Glenn Gould: The New Listener

by Kevin Bazzana

Glenn Gould, 1932-1982: An Introduction

Glenn Herbert Gould was born on 25 September 1932, in Toronto, which would remain his home throughout his life. His prodigious musical gifts, including perfect pitch, were apparent by age three. As a child he learned the rudiments of music and the piano from his mother; he then studied piano, organ, and music theory at the Toronto (later Royal) Conservatory of Music, earning the highest honours.

From the age of five, Gould occasionally played in public, on piano and organ, and from the age of twelve he competed successfully in music festivals, though his parents never subjected him to the pressures of a star-prodigy's life. His first major solo recital on the organ was in 1945, on the piano in 1946, and he made his professional recital and concerto débuts in 1947.

By the early 1950s, Gould was known across Canada, through concert appearances, radio and television broadcasts, and recordings. He performed often at the annual summer Shakespeare festival in Stratford, Ontario, beginning in its first season, and for several years served as one of the festival's directors of music.

In January 1955, Gould made his American début, with recitals in Washington, D.C., and New York. His unorthodox programme, distinctive piano style, idiosyncratic interpretations, and unusual platform mannerisms immediately marked him as an iconoclast. The day after his New York début, he signed a contract with Columbia Records, for whom he recorded exclusively for the rest of his career. His first recording, of Bach's Goldberg Variations, was released in 1956 to critical and popular acclaim, and it brought him international attention.

For the next nine years, he lived the life of a touring celebrity virtuoso. He gave concerts throughout North America, and between 1957 and 1959 he made three overseas tours, playing in the U.S.S.R., Western Europe, Israel, and London, earning great acclaim as well as arousing controversy wherever he appeared.

In 1964, Gould retired permanently from public performance, citing temperamental, moral, and musical objections to the concert medium. He went on to become an outspoken champion of the electronic

media—of studio recording, broadcasting, and filmmaking. He made scores of recordings, acquiring theoretical and practical insights into the recording medium that were unusual for a classical performer.

Throughout his career, Gould made countless radio and television programmes for the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC), ranging from conventional recitals to talk-and-play shows on particular themes to a series of innovative “contrapuntal radio documentaries.” He also made some important programmes and films for British, French, and German television.

Gould was active as a writer from the beginning of his career, even more so after 1964, exploring many musical and non-musical topics in programme notes for concerts and recordings, periodical articles and reviews, scripts for broadcasts and films, and interviews. He also gave some lecture-recitals and public lectures.

Gould composed from the beginning of his musical life, occasionally performing his own music in public from the age of six; he was particularly active in his teen years, when he wrote piano pieces, a bassoon sonata, and many works that remain unfinished. His only major composition is the long, one-movement String Quartet, Opus 1, composed between 1953 and 1955 and later published and recorded. From the beginning of his concert career, Gould spoke often of quitting performing in order to devote himself to composition, but after the String Quartet he completed few works, mostly humorous occasional pieces. In later life, he arranged music for several feature films, such as *Slaughterhouse-Five* and *The Wars*.

Gould was one of the most distinctive and eccentric classical musicians of modern times. His musical tastes were unconventional, and his repertoire was highly selective, avoiding most of the music generally considered the core of the concert pianist’s repertoire. He developed an instantly recognizable piano style that broke many conventions about the instrument and caused much controversy, though there has been universal agreement as to his virtuosity and pianistic command. His probing intellect, command of musical architecture, rhythmic dynamism, precise fingerwork, and extreme clarity of counterpoint were all widely admired. His playing was particularly influential in the music of Bach and Schoenberg, the two principal axes of his repertoire.

Believing that the performer’s role was properly creative, Gould offered deeply personal, sometimes shocking interpretations that have always been controversial, particularly in the best-known works of the classical canon (Mozart, Beethoven, Brahms). His unusual personal life, and many eccentricities of character, both on stage and off, have provoked nearly as much comment as his playing, and he was the subject of colourful publicity from his first public appearances.

By age fifty, Gould claimed to have largely exhausted the piano literature that interested him, and turned to a new interest: conducting. In 1982, he made a chamber-orchestra recording—as unusual as any of his piano recordings—of Wagner's *Siegfried Idyll*, and he had ambitious plans for at least several years' worth of conducting projects, some of them to be associated with films. After that, he planned to give up performance entirely and devote himself to writing and composing, and he spoke of retiring to the countryside. But on 27 September 1982, shortly after the release of a new, best-selling recording of the Goldberg Variations, Gould suffered a massive stroke. He died, in Toronto, on 4 October.

Early years (1932-1955)

Childhood

Glenn Herbert Gould was born on 25 September 1932, in Toronto. He was the only child of Russell Herbert Gould (1901-1996) and Florence Emma Gould, née Greig (1891-1975), both of English and Scotch-Presbyterian descent. (They were known as Bert and Florrie.) In later childhood, Gould's beloved cousin Jessie Greig moved in with the family; she became a surrogate sister to him, and perhaps his closest friend until his death.

The family's original surname was "Gold," and appears as such in the earliest documents pertaining to Glenn's life. Bert changed their name around 1939 or 1940, at the start of the Second World War. Gould often misspelled his first name as "Glen." Throughout his life, he seems to have used the two spellings interchangeably. Though his given name had two Ns, his official signature tended to have only one. Gould reportedly had some strange superstitions when it came to writing his name. He might rewrite a cheque over and over, throwing one out if there was something "not right" with the signature.

Gould's paternal grandfather, Thomas G. Gold, started a fur business in 1913, Gold Standard Furs, which Bert took over; this assured Glenn of a relatively prosperous Depression-era upbringing. The family lived comfortably, in a house at 32 Southwood Drive, in the Beaches section of eastern Toronto. (His next-door neighbour, and one of his only childhood friends, was Robert Fulford, who grew up to become one of Canada's most important men of letters.)

The family also owned a cottage on Lake Simcoe, north of Toronto, and had many connections with the nearby towns of Uxbridge, Uptergrove, and Orillia. The cottage was the family's weekend and summer home, and Gould loved it. Throughout his early life, it was an important retreat from the tensions of the city and the pressures of concert life, a place where he could meditate, practice, think, and write in peace.

Gould had a quiet, sheltered, relatively normal upbringing. His parents were both musical and both devout members of the United Church: family life revolved around music and the church—frequently, music in the church. It was a household with strict codes of morality and behaviour, which Gould sometimes found restricting. He attended church until age eighteen, then stopped; for him, church seems to have been more of a refuge from the city and school than a place of worship. Later, he confirmed that he had abandoned formal, denominational religion, though he still had a strong streak of spirituality in his character.

Gould attended elementary school at Williamson Road Public School, then Malvern Collegiate Institute, from 1945 to 1951, though he never formally graduated from high school (by then, he was devoting most of his time to music). He claimed never to have been very good at school, and his progress was unremarkable: he mastered some subjects easily (math), others only with difficulty (English). At school he felt lonely and out of place, and the enforced collegiality conflicted with his preference for solitude.

I was born in Toronto, and it's been home base all my life. I'm not quite sure why; it's primarily a matter of convenience, I suppose. I'm not really cut out for city living, and given my druthers, I would avoid all cities and simply live in the country.

Toronto does belong on a very short list of cities I've visited that seem to offer—to me, at any rate—peace of mind—cities which, for want of a better definition, do not impose their "cityness" upon you. Leningrad is probably the best example of the truly peaceful city. I think that if I could come to grips with the language and the political system, I could live a very productive life in Leningrad. On the other hand, I'd have a crackup for sure if I were compelled to live in Rome or New York—and of course, any Torontonian worthy of the name feels that way about Montreal, on principle.

The point is that, by design, I have very little contact with this city. In some respects, indeed, I think that the only Toronto I really know well is the one I carry about with me in memory. And most of the images in my memory bank have to do with the Toronto of the forties and early fifties, when I was a teen-ager.

(From *Cities*: "Glenn Gould's Toronto", 1979)

In my youth, Toronto was also called "the City of Churches," and, indeed, the most vivid of my childhood memories in connection with Toronto have to do with churches. They have to do with Sunday-evening services, with evening light filtered through stained-glass windows, and with ministers who concluded their benediction with the phrase "Lord, give us the peace that the earth cannot give." Monday mornings, you see, meant that one had to go back to school and encounter all sorts of terrifying situations out there in the city. So those moments of Sunday-evening sanctuary became very special to me; they meant that one could find a certain tranquility even in the city, but only if one opted not to be part of it.

(From *Cities*: "Glenn Gould's Toronto", 1979)

Pets and Love of Animals

Gould loved animals all his life, and claimed to be more comfortable with animals than with people. Indeed, much of his contact with other people was long-distance—by telephone—and he seemed nervous about physical contact. Animals, apparently, provided him with the affectionate companionship he needed without the difficulties of more complicated human relationships.

Gould's "family" included many pets: dogs, including Sinbad, Sir Nickolson of Garelocheed (Nick, an English setter), and later Banquo (a collie); a bird named Mozart; goldfish named Bach, Beethoven, Chopin, and Haydn; miscellaneous rabbits, turtles, and other creatures; even a wild skunk. His father once recalled that he loved to cycle to nearby farmland and sing to the cows.

Gould's love of animals persisted into later life, even when he was no longer able to keep pets. (There are stories of his rescuing stray dogs.) At several points, he spoke of retiring to Manitoulin Island, in northern Lake Superior, and purchasing a farm on which he would allow old animals to live out their last days in dignity. When he was approached in the last year of his life, to do music for the World War I film *The Wars*, Gould first had to be assured that a dead horse used in one scene was not killed especially for that purpose. The beneficiaries of Gould's estate were the Salvation Army and the Toronto Humane Society.

