLICED: *Well, it synced up very well in post. That's why I asked the question. I wasn't even sure.*

GIRARD: It's always very difficult. In "Red Violin" we have four people playing the violin. Two of them are real violinists, that's the boy and Ruselsky at the end.

SPLICED: *Bell had to essentially play four characters in the movie. Did try to do different personalities for the characters in his playing?*

GIRARD: Both (composer John Coriglano) and Josh had to define the characters. They had to help me give them a personality. So it starts with John composing music that would be suitable for Pope and for the boy. For whatever music is performed on screen, John tried to be true to the period and the place, but also true to the character, which is more important. It's like putting a costume on a character, but at the same time defining the character is more important.

SPLICED: *Are you a musician?*

GIRARD: Well, I have too much respect for what we call musicians to call myself a musician. I just bought a very good piano and I get my steam out on the keyboard. It has a real place in my life, but I'm not a trained musician.

SPLICED: *You play for your own enjoyment.*

GIRARD: And for my dog *(smiles slyly)*.

SPLICED: *Tell me about the conception of the story. How did the idea come to you, the life of a violin?*

GIRARD: Well, the short answer is an anecdote about when I was in London with a friend and we were talking about objects traveling through time, and this was at a time when Don

McKellar and Niv Fichman -- the co-writer and producer of my last film -- we were all looking for a new story to tell. I remember it very vividly -- I even remember the park by which we were driving -- and I remember thinking we could tell the life of an instrument (and I felt) the emotional potential of it and how it can connect to important themes.

SPLICED: *You're aware you're going to be known now as a director of films with musical themes.*

GIRARD: *(Laughing)* That's not what I was trying to do! After "Glenn Gould" it was in my nature to resist that. But when you come to an idea (like this), all that goes away. You feel the need to tell it, and that's the most important thing. (Besides) making films *is* making music. You just can't escape that. The musical nature of cinema is unavoidable. But you don't start by saying, "I'm gonna make a music film." You start with an idea that has life in it and it unfolds before you.

SPLICED: *How long did it take you to write the script?*

GIRARD: The original idea was just before the Berlin (film) festival in '94. We took a couple years to come close to a shooting script....

SPLICED: *You were researching for a couple years, weren't you?*

GIRARD: Yes. Those were parallel things. The writing is not all about connecting with the research. But we needed to research a number of things. Just to collect violin stories was a very extensive process. I had a researcher working for me almost full time for two year, and he was going all over the place for the questions we needed to answer.

I love research because my work provides the opportunities to learn. Every time you start a new film you have something to understand and discover. I drive producers crazy with research costs. But once that is done, you really have to put it aside and get the characters and the script right, which most of the time means cheating and playing with historical things to maybe access a higher truth. But at least if you cheat, you know from what you're cheating.

SPLICED: *Were you going for a parallel to stages in a human life in the life of the violin? It seemed to me, for example, that the Frederick Pope section was kind of a sexual awakening.*

GIRARD: You're absolutely right. That's a very smart read. Actually, it was very focused on that, but it was never meant to be noticed necessarily. I think you might be the second one to point that out. This was one way to give the film its unity. We had to deal with a number of owners, therefore a fragmented episodic structure and you're trying to find all the possible ways to tie them together. So we have the story first with the unborn child, then of the child, then of the young adult, then the story of political awakening and social consciousness and maturity, and then we go back to the age of the master again, which

loops back to the creator again. So in the writing, that was a constant guide, focusing on that theme progression.

SPLICED: *The gypsies would then be part of the childhood, the carefree, playful days? There's that wonderful shot of the violin strapped to the camera with a succession of gypsies playing the violin, and they are motionless while the background is dancing all over. How did you do that?*

GIRARD: We're talking low-tech technology. We created a rig suspended on bungies and moved around by poles and stuff. This whole thing is like built in a garage. Eventually the high-tech part of it was...that we gave it to the computer graphic guys to erase the bar (holding the violin to the camera), so it's not in the frame any more.

SPLICED: *It's amazing how that technology started out as a way to do special effects and now it's being used in just the simplest ways -- to be able to do something like erase the equipment from a shot.*

GIRARD: I like the use of high technology in low tech situations. Especially in a film like "The Red Violin" because the last thing you want to do is to make it noticeable. But there were quite a large number of shots that were treated digitally and composite images. Like when the carriage comes into Vienna, that whole city was constructed in computer graphics. But you don't want that to be noticed.

SPLICED: *Talking about the lifetime of the violin, did each part of the story feel like a separate movie? I mean, different locations, different actors, probably different crews. Did it feel like you were making four or five movies?*

GIRARD: Sometimes it was a strange feeling because sometimes we were shooting with actors for a limited period of time. Like at the end of a two week shoot is about the time when, like, the crew really connects with the actors. But we had to move on. But the good part was that we had five wrap parties!

But about 20 people -- designers, producers, script, sound, assistants -- they were all the same in all the places. We designed and planned the film all from Montreal together and then we all did a number of trips to pick the actors, choose a crew, scout the locations and all that stuff. So once it came time to shoot the movie, everybody was making one film.

SPLICED: *Samuel L. Jackson's passion about the violin really ties it all together.*

GIRARD: It's great what Sam brings to the film. He brings a real edge. It was a difficult character. It was never as clear for Charles Morritz as it was for the other characters. When I'm asked what was the most difficult shoot -- we're talking story and character -- Montreal was the toughest.

SPLICED: *Well, there's a piece of each story in the auction, with people bidding on the violin. There's people from the orphanage, from the Pope Institute, and that brings it all together, so I can see how that would be.*

GIRARD: And Montreal had to be the story of Charles Morritz, it had to be self-resolved, and yet at the same time it had to be the resolution of all the others, so it was the toughest one to write. We were always caught between those two tasks. And it was the hardest one to shoot, and by far the hardest one to cut (because of all the stories represented at the auction).

SPLICED: *Well, the tension building worked beautifully. By the time you get to the scene that's just the auction, where it's not being interrupted anymore, I was just riveted.*

GIRARD: That scene, we edited it for about 16 to 20 weeks.

SPLICED: *Wow.*

GIRARD: The film is 135 minutes, and those four minutes took a third of all the editing time.

SPLICED: *Well, everything else is relatively linear, but you have to get that just right.*

GIRARD: It was by far the most complex scene I've ever cut. We had two plots, twelve characters we had to keep alive, plus that build-up was a real editing challenge.