> [...] I had an English setter named Nick. He was of the Blue Belton black and white, setter persuasion and he had a magnificent coat. Several times a year, in fact, Nick moulted; I know that, officially, dogs are supposed to shed, but Nick was no ordinary dog and he moulted—great long tufts of fur were left behind wherever Nick paused in his rounds and with whomever he had shaken hands or extended other canine courtesies. As I was getting into my best dark suit prior to the concert, my father cautioned me to keep my distance from Nick but that, of course, was easier said than done. Nick was an affectionate and concerned animal and not one to see a friend off without offering his good wishes.
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> Anyway, at the concert, toward the end of the slow movement, I happened to glance toward the floor, in my modest Schweitzerian way, and noticed that both trouser-legs were flecked with white—dozens of setter-strands obscured the immaculate sheen of my concert garb. I, of course, saw nothing wrong with this, fashion-wise, but since I was, after all, advertising Nick's misdemeanours, I thought it appropriate to remove the evidence before my parents trooped backstage. The several long orchestral tuttis in the finale seemed to offer the obvious opportunity and, incorporating within my hair-removal operation the customary off-key-board tutti-gestures of impatient soloists, I set to work. One, two, or maybe three—and that was the problem—major tuttis went by and the operation was ninety percent complete. Only one question remained in my mind: how complete was the concerto? Was this the tutti which, upon my entrance, I lead toward the dominant? Was it the one which I echo in the minor key? Or was it the one which points the way to the cadenza? The problem didn't occur to me until the last few bars of whichever tutti it was. I tried desperately to remember what besides picking setter hairs I'd been doing for the last five minutes or so and placed an inspired bet upon tutti no. 3. The cadenza lead-in was, indeed, upcoming, but I had learned the first valuable lesson of my association with the TSO—either pay attention or keep short-haired dogs.
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> (From "Memories of the Toronto Symphony", 1975)

Musical Gifts

Gould grew up in a relatively provincial musical culture, but his parents were both musical, and both active in local musical life: they sang; his mother played piano and organ, and taught piano and voice; and his father played the violin. Gould liked to point out, tongue in cheek, that he came by it honestly: he was distantly related to the great Norwegian composer Edvard Grieg, who was a first cousin of his maternal grandfather.

Gould's mother played classical music while he was in the womb; she was determined from the beginning that her son would be a great musician. His father recalled that he emerged from the womb with his fingers wiggling, and the doctor proclaimed that he would grow up to be either a surgeon or a pianist.

Gould sometimes spoke of the influence of the Methodist hymns and other such music of his youth, the kind of music his devout grandmother and parents would have known. Near the end of his life, he had an opportunity to draw on some of this music, in his score for the World War I film, *The Wars*. Even before Bach and Schoenberg, before his discovery of counterpoint and complex forms, simple church hymns deeply impressed him.

At age three, Gould was found to have perfect pitch, and soon afterward he was picking out simple tunes on the piano; it was determined that he would have a musical education. He learned to read music before he could read words, and his sensitivity to it was immediately obvious. As a child, at the keyboard, he would never pound the keys with his fists, as many children do, but rather would play single notes and listen intently as they decayed. And he would hum rather than cry.

Other unusual musical gifts—memory, improvisation, composition—soon became apparent. He could, for example, call out all the correct notes of any chord played to him. And as a teenager, he once retired to his room with the score of a Beethoven concerto and came out a few hours later with the entire work memorized.

These natural gifts nourished him throughout his life, not least in his seemingly effortless and innate command of the piano. In fact, he claimed not to understand how he did what he did at the keyboard, and resisted pianistic "shop talk," because of its "centipedal" implications. (He liked telling the story of the centipede, who, when asked how it coordinated all its many legs, began thinking about the matter and then found itself unable to walk at all.) He didn't like thinking too much about matters of pianistic technique; he didn't really know how he did what he did at the piano, and didn't really want to know, lest he somehow spoil the magic. Gould claimed that he never wrote down fingerings, that he never practiced; he

memorized pieces in his head before playing them, he could play any bar of any piece at the drop of a hat, he could sight-read the Grieg concerto—all evidence of a remarkable gift. He was in every respect a natural talent as a musician, and took to the piano as easily as breathing.

I was never really at any time of my life a prodigy.

(From an interview with Alfred Bester, *Holiday* , April 1964)

I regard [the word ‘genius’] with great suspicion.

(From an interview with Dennis Braithwaite, *Toronto Daily Star*, March 28 1959)

Musical Training

From the ages of three through ten, Gould had piano lessons with his mother, who was a strict but supportive teacher, never permitting a wrong note. He took to the instrument immediately, and his progress was prodigious. Gould's parents, and his childhood friend Robert Fulford, recalled that he loved nothing more than spending hours a day at the piano; in fact, his playing time had to be restricted—at one point, to no more than four hours per day—or else he would never have stopped. Locking the piano lid was far worse punishment than spanking.

The word "prodigy" was apparently never uttered in the Gould household, and the sad example of the exploited young Mozart was often held up as a cautionary tale. Gould was permitted to develop musically at his own rate, encouraged and supported, and occasionally permitted to display his achievements in public. His parents, though they wanted and encouraged him to be a musician from the beginning, never subjected him to the pressures, the exploitation, of the public star-prodigy's life. The security of Gould's early musical upbringing was certainly responsible, to a degree, for his later confidence and sureness as a musician. And his being encouraged to follow his own musical path, from an early age, along with his never being subjected to the pressures of a more mainstream, cosmopolitan upbringing, certainly helped plant in him the seeds of his later musical idiosyncrasy.

Gould's first public performance was at age five: 5 June 1938, accompanying on the piano, at a Sunday-afternoon church service, for the 30th anniversary of the Business Men's Bible Class, Uxbridge United Church, Uxbridge, Ontario. Each year thereafter, he performed at least once or twice in public, on both piano and organ: mostly in church services and events, also in children's concerts and socials, and later at school events, Conservatory concerts, and Kiwanis Festivals. It was not long before people in the Toronto area realized that the Gould family had a rather special young musician in their midst, and it was not long before the youngster himself had decided on a career as a concert pianist.

> You see, I think there's a fallacy that's been concocted about by the music teacher's profession, to wit: that there's a certain sequence of events necessary in order to have the revealed truth about the way one produces a given effect on a given instrument. And I said: Given half an hour of your time and your spirit in a quiet room, I could teach any of you how to play the piano—everything there is to know about playing the piano can be taught in half an hour, I'm convinced of it. I've never done it and I never intend to do it, because it's centipedal in the Schoenbergian sense—that is to say, in the sense in which Schoenberg was afraid to be asked why he used a certain row in a certain way, saying he felt like the centipede, which doesn't want to think about the movement of its hundred legs because it would become impotent; it couldn't walk at all if it did think about it. And I said: Therefore I'm not going to give this half-hour lesson, but if I chose to, the physical element is so very minimal that I could teach it to you if you paid attention and were very quiet and absorbed what I said and possibly you could take it down on a cassette so that you could replay it later on, and you wouldn't need another lesson. You would then have to proceed along certain rather disciplined lines whereby you observed the correlation of that bit of information with certain other kinds of physical activity—you would discover there are certain things you can't do, certain kinds of surfaces you can't sit on, certain kinds of car seats that you can't ride in.
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> (From an interview with Jonathan Cott, *Conversations with Glenn Gould*, 1984)

Conservatory Years

Gould first began studying at the Toronto (later Royal) Conservatory of Music at age eight, for music-theory lessons. The Conservatory became increasingly important in his life, and by the time he was in high school he was embarked on a real musical career, dividing his time between Malvern Collegiate (mornings) and the Conservatory (afternoons), eventually leaving school altogether. He studied theory with Leo Smith (1940-7), organ with Frederick C. Silvester (1942-9), and piano with the Chilean-born Alberto Guerrero (1943-52), who exercised a significant influence on Gould's musical tastes and piano style. His progress was prodigious. In 1945, at age twelve, he passed his Associateship exam as solo pianist, and in 1946 passed his music-theory exams; he was then awarded his Associate diploma—which represents professional achievement—with the highest marks in Canada.

Gould's first significant public performance was on 12 December 1945, on the organ, at a Casavant Society recital at Eaton Auditorium. His first major piano performance was a 1946 recital at the Conservatory. He first appeared in public in a concerto at an 8 May 1946 Conservatory event, in the first movement of Beethoven's Piano Concerto No. 4. In his youth, Gould competed in Kiwanis Festivals, from the inaugural one in 1944 and for the next two years. (Later he came to despise competition in all its forms, and wrote a scathing article about festivals and competitions, titled "We Who Are About to Be Disqualified Salute You!") His Kiwanis victories also meant public recitals and even radio broadcasts, in winners' concerts.

There were other influences on the young Gould—notably the pianists Artur Schnabel and Rosalyn Tureck.

Gould called Schnabel his idol—his God—as a youth, and "revered Schnabel above all pianists". (He made comments to this effect in many interviews.) He admired Schnabel because he was a musician first and a pianist second, a fellow-idealist who put structure and imagination before sound and instrument. When preparing Beethoven's Piano Concerto No. 4 for his concerto début, he acquired Schnabel's 1945 RCA recording, and (as he later wrote) "faithfully traced every inflective nuance of the Schnabelian rhetoric"; he even "glided to a graceful cadential halt every four minutes and twenty-five seconds"—that is, wherever a 78-rpm side had to be changed in the Schnabel recording. (To this day, one can see, in the National Library of Canada, Gould's own pocket score of the concerto, from 1946, in which he has scrupulously noted all of the nuances in Schnabel's recording.) Guerrero eventually took away the records, but on the night of the concert he allowed himself to be inspired by his hero. The press reaction, as he wryly recalled, was : "Who does the kid think he is, Schnabel?"

Gould found in Tureck's unique approach to Bach a model for the kind of piano style he wanted to adopt in Bach—a highly articulated, "structural," anti-Romantic, harpsichord-influenced, almost "liturgical" style. Gould was much influenced by Tureck's early recordings, as even the most cursory comparison between the two shows. She influenced not just his Bach piano style, but his whole attitude to Bach's art.

On Guerrero: "Our outlooks on music were diametrically opposed. He was a 'heart' man and I wanted to be a 'head' kid."

(From a profile by Joseph Roddy, *The New Yorker*, 1960)

On Rosalyn Tureck: "[...] back in the forties, when I was a teenager, she was the first person who played Bach in what seemed to me a sensible way. In those days, being fourteen, fifteen, sixteen, I was fighting a battle in which I was never going to get a surrender flag from my teacher on the way in which Bach should go, but her records were the first evidence that one did not fight alone. It was playing of such uprightness, to put it into the moral sphere. There was such a sense of repose that had nothing to do with languour, but rather with moral rectitude in the liturgical sense."

(From an interview with Jonathan Cott, *Conversations with Glenn Gould*, 1984)

The Organ

Gould's mother played the organ, and Gould was playing it from a very young age. Later, at the Toronto Conservatory, he would study it with Frederick C. Silvester (from 1942 to 1949). In childhood, he apparently loved the instrument as much as the piano, and only settled definitively on the piano in his teens. Robert Fulford recalls that, at about age twelve, Gould decided that his natural instrument was not the piano but the organ, and he wanted his father to install a full-sized organ in the house; his father had to patiently explain why this was not exactly feasible... Still, the organ was very influential on Gould's piano playing—on his fondness for Baroque music, on his tendency to "think with his feet" and emphasize bass lines, on his obsession with counterpoint, on his highly articulated piano sound, on the general "uprightness" in his playing.

Gould made only one recording on the organ: Volume 1 of Bach's *Art of Fugue* in 1962. At one point, he talked of making more organ recordings, perhaps even one a year, of works by Mendelssohn, Bach, and others. But no other organ albums appeared, not even Volume 2 of *The Art of Fugue*. Undoubtedly, the critical reception to Volume 1 discouraged him. His highly unorthodox organ playing did not sit well with listeners—it was bright, upright, fast, loud, choppy, vigorous, and relatively colourless: nothing like the usual Romantic organ playing.

> Because I started at the organ very young, I still think of music as being played by three hands—the feet acting as the third hand. So I think of music as more contrapuntally divisible than pianists generally do.
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> (From an interview with Bernard Asbell, *Horizon*, January 1962)

First Professional Concerts, Broadcasts, and Recordings

Gould made his professional solo-recital and concerto débuts in 1947: 14-15 January and 20 October, respectively. He went on to play in many Toronto venues, and occasionally outside of Toronto, in cities large and small, as far east as St. John and as far west as Vancouver. (In 1947 and 1948 he was giving some organ concerts as well.) But his schedule was sparing: he rarely played more than a half-dozen concerts in a year. Some of these were small-scale events, musicales and accompanying jobs and benefit appearances, but there were also major concerto appearances and recitals in big halls. In 1953, he played at the inaugural season of the Stratford Festival, with which he would later be closely associated. By the mid-1950s, the time of his American début, he was very well known and admired as a concert performer across Canada.

His repertoire at this time already included many of the composers with whom he would later be associated—Gibbons, Bach, Beethoven, Hindemith, Schoenberg, Berg, Krenek—but for his first few years as a professional there were still some remnants from his student days, composers whose names would later appear only rarely in his concert programmes: Couperin, Scarlatti, Czerny, Weber, Chopin, Mendelssohn, Liszt. Some early performances survive on tape, and besides showing off his brash early piano style, they also reveal the adrenaline, nervous excitement, audience noise, poor acoustics, and everything else he came to hate about concerts.

Gould's interest in modern music influenced even these early concerts. In fact, in 1952, he and his friend Robert Fulford formed New Music Associates, a company dedicated to the promotion of modern music. Their first concert was a Schoenberg memorial, in 1952; there were two more concerts, in 1954, before the company ran out of money. At the last, he played the Goldberg Variations for the first time in concert. When asked why this piece appeared in a series on modern music, he replied, "Bach is ever new."

After ending lessons with Alberto Guerrero, in 1952, Gould spent several years largely in retreat, often at Lake Simcoe. He gave some concerts, but mostly he was thinking and practicing, composing his String Quartet, solidifying his artistic ideas, and generally preparing for the life of an international concert pianist—a life he would turn to in January of 1955.

Gould occasionally appeared on local Toronto radio in his youth—for example, in a 1945 CFRB broadcast featuring Kiwanis Festival winners in concert. He gave his first national CBC radio broadcast on Christmas Eve, 1950, in the series *Sunday Morning* , playing sonatas by Mozart and Hindemith. He later recalled the event fondly, as the occasion on which "my love affair with the microphone began." On 8 September 1952, on the CBC, Gould became the first pianist to be televised in performance in Canada. He took to

broadcasting immediately, and would have a productive relationship with CBC television lasting nearly thirty years.

Gould's first studio recordings were made in 1951, when he was eighteen: Berg's Sonata, Opus 1, and three Russian pieces with violinist Albert Pratz. They were released in 1953, on Hallmark. Three more Gould recordings, taken from CBC radio broadcasts, were released during his concert years as Radio Canada International (RCI) transcription discs: Bach's G-major Partita and Morawetz's *Fantasy in D* (1954); his own String Quartet, Opus 1, played by the Montreal String Quartet (1956); and Brahms' Quintet in F Minor, Op. 34, again with the Montreal String Quartet (1957).

> One Sunday morning in December 1950, I wandered into a living-room-sized radio studio, placed my services at the disposal of a single microphone belonging to the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, and proceeded to broadcast "live" [...] two sonatas: one by Mozart, one by Hindemith. It was my first network broadcast, but it was not my first contact with the microphone; for several years I'd been indulging in experiments at home with primitive tape recorders—strapping the mikes to the sounding board of my piano, the better to emasculate Scarlatti sonatas, for example, and generally subjecting both instruments to whichever imaginative indignities came to mind.
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> But the CBC occasion, as I've already hinted, was a memorable one: not simply because it enabled me to communicate without the immediate presence of a gallery of witnesses (though the fact that in most forms of broadcasting a microphone six feet away stands as surrogate for an audience has always been, for me, prominent among the attractions of the medium) but rather because later that same day I was presented with a soft-cut "acetate," a disc which dimly reproduced the felicities of the broadcast in question and which, even today, a quarter-century after the fact, I still take down from the shelf on occasion in order to celebrate that moment in my life when I first caught a vague impression of the direction it would take, when I realized that the collected wisdom of my peers and elders to the effect that technology represented a compromising, dehumanizing intrusion into art was nonsense, when my love affair with the microphone began.
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> (From "Music and Technology", 1974-1975)

Compositions

Early Works

Gould showed an aptitude for composition from earliest childhood, almost as soon as his interest in music began. By age six, he had already performed one of his own works in public. He continued composing throughout childhood, in school as well as privately (his mother, for example, encouraged him to write his own little songs). By his teens, he was serious about composing, and was already making some ambitious creative plans: around age 12, he conceived of an opera dealing with post-Apocalyptic life on earth, with post-nuclear frogs replacing the human race, and he claims to have written a few bars of a chorus for frogs in E major, which unfortunately does not survive.

Gould was composing steadily and seriously in his teens, some works revealing his early interest in Baroque and Classical music, others inspired by his discovery of the late-Romantic and twelve-tone idioms so important to his mature repertoire and musical tastes. There are works for piano and organ and chamber groups, some works completed, others only sketched, and still others—like a clarinet sonata—that he talked about but of which no trace survives.

Not long after discovering the music of Schoenberg and Webern, around the age of sixteen, Gould was attempting his own works in atonal and twelve-tone idioms (his Five Short Pieces for piano were "influenced by Webern's Opus 5"); many completed works and sketches survive from this period. Some of Gould's early music has recently been published: the Five Short Pieces for piano; the Two Pieces for piano; an unfinished Piano Sonata; and the Bassoon Sonata.

Gould was also performing his own music in public at this time: when he was sixteen, he wrote a piano suite for a high-school production by the Malvern Dramatic Society of Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night*, and played it at intermission: "Regal Atmosphere", "Elizabethan Gaiety", "Whimsical Nonsense", and "Nocturne" (the music does not survive, however). On 4 January 1951, he performed two of his pieces at a Royal Conservatory student concert: the Five Short Pieces and the Bassoon Sonata, with Nicholas Kilburn. As Kilburn recalled years later, the public début of the Bassoon Sonata was somewhat marred by slapstick, as his bassoon reed inadvertently flew out of his instrument and lodged behind some organ pipes...

> The manuscript remnants of junior masterpieces occupy many drawers in my home. They are tokens of that swift moving parade of enthusiasms which constitute the student life and they exhibit an attempt at every style from Palestrina (which was done to please my teachers) to Webern (which was done to annoy them). There were a great many quite professionally polished fughettas among them (I was good at fughettas, it was sort of like solving a jigsaw puzzle ...).
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> (From *Cities:* "Glenn Gould's Toronto", 1979)

Published Works

In 1952, at the age of nineteen, Gould discontinued his formal instruction in piano with Alberto Guerrero; he still performed occasionally in Canada, though his international breakthrough was still three years away. Those years were spent largely in retreat, with Gould practicing and studying and preparing for the realities of being a professional, touring concert pianist.

He was also composing intensely during this period, his biggest project being what would turn out to be his only major work: the String Quartet, Opus 1, written between 1953 and 1955. The quartet was in a long single movement of about a half-hour's length, in a unique form with an unusual synthesis of musical styles, and an almost polemically old-fashioned harmonic language: the work often sounds like Strauss or Bruckner, though it was written at a time when post-Webern serialism was all the rage. Gould, never a fan of the idea of "progress" or "fashion" in music, strongly defended the work against accusations of anachronism.

After the quartet was finished, Gould was able to use his new international fame to create performance opportunities for the work—concerts, broadcasts, and recordings. In 1957, the small publisher Barger & Barclay (Great Neck, N.Y.) brought out an edition of the quartet, and later a miniature score as well, though the work has been out of print for years (a new edition is forthcoming from B. Schott's Söhne). Two recordings of the work were made under Gould's supervision: one in 1956, with the Montreal String Quartet, for an RCI transcription disc, the other in 1960, with the Symphonia String Quartet, for a Columbia album. A third recording appeared in 1992, on the Sony Classical CD *Glenn Gould: The Composer*.

Though the quartet received some favourable notices, and a good deal of attention, it also received a good deal of negative criticism, especially from other composers, who lamented its backward-looking harmonic language, and gave detailed insights into its many weaknesses as well as pointing out Gould's frequent amateurishness as a composer. It is clear that the work received a good deal more attention than it would have had the composer been anyone other than a famous performer.

Gould told the photographer Jock Carroll, in 1956, that he was much more sensitive to criticism of his writing or composing than of his playing, and there is no doubt that the mixed reaction to the quartet made him reluctant to "go public" again with so ambitious a composition.

By his early twenties, Gould was a busy international concert pianist, and composition necessarily took a back seat. Some of his composing during this period was geared directly to his needs as a performer. In 1954, for example, he composed his own highly idiosyncratic cadenzas for the first and third movements

of Beethoven's Piano Concerto No. 1 in C Major. The first-movement cadenza was "a rather Regerian fugue," the third-movement a wayward "rhapsody," and neither could be said to have been written in the musical vocabulary of early Beethoven.

Like Romantic musicians, including Schnabel, but unlike most of his contemporaries, Gould preferred to contribute cadenzas that reflected his own musical values and preferences, rather than the composer's. He first performed the cadenzas in a concert in Montreal, 14-15 December 1954, and on 16 December in a CBC television broadcast. They were published ca. 1958 by Barger & Barclay (Great Neck, N.Y.), but they are now out of print. (These were not the only cadenzas for his own use that Gould worked on during his concert years. He wrote a short cadenza to play in the second movement of Mozart's Concerto No. 24 in C Minor, K. 491, and sketched—though never completed—his own cadenza for Beethoven's Piano Concerto No. 3 in C Minor.)

The only other major work that Gould completed during his concert years was a short, humorous, occasional work: *So You Want to Write a Fugue?* for four voices and string quartet (to his own text), composed in 1963 as a finale for his CBC television programme *The Anatomy of Fugue*. It is a tongue-in-cheek discussion of fugal form and fugal devices, and, with witty references to Bach and Wagner and others, it offers a kind of capsule history of fugal styles. It was published in 1964 by Schirmer, and remains in print; it has proven quite popular with choral groups over the years. There was one Columbia recording of the work made under Gould's supervision, in 1963; it appeared as an insert record in a 1963 issue of *High Fidelity*, and was first released on LP in 1980. A second recording, made in 1992, is available on the Sony Classical CD *Glenn Gould: The Composer*.

On his String Quartet, Opus 1: "It seems that I perform in the eighteenth and twentieth centuries and compose in the nineteenth. That must be jammed with psychoanalytical significance, but I have never paid to find out what it means."

(From a profile by Joseph Roddy, *The New Yorker*, 1960)

Desire to Compose

Except for the cadenzas and the fugue, Gould did little other substantial composing during his concert years: the demands of his touring schedule left little time. Yet, throughout this period, he often spoke of his desire to retire from public life in order to devote himself to composition. Indeed, the more renowned he became as a concert pianist, the more he resisted the label of concert pianist. He told an interviewer in 1962, “I saw myself as a sort of musical Renaissance Man, capable of doing many things.” On another occasion he referred to himself as “a composer who plays the piano”—which was wishful thinking at the time. Yet even this early in his career, he seemed to be constantly seeking to transcend the piano and the medium of public performance, seeking immortality through a more profound and permanent type of creative activity.

In 1964, when Gould finally did retire from concert life, he was not yet thirty-two, and he had a full career ahead of him; yet he never seemed to get around to being the serious composer he longed to be. He seemed to find time for everything else first—recording, writing, lecturing, radio and television broadcasting, filmmaking, conducting—and clearly he was sublimating his creative urges in this work.

After 1964, he sketched various works but completed few. There were mostly other humorous occasional works, like the fugue, often written for friends and privately performed. His “Lieberson Madrigal,” for example, was a chorus-piano work composed in 1964 for private performance at a testimonial dinner honouring a Columbia executive. *Monica: Her Madrigal* was a short choral work written for a friend, the Canadian pianist Monica Gaylord. And “From Chilkoot’s Icy Glacier” was a short satirical choral piece written as part of the humorous CBC radio programme *Conference at Port Chilkoot* (1967); the programme satirizes a music-critics’ conference, and this piece is performed at a welcoming ceremony.

Despite completing little substantial, serious composing after 1964, Gould was still occasionally making big plans for compositional projects—just as he had when he was twelve—right up until the end of his life. But few of them appear to have been even started or sketched. In the late 1950s, he told a reporter that he was planning an opera for television based on Franz Kafka’s story “The Metamorphosis”, though no work on this project survives. Around 1964, he apparently worked on a cantata for the Canadian soprano Lois Marshall, titled *A Letter from Stalingrad* and based on a letter from a German officer at Stalingrad, though again no sketches survive. He left behind draft librettos (though no music) for *Dr. Strauss Writes an Opera*, a proposed opera about Strauss as an opera composer, based on Strauss’ own last opera, the self-reflexive conversation piece *Capriccio.* And shortly before his death, in 1982, he discussed with his cousin Jessie Greig his plan to write a large-scale, *Messiah*-type oratorio based on the Book of Revelation. At that time, when he was beginning to abandon the piano in favour of conducting, he again spoke of

retiring from performance to devote himself entirely to writing and composing. We will never know how these plans would have materialized.

The relatively negative critical response to his String Quartet may account in part for Gould's later lack of output as a composer. In addition, he was frustrated by what he felt was the derivative nature of his compositions. He never felt that he found a truly distinctive personal voice, but rather thought that most of his music sounded like other composers. He was a slow, sometimes painfully slow, composer, too, which suggests a certain awkwardness or insecurity. Still, there is no doubt that Gould had some serious talent as a composer, as well as the temperament for composition, and his music was not always as derivative as he thought.

In the end, he never developed a secure identity or vocation as a composer, but the urge to create did not disappear, even when it became apparent that he was not likely to leave a significant legacy of conventional musical compositions. Instead, Gould—increasingly after 1964—began to manifest a personal creative voice in other of his musical activities—in the creative manipulation of studio techniques in his recordings; in his writings (he even spoke of wanting to try his hand at fiction after retiring from performance); in his radio and television broadcasts and his films (most conspicuously in his "contrapuntal radio documentaries," which he considered musical compositions) and above all, in his highly idiosyncratic interpretations at the keyboard, in which he creatively manipulated other people's music, sometimes to the point of recomposing it.

Gould clearly had the urge to create, not just to reproduce the music of others with a hands-off attitude. One could suggest, indeed, that Gould, though primarily a performer, had a "composerly" mindset—that he was a kind of composer trapped in a pianist's body. This explains why he suffered a good deal of frustration as a "real" composer, but also why he was so stubbornly idiosyncratic and creatively manipulative as a performer and media artist. Gould was a creative force, not simply a player or executant. This has been recognized by many of those who have written about him, including some composers: the Canadian Jacques Hétu responded to Gould's recording of his *Variations pour piano* by writing an article about it, in which he not only catalogued Gould's various transgressions against the score, but discussed the broader issue of Gould as a truly creative, "composerly" performer.

In fact, it could be suggested that Gould as a creator or composer was never truly fulfilled by conventional composition, but only more indirectly *after* he retired from concert life, since one could make a case that his best recorded interpretations and his "sound collages" for radio amount to more significant, original creative work than his conventional compositions. In other words, only away from the public life, through

the appropriation of technology—the private, unhurried, “laboratory-like” setting of the recording and broadcasting studio—was he able to fulfill himself as a creative artist.

I think quite frankly that part of my rejection of concerts is that I want to consider myself a composer. And I admit that so far there has been much more talk than action. In my twenty-nine years I have written only one work of size that I like, my string quartet. I specialize in unfinished works.

(From an interview with Bernard Asbell, *Horizon*, January 1962)

Transcriptions and Film Scores

Gould did channel some of his compositional urges into related activities. For example, he made some interesting and quite creative arrangements and transcriptions. In 1972, before recording the Prelude to Handel's Suite for Harpsichord in A Major, he wrote out a busy arrangement of what, in the original score, is a skeletal work intended to be subjected to improvised variations by the performer. And in 1973, he released a beautiful recording of orchestral music by Wagner, in his own piano transcriptions: the *Siegfried Idyll*, the Prelude to *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*, and "Dawn" and "Siegfried's Rhine Journey" from *Götterdämmerung*.

Gould also composed and arranged music for two feature films.

For *Slaughterhouse-Five* (Universal, 1972), based on the Kurt Vonnegut novel, he contributed a score consisting mostly of arrangements of Bach (with a little original composition), performed by him and others under his supervision. (In the end, Gould was not fond of the finished film, for moral reasons, and he wrote a rather negative review of it for a CBC radio programme.)

In 1982, he worked on the film version of *The Wars* (1982), based on Timothy Findley's World War I novel. This project resonated with Gould's own anti-war and humanitarian feelings. He composed some music, but mostly arranged music by Brahms and Strauss, in addition to hymns and other such music that he had known and loved as a child; he also did some performing and conducting. Though he did little real composing, he put together a very unified, cleverly structured, appropriate, and evocative score.

Gould also provided the music for the 1974 Warner Brothers film *The Terminal Man* though he did not really participate: his recording of the Goldberg Variations was merely used for the soundtrack.

> [...] I came to feel that in the Liszt transcriptions, he was too faithful to the score for his own good. You know, in an orchestral work, you can put in all sorts of octave doublings, for example, and, according to the diverse impulses of the instruments involved, you will have a rich and glamorous texture. Do the same thing on the piano, even within the options available to ten fingers and, although you may get marks for authenticity, what you end up with is mud, glorious mud.
>
> (From a conversation with Ken Haslam, scripted in 1973 and published in *GlennGould* Fall 1996)

> gg: [...] What about the fact that you supplied music for *Slaughterhouse-Five*?
> GG: What about it?
> gg: 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?

GG: 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."
gg: And pessimism, combined with a hedonistic cop-out, was the hallmark of *Slaughterhouse*, was it not?
GG: Yes, but it was the hedonistic properties rather than the pessimistic ones that gave me a lot of sleepless nights.
gg: So you don't approve of the film?
GG: I admired its craftsmanship extravagantly.
gg: That's not the same thing as liking it.
GG: No, it isn't.

(From "Glenn Gould interviews Glenn Gould about Glenn Gould", 1974)

Concert Years (1955-1964)

American Début and First Columbia Recording

On 2 January 1955, Gould made his American début, with a recital at the Phillips Gallery in Washington, D.C.; on 11 January, he made his New York début at Town Hall. (His father put up the money to pay the expenses for both concerts.)

Word of mouth after the Washington recital quickly spread to New York. The concerts were successful—in New York, audiences demanded an encore at the intermission, and a hundred people came backstage afterward. From the first, he made an impact as an accomplished and unusual performer. His highly idiosyncratic début repertoire—Gibbons, Sweelinck, Bach, Webern (played twice to demonstrate its relationship to the following Beethoven), late Beethoven, and Berg immediately attracted attention as did his unique playing style and his choreographic platform manner. The reviews instantly took notice of his originality, but also of his distinction and brilliance.

David Oppenheim, director of Columbia Records' Masterworks division, had been convinced to attend the Town Hall recital. As a result, immediately after the recital, he offered Gould a contract with Columbia; Gould accepted, and remained under contract to record for Columbia Masterworks (after 1973, CBS Masterworks) for the rest of his career—a three-decades-long relationship that produced scores of recordings in a wide range of repertoire. (Sony Classical acquired CBS Masterworks in the 1980s.) It was perhaps unheard of for a performer to have been offered a contract after only a single recital, but Gould's distinctiveness—and marketability—were immediately apparent.

Gould was true to form as an eccentric when he chose the repertoire for his first Columbia recording: Bach's difficult Goldberg Variations—at that time, a hardly well-known piece, and associated only with the relatively cultish following of artists like pianist Rosalyn Tureck and harpsichordist Wanda Landowska. Columbia eventually agreed, after suggesting more saleable repertoire—but Gould's début album was as unusual as his début recital. (That the piece is a household word today is largely due to Gould's recordings, particularly this first one.)

The main recording sessions took place in June 1955, at Columbia's 30th Street studios in New York, and the finished album was released, as ML 5060, in January 1956. The original, now-famous album cover showed thirty photographs of Gould in the studio—one for each Goldberg variation. The recording became an immediate classical best-seller, a critical sensation, earned Gould an international following, and has never been out of print.

Gould earned the praise of serious music critics, but also became a media darling in magazines like *Esquire*, *Glamour*, *Life*, and *Vogue*, which responded to his unusual character and appearance. Even before the first Goldberg recording was completed, Columbia Records issued a long press release that set the tone for much of the press coverage he would receive, especially in North America, throughout his career. They had quickly realized that they had not only a great musician, but a world-class eccentric on their hands, and—apparently with Gould's consent—they exploited the pianist's colourful personality to promote his records.

[The Goldberg Variations are,] in short, music which observes neither end nor beginning, music with neither real climax nor real resolution, music, which, like Baudelaire'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.

(From Gould's liner notes to the Goldberg Variations, 1956)

Columbia Masterworks' recording director and his engineering colleagues are sympathetic veterans who accept as perfectly natural all artists' studio rituals, foibles or fancies. But even these hardy souls were surprised by the arrival of young Canadian pianist Glenn Gould and his 'recording equipment' for his first Columbia sessions. Mr. Gould was to spend a week recording one of his chief specialties, Bach's Goldberg Variations.

It was a balmy June day, but Gould arrived in coat, beret, muffler, and gloves. 'Equipment' consisted of the customary music portfolio, also a batch of towels, two large bottles of spring water, five small bottles of pills (all different colors and prescriptions) and his own special piano chair.

Towels, it developed, were needed in plenty because Gould soaks his hands and arms up to the elbows in hot water for twenty minutes before sitting down at the keyboard, a procedure which quickly became a convivial group ritual; everyone sat around talking, joking, discussing music, literature and so forth while 'soaking' went on.

Bottled spring water was a necessity because Glenn can't abide New York tap water. Pills were for any number of reasons—headache, relieving tension, maintaining good circulation. The air conditioning engineer worked as hard as the man at the recording studio control panel. Glenn is very sensitive to the slightest changes in temperature, so there was constant adjustment of the vast studio air conditioning system.

But the collapsible chair was the Goldberg (Rube) variation of them all. It's a bridge chair, basically, with each leg adjusted individually for height so that Glenn can lean forward, backward, or to either side. The studio skeptics thought this was wackiness of the highest order until recording got under way. Then they saw Glenn adjust the slant of his chair before doing his slightly incredible cross-hand passages in the Variations, leaning in the direction of the 'cross.' The chair was unanimously accepted as a splendid, logical device.

Gould at the keyboard was another phenomenon—sometimes singing along with his piano, sometimes hovering low over the keys, sometimes playing with eyes closed and head flung back. The control-room audience was entranced, and even the air conditioning engineer began to develop a fondness for Bach. Even at record playbacks Glenn was in perpetual motion, conducted rhapsodically, did a veritable ballet to the

music. For sustenance he munched arrowroot biscuits, drank skimmed milk, frowned on the recording crew's Hero sandwiches.

After a week of recording, Glenn said he was satisfied with his recording stint, packed up his towels, pills, and bridge chair. He went 'round to shake hands with everyone—the recording director, the engineers, the studio man, the air conditioning engineer. Everybody agreed they would miss the cheerful 'soaking' sessions, the Gould humor and excitement, the pills, the spring water.

'Well,' said Glenn as he put on his coat, beret, muffler and gloves to venture out into the June air, 'you know I'll be back in January!'

And so he will. The studio air conditioning engineer is getting ready for the workout.

(Columbia Masterworks press release, 25 June 1955.)

North American Concerts

The successful American début recitals, and especially the release of his first recording of the Goldberg Variations in January 1956, made Gould an instant celebrity in classical music, and launched him as an international concert performer. For the next nine years, he continued to give concerts annually across Canada and the U.S., now with considerably more prestige than before. He earned notices both rapt and critical, and he generated controversy wherever he appeared—for his unusual repertoire, piano style, and interpretations, but also for his eccentric manner on and off the stage, which made him perennially good newspaper copy.

Gould played recitals and concertos in major cities like New York and Toronto as well as many smaller centres—like Brantford, Ontario and Sherbrooke, Québec; and, in America, cities like Mount Lebanon, Pennsylvania; Watertown, Connecticut; Rock Hill, South Carolina; Burlington, Vermont; Ogden, Utah; White Plains, New York; and South Bend, Indiana. After his débuts, he gave no other U.S. concerts during the remainder of 1955.

Gould's American appearances begin in earnest only after the release of the Goldberg Variations in January 1956. On 15 March 1956 he made his first U.S. concerto appearance: Beethoven's Piano Concerto No. 4, in Detroit. On 26-27 January 1957, he made his New York Philharmonic début, in Beethoven's Piano Concerto No. 2, with Leonard Bernstein conducting.

Perhaps his most controversial North American concerts were on 5, 6 and 8 April 1962, when he played the Brahms D-minor concerto, with Bernstein and the New York Philharmonic. His slow, highly idiosyncratic interpretation of the piece, coupled with Bernstein's pre-concert disclaimer (he disagreed with Gould's interpretation), caused something of a minor scandal in the press—in particular, in Harold C. Schonberg's notorious *New York Times* review.

> In a recently, widely discussed testimonial, Mr. Leonard Bernstein drew attention to what he considered certain departures from the interpretative norm in my conception of the Brahms D-minor Concerto. Prior to a performance with the New York Philharmonic, he suggested that it was the most leisurely, in some ways the most intractable, interpretation he had ever heard. As descriptive comment, both of these remarks were quite justified—it was (is) a remarkably leisurely performance, and it held tenaciously to the leisure of its pace (and hence became intractable) throughout. However, the gentlemen of the New York press, who are always eager to have their reviews written for them, were quick to translate leisure as turgidity, tenacity as pigheadedness, and to suggest that undoubtedly one of the classic conductor-soloist feuds was under way. In point of fact, nothing of the kind was taking place.
>
> (From "N'aimez-vous pas Brahms?", 1962)

Festivals

Gould was critical of the standard concert business and repertoire from the beginning of his career, and it is not surprising that he preferred the more casual atmosphere of summer music festivals, in Canada as well as in Berlin, Vienna, Salzburg, Lucerne, and elsewhere.

In the summers of 1958, 1960, and 1961, Gould appeared at the Vancouver International Festival. In this environment, he felt more free to indulge his tastes in modern music, to give relaxed lecture-recitals, and to broaden his repertoire with the sort of music he had little opportunity to place in regular concert seasons. He accompanied Schoenberg Lieder; he conducted (from the keyboard) Schoenberg's *Ode to Napoleon*, Bach's cantata *Widerstehe doch der Sünde*, and Bach's Brandenburg Concerto No. 5; lectured on Schoenberg; and even gave a humorous lecture-recital, complete with accents and props, to an audience of children, on 7 August 1961.

Gould's closest festival association was with the annual Stratford Festival in Stratford, Ontario, where he played often, beginning in its first season, 1953, and in other early seasons: 1954, 1955, and 1956. He skipped Stratford from 1957 to 1959, when he was busy touring overseas, but returned, as Artist in Residence, in 1960, and then performed from 1961 to 1963. He served as one of Stratford's directors of music from 1961 to 1964, along with violinist Oscar Shumsky and cellist Leonard Rose. (He did not actually play in 1964, however: by summer he had already retired from concert life.)

> It ought to be possible to build a musical season in which the participants would come and stay awhile, would dare to try new things, and, perhaps, because of Stratford, would think a bit, would leave a little larger than they came. This, then, is what we want to do, what we want to build.
>
> (From "Reminiscence and Prediction", Gould's article in the 1962 Stratford souvenir booklet)

Overseas Tours

Gould gave overseas tours annually from 1957 to 1959—a relatively small body of work. Though he aroused the usual controversy overseas that he did at home (though not as much so), he was largely lionized, and managed to earn a permanent international reputation in spite of having played less than fifty concerts overseas in his entire career, and in spite of a repertoire that featured composers like Sweelinck, Bach, late Beethoven, Schoenberg, Berg, Webern, and others whom audiences were not used to in the 1950s.

Gould's overseas career began auspiciously—with a much-publicized two-week tour of Soviet Russia, where he was the first North American pianist to play (this was a year before Van Cliburn's appearance at the Tchaikovsky Competition). His concerts were triumphs, rapturously received by audiences and critics. His first concert had not been sold out, but all of the others, by word of mouth, were mobbed. The Russians never forgot him, and have been among his most passionate fans ever since; they longed for his return, and he maintained a huge reputation there even at a time when relatively little of his work was available to Russian listeners. Tapes of some of Gould's Russian performances survived and have appeared posthumously on CD, including his informal 12 May lecture-recital at the Moscow Conservatory, where he rather controversially played proscribed modern music, and some concerto performances with the Leningrad Philharmonic—performances Gould himself once described as "full of beans" and worthy of release.

After his Russian triumphs, Gould made his Western European début on 24, 25, and 26 May 1957, with the Berlin Philharmonic under Herbert von Karajan, in Beethoven's Third Concerto; it was no less a triumph. Then, on 7 June, he made his Western European recital début at the Vienna Festival, again to a rapturous reception. Critics were amazed at his virtuosity and pianistic command, especially given his age, and were impressed by his unusual repertoire, style, and interpretations.

After this glorious tour, Gould went home. In 1958, he came to Europe again in the summer and fall, playing in the Salzburg Festival, the Brussels World's Fair, in Berlin, Stockholm, Florence, and Rome, and in a two-week tour of Israel. Again, he had musical triumphs and aroused some controversy, though his reception in Israel was as rapturous as it had been in Russia. By this time, the rigours of concert life were starting to wear him down: he picked up an illness in Sweden that dogged him for months, and he had to cancel many concerts, finally holing up in Hamburg for a month to recuperate; later, when he performed in Italy and Israel, he was still sick...

In the spring of 1959, Gould returned to Europe, first for a recital in Berlin, then to play all five Beethoven concertos with Josef Krips and the London Symphony, his only appearance in London. (He played Nos. 1-4, but illness forced cancellation of the “Emperor”. Or was it illness? He didn’t really like the piece...) English audiences and critics were bothered by his platform manner—the crossed legs, the reluctant bows, the singing and gesticulating, and so on, though most were captivated by his playing. Then, after a recital at the Salzburg Festival and a concerto appearance at the Lucerne Festival, Gould returned to Canada and never again performed (or, apparently, even travelled) outside North America.

On one of his informal lecture-recitals in Russia: “It was a sensation equivalent to that of perhaps being the first musician to land on Mars or Venus and to be in a position of revealing a vast unexplored territory to some greatly puzzled but very willing auditors. It was a great day for me!”

(From a 1957 letter to Yousuf Karsh)

Retirement from Concerts

From the beginning of his performing career, Gould harboured many negative feelings, both personal and musical, about the life of a touring concert pianist. (This was not because of any lack of success: he was one of the leading international classical-music acts of his day, so his championing of recording was by no means “sour grapes”; moreover, he was hardly the only major performer to have made negative comments about the touring life.)

One sign of his disdain for concerts was that, by most standards, he gave relatively few of them, rationing his appearances carefully, and cancelling at the slightest hint of a problem. He gave less than a dozen concerts a year before 1955, and even at the height of his fame his touring schedule was far less hectic than that of many musicians. His entire international concert career—the basis for a continuing international reputation—consisted of less than fifty concerts. It was clear that he undertook concerts reluctantly, only as a means of assuring himself of financial security and a reputation as a musician—in order to build an audience for his recordings. Concerts were a necessary evil to be got over as quickly as possible.

By 1963, Gould’s concert activity had fallen off dramatically. On 10 April 1964, in Los Angeles, he made his last public appearance as a pianist, in a characteristic programme of Bach, Beethoven, and Hindemith. This was not a planned last concert; in fact, subsequent letters, interviews, and other sources show that Gould was occasionally considering plans for concerts and tours into 1965, even 1966. He seems to have simply gradually stopped taking engagements, cancelling those he had accepted, until, after a few years, he realized that he preferred his new life away from the public eye. In short, he never officially retired; he simply stopped showing up for work. And he never relented, refusing even the most lucrative offers to make (like Vladimir Horowitz) a “Historic Return” to the concert hall.

Gould had many intellectual arguments against concerts, many arguments based on musical and even ethical criteria:

- Concerts were a manifestation of competitive, even violent, tendencies, no less than bullfights or the Roman Coliseum, as reflected in the “blood-lust” of audiences. (“At live concerts I feel demeaned, like a vaudevillian,” he said in 1964.) Gould hated the audience-conquering aspect of concerts: “A performance is not a contest but a love affair,” he said in 1962, and this “love affair” was, for him, better conducted in the recording studio.

- Concerts encouraged showing off, titillation, superficial adrenaline rushes rather than relaxed, reasoned contemplation of music.

- Concerts encouraged focus on the worst sort of audience-grabbing repertoire—Romantic solo concertos, Liszt concert études, and the like—and were detrimental to what he considered the most worthy music, structurally as well as ethically—fugues, twelve-tone music, and the like.

• Concerts encouraged the repetition of the tried-and-true, the hardening of interpretations into routine. They expressed the unwillingness to explore new repertoire, and a tendency to fall back on safe pieces that have had previous success. Though his repertoire was unusual, he, no less than any of his colleagues, would repeat his favourite pieces in concert after concert—the Sweelinck fantasia, the G-major Partita and the Goldberg Variations, Beethoven's Opus 109 sonata, the Schoenberg Suite, sonatas by Berg, Krenek, Hindemith...

• Concerts encouraged a playing style full of exaggerated nuances, intended to put over a piece effectively to a dispersed crowd in a large hall—something he considered especially detrimental to the relatively complex and intimate music he preferred, like Bach's. (In several interviews, he complained about his 1957 recording of Bach's Partita No. 5 in G Major; in 1968, he called it the worst recording he had ever made. The reason, in his view, was that his interpretation had been "compromised" or "contaminated" by having been played too much in public concerts, where he picked up all sorts of exaggerated, distorted interpretive nuances that were necessary in a live setting but had no place in a recording.)

But as Gould himself admitted, these intellectual arguments, however valid, rationalized what was, in the beginning, a deeply personal objection to the concert experience—the stage fright, the adrenaline, the personal and temperamental and physical discomfort, the inability to compete with his own recordings in live situations.

When Gould became ill on tour in Europe, in the fall of 1958, he cancelled a large number of concerts and holed up for a month in a hotel in Hamburg, recuperating. It was, he later said, the best, because most solitary, month of his life—surely a clue that this was not a person best suited to concert life.

I suppose I never really did want to give concerts. I thought of it as something that had to be got through. I thought of it as something that one must do while endeavouring to establish I suppose some sort of reputation which would stand you perhaps in good stead later on. And it didn't seem to me that there was anything very productive, even at the time. There was a sense of power which I rather enjoyed when I was fourteen, fifteen, sixteen years old. That was kind of fun, to play before a live, rabid public, and give of the best one could, and toward which one had to practice many months. But that wears off pretty quickly, that's a very thin veneer indeed, and once you start doing that every couple of nights, and at distant points in distant lands, the charm and the glamour of that doesn't last very long. It certainly didn't with me. And I became not only fairly sick, but I began to feel that it was indeed very unproductive, that I was at best competing with myself. Once I'd begun to make recordings the most that I could hope would be that my public statement would be as good as the equivalent recording of that work if I had in fact recorded it, and I often had, because one cheats in giving concerts, you don't explore very much, you play the same old tired pieces that you've tried out on your recorded public as well as on other public publics. One does cheat and one does try to get by with as little work as possible and play them pretty much the same way I suppose, and there is an incredible lack of imagination that sets in and no, there's no longer a need to rely on your imagination, and one grows old very quickly. It's a dreadful life.

(From the 1968 TV show *Telescope*)

For many years, I had a recurring dream, which I think has stopped now, but it came during my school years and shortly after, and this dream always involved variations on the same theme, which was a return to school, and school in this case obviously meant much more than that. It meant a return to a schedule which

I couldn’t completely control, and it was a dreadful kind of thing. I remember one very colourful variation on it, which I think I must have dreamt when I was perhaps fifteen or sixteen. And I... I dreamt that I got up one morning up here at the lake, and looked out my window, and instead of seeing grass, I saw rock, as one would see a hundred miles to the north of here, just endless rock, [...] and on this rock there were nothing but dead leaves of some kind, and I was all the worst for the dream. And I shortly after that woke up with that feeling one can never describe... so absolutely sad beyond all description. It was something which I shall never forget. And I had many variations on this same image at that time. And to this day this is approximately the way I feel when I have to return to a life which I don’t really enjoy.

(From *Glenn Gould: Off the Record*, 1959)

Recordings

Early Columbia Recordings

Even during his busiest concert years, Gould was active making recordings, and it was clear from the beginning that, for him, the recording studio was a more natural milieu, the recording medium a more satisfying form of performance. Yet, as he would say later, it was not until he retired from concert life in 1964 that he became a true "recording artist," an artist for whom the fact of recording exercised an influence on the interpretation itself.

By Gould's standards, most of his earlier recordings merely preserved on tape conventional performances not founded on a particular recording aesthetic—a distinction he considered crucial. And he found it increasingly impossible to compete, as a concert artist, with the standard set by his recordings.

What Gould's early recordings do show, however, is the brash young performer whose virtuosity and distinctive piano style made such a big noise in the 1950s. They also reveal immediately the unusual repertoire that distinguished him—lots of Bach, early and late Beethoven, twentieth-century music, no standard Romantic fare, and his own string quartet. (In short, his preferred concert repertoire; only after he retired from concerts did he really begin to branch out in terms of repertoire.) The early recordings already demonstrate the extremes in Gould's musical make-up—highly "classical," pristine recordings of Bach and highly intellectual performances of twentieth-century music, but also hyper-Romantic playing in late Beethoven and Brahms and Strauss. Also, the early recordings show off Gould as pianist, organist, and composer, as soloist and concerto partner and accompanist. In all, Gould's first few years of recordings mark an auspicious and noteworthy début.

> I have just done a whole album of Brahms intermezzi, which is the sexiest interpretation of Brahms intermezzi you have ever heard. I have captured, I think, an atmosphere of improvisation which I don't believe has ever been represented in a Brahms recording before. [...] This is one of the things I am most proud of.
>
> (From an interview with Bernard Asbell, *Horizon*, January 1962)

Columbia Albums, 1955-1963

• Bach, the Goldberg Variations (1956). This is Gould's first Columbia recording, and a dazzling introduction to his fleet, clean, contrapuntally clear, rhythmically dynamic early Bach style.

• Beethoven, the last three sonatas, Opp. 109, 110, and 111 (1956). This is a very controversial recording, featuring many highly idiosyncratic tempos, turns of phrase, departures from the score, etc.—in its way, a quite Romantic reading of late Beethoven. (Gould's liner notes, which implied that perhaps the late Beethoven sonatas were not quite so profound as reputed, were also controversial.)

• Bach, Clavier Concerto No. 1 in D Minor, and Beethoven, Piano Concerto No. 2, with Leonard Bernstein conducting the Columbia Symphony (1957).

• Bach, Partitas Nos. 5 and 6, with the fugues in E major and F-sharp minor from Book II of *The Well-Tempered Clavier* (1957).

• Haydn, Sonata No. 49 in E-flat Major; Mozart, Sonata in C Major, K. 330; Mozart, Fantasia and Fugue in C Major, K. 394 (1958): a beautiful and dynamic introduction to Gould as a performer of earlier Classical repertoire.

• Bach, Clavier Concerto No. 5 in F Minor, and Beethoven, Piano Concerto No. 1, with Vladimir Golschmann conducting the Columbia Symphony (1958): the Beethoven features Gould's own idiosyncratic cadenzas in the first and last movements.

• Solo-piano works by Berg, Krenek, and Schoenberg (1959): Gould's first Columbia recording of twentieth-century music, and a particularly beautiful example of his reading of this repertoire.

• Beethoven, Piano Concerto No. 3, with Leonard Bernstein conducting the Columbia Symphony (1960).

• Gould, String Quartet, Opus 1, with the Symphonia Quartet (1960).

• Bach, Italian Concerto and Partitas Nos. 1 and 2 (1960). The Italian Concerto in particular, though not one of Gould's favourite pieces, inspired one of his most brilliant and dynamic Bach recordings. (The studio sessions for this recording are documented in the 1959 National Film Board of Canada documentary *Glenn Gould: On the Record*.)

• Brahms, ten Intermezzi (1961). Gould described this recording as "sexy": intimate, contrapuntal, "late-night" music that he loved dearly, and which he in fact played in a highly Romantic, deeply expressive, very contrapuntal manner. This recording surprised many listeners: up to then, he had recorded only Baroque, Classical, and modern repertoire.

• Beethoven, Piano Concerto No. 4, with Leonard Bernstein conducting the New York Philharmonic (1961).

• Bach, *The Art of Fugue*, Volume I (fugues nos. 1-9), played on the organ (1962).

• Mozart, Piano Concerto No. 24 in C Minor, K. 491, and Schoenberg, Piano Concerto, Opus 42 (1962). This combination was an unusual pairing, one which Gould attempted to defend in his liner notes. The Mozart was, Gould claimed, the only Mozart concerto that he could stand—and early revelation of his highly ambivalent feelings about this composer. The Schoenberg, of which Gould had given the Canadian première, was a piece he fervently championed, saying that he would turn down no opportunity to play it in public.

• Strauss, *Enoch Arden*, with Claude Rains (1962): a most uncharacteristic foray into Romantic salon music.

• Bach, *The Well-Tempered Clavier*, Book I, Volume 1 (preludes and fugues nos. 1-8) (1963).

• Bach, Partitas Nos. 3 and 4, and Toccata in E Minor (1963).

Championing of Recording

Gould was a conspicuously modern man in his championing of technology in all facets of life. For example, his solution to physical problems was never improved diet or exercise, but the intercession of technology: he would take a pill. He was fascinated with the electronic media and with recording technology from the beginning of his life.

As a child, he and his neighbour Robert Fulford used to communicate, and later do “broadcasts,” from their respective houses, using tin cans connected by string. By the 1940s, he was already recording himself at home; thus he discovered early on how best to relate his playing to the microphone. By the time he began officially to make recordings in the 1950s, he was already familiar with the studio's principles and technology, and later—especially after he left the concert stage—he became perhaps the most informed and hands-on of classical recording artists. Around 1970, he even stopped recording at the CBS studios in New York and undertook his own recording sessions at Eaton Auditorium in Toronto, controlling ever more closely his own recorded products. In the last few years, he also acted as his own producer for a few recordings—perhaps unprecedented for a classical musician.

Gould was the leading advocate, in theory and practice, of the intrusion of technology into classical music. (Some of what he advocated was already common in other realms, like pop music, but he was one of the first classical artists...) He went far beyond the norms of his day technologically; in some respects he was visionary—even by today’s computerized standards. For him, the intrusion of technology was a creative act: he viewed the studio as a kind of laboratory in which he could undertake experiments with the goal of producing the best possible commentary on the music at hand. He rejected the stigma attached to “dishonest” activities like splicing; instead, he used terms like “creative cheating” or “creative lying,” conveying the idea that studio manipulations served higher creative goals. His main concerns in recording and editing were not to fix errors—to “fool” the listener—but to create the very best possible artistic product, without feeling bound by the particular restrictions of concert performance.

Moreover, Gould was a true philosopher of recording, in the sense that he pursued the implications of technology from the musical sphere into the moral and sociological, in ways that are sometimes visionary still today. He believed, for example, that recording was superior to concerts because it allowed the performer to realize his concept of a piece more perfectly, completely, permanently. More broadly, he believed that recording was morally superior to concerts because it removed the aspect of “live-ness,” of competition, from the musical equation, while concerts represented a “hedonistic” and less contemplative way of life. Also, recordings were the products of team effort, and so were more “democratic.” In the end, Gould argued with conviction and passion that recordings and concerts were two different art forms (like

film and theatre) that were not bound by each other's standards, values, implications, limitations, or possibilities.

Gould considered recording particularly well suited to his particular repertoire, piano style, and musical ideas. For example, the close-up, analytical, "dissecting" nature of the microphone was suited to the clear presentation of the kind of music he preferred—Bach fugues, for instance, or intimate Elizabethan pieces, or structurally complex works in the twelve-tone idiom. (He often spoke of concert performances, by contrast, as tending to "pervert" or "contaminate" just such repertoire because it had to be artificially projected to a dispersed crowd in a large hall.) Gould's whole style of playing—clean, analytical, intimate, reticent about expression, concerned with the tiniest shades of nuance and volume and rhythm, unconcerned about triumphant, barn-storming virtuosity—was, one might say, scaled to the needs of the recording medium. Like a screen actor out of his element on the stage, Gould was an artist whose most characteristic work was lost—or at least, compromised—in large public spaces and live situations.

Because he considered recording an inherently creative exercise, Gould found it, much more so than concertizing, conducive to the sorts of experiments in interpretation for which he was notorious. Recording encouraged one to try out many versions of the same piece, for example, exploring alternative interpretations and then picking the best—or splicing together the best from a variety of takes. This was precisely his method in the studio: he said he often arrived not knowing how he wanted to play the piece, instead having a number of possibilities in mind, which he would try out, making final decisions only in the editing process.

Gould's most unusual and creative interpretations come only after his 1964 retirement, in the comfort and security of the studio. Gould believed that the fact of recording, in the twentieth century, made a creative attitude toward interpretation imperative, at least for performers of the standard canon. He thought that there was no reason, in the age of recordings, to make a recording unless you had something unique to say about the piece in question, especially if it was a well-known piece, like a sonata by Mozart or Beethoven. He once said to Humphrey Burton that the only excuse for recording is to do it differently.

There was a "composerly" aspect inherent in recording. And Gould was as good as his word: hence his rather unpredictable discography, an eclectic body of works frequently highly eccentric in interpretation.

You know, this is a very cloistered environment—this world of the recording studio, that's why I love it so. I don't mean 'cloistered' in the physical sense only, though it certainly does share in that aspect of the cloister too. What I do mean is that it's, quite literally, an environment where time turns in upon itself, where, as in a cloister, one is able to withstand the frantic pursuit of the transient, of the moment-to-moment, day-by-day succession of events.

(From "Glenn Gould on Recording", *GlennGould*, Spring 1998)

My favourite record from my own catalogue, I think, is a recording of music by Byrd and Gibbons which, first of all, as music, is very close to my heart.

(From an interview with Elyse Mach, *Great Pianists Speak for Themselves*, 1980)

Columbia Albums, 1964-Present

Most of Gould's early Columbia albums, understandably, documented the centrepieces of his concert repertoire: Bach's Partitas, a few works by Mozart and Haydn, Beethoven's concertos and late sonatas, works by Schoenberg, Berg, Krenek, Hindemith. But from 1964 on, he greatly expanded his recorded repertoire, not only beyond his own concerts but also including works rarely heard on pianists' concert programmes: much twentieth-century music, including new Canadian works, virginal music by Byrd and Gibbons, Bach fugues, orchestral transcriptions, obscure works by Bizet and Grieg and Strauss... And he undertook complete surveys—Bach keyboard works, Mozart and Beethoven sonatas—that he would never have done in concert, though he did not live to complete all of these long-term projects.

• Bach, *The Well-Tempered Clavier*, Book I, Volume 2 (preludes and fugues nos. 9-16) (1964).

• Bach, Two- and Three-Part Inventions/Sinfonias (1964). This is the first recording to feature Gould's newly acquired, mechanically altered Steinway grand piano, CD 318, an instrument he loved.

• Beethoven, three sonatas, Opus 10 (1965). With this recording, Gould began in earnest what was to have been a survey of the complete Beethoven sonatas. He did not live to complete the project—in the end, he recorded only about twenty of the thirty-two sonatas—but the recordings he did leave are among his most controversial, as he worked through his very personal, and very mixed, feelings about this important composer.

• Bach, *The Well-Tempered Clavier*, Book I, Volume 3 (preludes and fugues nos. 17-24) (1965).

• Schoenberg, Complete Songs for Voice and Piano, Volume 1, with various soloists (1966). Freed from concert life in the mid-1960s, Gould began to explore his interest in Schoenberg much more intensely than he ever could have in public, making a number of Schoenberg recordings as well as many hours' worth of radio programmes, in addition to public lectures and published writings. He became, in the mid-1960s, a true champion of Schoenberg's music.

• Schoenberg, complete works for solo piano (1966).

• Beethoven, "Emperor" Concerto, with Leopold Stokowski conducting the American Symphony (1966).

• Beethoven, *Pathétique* Sonata, Opus 13, and two sonatas, Opus 14 (1967).

• Bach, Clavier Concertos Nos. 3, 5, and 7, with Vladimir Golschmann conducting the Columbia Symphony (1967).

• Canadian Centennial album, featuring works by three Canadian composers: Anhalt, Morawetz, and Hétu (1967).

• Schoenberg, two chamber-music works: *Ode to Napoleon Bonaparte* and *Phantasy* for violin, released on separate albums with other works by Schoenberg (1967).

• Mozart, Complete Piano Sonatas and Fantasias, Volume 1 (1968): perhaps the most controversial of any of Gould's recordings, these highly idiosyncratic—to many, blasphemous—readings of Mozart's much-loved sonatas revealed Gould's highly prejudiced, and very mixed, opinion of these works, which he sought to remove from sentimental, "Victorian" prejudices.

• Bach, *The Well-Tempered Clavier*, Book II, Volume 1 (preludes and fugues nos. 1-8) (1968).

• *Glenn Gould: Concert Dropout*, recorded interview with John McClure (1968, released as a bonus LP with the album that follows). By 1968, Gould was certain that he was not going to return to the life of a concert performer, and he used this interview to promote his new life as a performer in the electronic media.

• Beethoven, Symphony No. 5, arranged by Franz Liszt (1968).

• Prokofiev, Sonata No. 7, and Scriabin, Sonata No. 3 (1969).

• Mozart, Complete Piano Sonatas and Fantasias, Volume 2 (1969).

• Bach, Clavier Concertos Nos. 2 and 4, with Vladimir Golschmann conducting the Columbia Symphony (1969).

• Schumann, Piano Quartet in E-flat Major, Opus 47, with members of the Juilliard String Quartet (1969).

• Bach, *The Well-Tempered Clavier*, Book II, Volume 2 (preludes and fugues nos. 9-16) (1970).

• Beethoven, three famous sonatas: *Pathétique*, "Moonlight," and "Appassionata" (1970). Gould had some ambivalent feelings about these beloved, nicknamed sonatas, feelings he expressed in both his performances and liner notes. His deconstruction of the "Appassionata," especially, became one of his most notorious and vilified performances.

• Beethoven, three sets of variations: Op. 34, Op. 35 ("Eroica"), and WoO 80 in C minor (1970).

• Bach, *The Well-Tempered Clavier*, Book II, Volume 3 (preludes and fugues nos. 17-24) (1971).

• *A Consort of Musike Bye William Byrde and Orlando Gibbons* (1971): Gould later called this his favourite album; to be sure, it makes a beautiful and convincing case for this Elizabethan music on the modern piano.

• Mozart, Complete Piano Sonatas and Fantasias, Volume 3. (1972).

• Schoenberg, Complete Songs for Voice and Piano, Volume 2, with various soloists (1972).

• Handel, four suites, performed on the harpsichord (1972).

• Bizet, *Variations chromatiques* and *Premier nocturne*, and Grieg, Sonata in E Minor, Opus 7 (1973).

• Bach, French Suites Nos. 1-4 (1973).

• Mozart, Complete Piano Sonatas and Fantasias, Volume 4 (1973).

• Hindemith, Piano Sonatas Nos. 1-3 (1973).

• Wagner, orchestral showpieces, in Gould's own piano transcriptions: *Siegfried Idyll*, Prelude to *Die Meistersinger*, and "Dawn" and "Siegfried's Rhine Journey" from *Götterdämmerung* (1973). Wagner was one of Gould's favourite composers throughout his life, but he lamented that Wagner (like most late-Romantic German composers) composed nothing of substance for the piano. With this album, Gould simply wanted something of Wagner's that he could play, but the result was one of his most strikingly beautiful recordings—a real testament to the Romanticism that lay beneath his rational exterior.

• Beethoven, three sonatas, Opus 31 (1973).

• Bach, French Suites Nos. 5 and 6, and French Overture in B Minor (1974).

• Bach, three sonatas for viola da gamba, with Leonard Rose, cello (1974).

• Beethoven, Bagatelles, Opp. 33 and 126 (1975).

• Mozart, Complete Piano Sonatas and Fantasias, Volume 5 (1975).

• Hindemith, five sonatas for brass instruments with piano, with various soloists (1976). This recording—of repertoire that, it is safe to say, is the choice of few international celebrity virtuosos—testifies to Gould's love of Hindemith's music. Indeed, as with Schoenberg in the mid-1960s, in the mid-1970s there was something of a renaissance in Gould's interest in Hindemith—in the recording studio, on television and radio, and in his writing.

• Bach, six violin sonatas, with Jaime Laredo (1976).

• Bach, English Suites Nos. 1-6 (1977).

• Sibelius, three Sonatines and *Kyllikki* (1977): the only recording released in Gould's lifetime to feature his recording technique of "acoustic choreography."

• Hindemith, *Das Marienleben* (original 1924 version), with soprano Roxolana Roslak (1978).

• Bach, Toccatas, Volume 1 (1979).

• Bach, Toccatas, Volume 2 (1980).

• Bach, Preludes, Fughettas, and Fugues (1980): clearly, by this time, Gould's long-term plan to record the complete keyboard music of Bach was coming to a close; with this album, and some minor recordings never released in his lifetime, Gould was obviously cleaning up loose ends, having already recorded all of Bach's most important keyboard works.

• Beethoven, three sonatas Opus 2, and the sonata Opus 28 (1980).

• *The Glenn Gould Silver Jubilee Album* (1980), containing the humorous documentary *A Glenn Gould Fantasy*, and the first release of recordings of Strauss's *Ophelia-Lieder* (with soprano Elisabeth Schwarzkopf), *So You Want to Write a Fugue?*, sonatas by Scarlatti and C.P.E. Bach, short pieces by Scriabin, and the first movement of the Beethoven-Liszt *Pastoral* Symphony.

• Haydn, last six sonatas (1982).

• Bach, Goldberg Variations (1982): the last recording to be released in Gould's lifetime—indeed, just days before his untimely death.

Several recording projects were completed but unreleased at the time of Gould's death, and there were many earlier recordings that he had made but were never released in his lifetime. The following are the more important posthumous releases of Columbia/CBS studio recordings:

• Brahms, Ballades, Opus 10, and Rhapsodies, Opus 79 (1983).

• Beethoven, sonatas Opp. 26 and 27 (1983).

• Strauss, Piano Sonata, Op. 5, and Five Piano Pieces, Op. 3 (1984). Rather touchingly, the sonata, by the sixteen-year-old Strauss, was the last studio recording Gould ever made.

• Recorded interview with Tim Page on his 1982 interpretation of the Goldberg Variations (1984).

• Scriabin, Sonata No. 5 (1986). This piece was recorded in 1970, using the technique of "acoustic choreography," though only released to date in a single-perspective version (Gould left no documentation as to the particular "acoustic choreography" he desired in this sonata, which was a remnant of an abandoned plan to record all of Scriabin's sonatas).

• Wagner, *Siegfried Idyll*, chamber-orchestra version conducted by Gould shortly before his death, with members of the Toronto Symphony (1990).

• *Glenn Gould: The Composer* (1992). New recordings of the String Quartet, Opus 1, of *So You Want to Write a Fugue?*, of the Bassoon Sonata, of the "Lieberson Madrigal," and of some teen-age piano pieces.

• Sony Classical's Glenn Gould Edition, which began release in 1992, has to date included a number of works that Gould recorded in the studio but never released, including: Beethoven, sonata Opus 78; Pentland, *Shadows/Ombres*; and Bach, miscellaneous variations, preludes, fugues, fughettas, and fantasias, recorded in the 1970s and 80s for several albums, including one devoted to the "Italian Bach."

• The Glenn Gould Edition also includes commercial releases of several recordings of major works that Gould made for CBC radio and television but not in the Columbia/CBS studios, including: Beethoven, "Hammerklavier" Sonata, Opus 106; Beethoven, Symphony No. 6 (*Pastoral*), in Liszt's transcription; Chopin, Sonata No. 3 in B Minor, Opus 58; Brahms, Piano Quintet in F Minor, Opus 34; Strauss, *Burleske* for piano and orchestra; Ravel, *La Valse*, in his own transcription; Webern, *Variations*, Opus 27; Valen, Sonata No. 2, Opus 38; and a number of other solo and chamber-music works.

Recording Techniques

Though he had a hands-on familiarity with recording unusual for a classical performer, Gould was not a "tape wizard," beholden to splicing in order to sound good, or interested in gadgetry for its own sake. Indeed, as his colleagues have testified, he could be relatively conservative in his uses of technology, not using splicing any more often than the average recording pianist. What was different was that he boasted about it, rather than hid the fact, and made a whole philosophical case for recording as an art form with its own integrity and validity. Most of his recordings were made the conventional way: basic takes supplemented with inserts, spliced together to make a perfect final version that conveyed his interpretation, with the difference that, more so than most, he used splicing to make creative decisions rather than merely to fix imperfections.

The basic use of splicing to create a technically and musically precise recording does not necessarily involve the creation of performances that are unavailable in the concert hall. For example, though Gould built up his interpretation of the A-minor fugue from *The Well-Tempered Clavier* Book I in the editing booth using different takes, the resulting performance could certainly have been played straight through that way, had Gould thought of that while recording the takes.

But Gould's experiments with recording technology often *did* go farther than this, creating performances with electronic features unavailable to the concert performer: performances truly designed for recording and playback. For example, he would add or reduce reverberation electronically, depending on the musical circumstances; he occasionally used a regenerated piece of tape to create an exact repetition of a passage; and he used over-dubbing in order to play a four-hand duet with himself in orchestral transcriptions of Wagner.

There were also some recording techniques that Gould extolled in theory but did not use in practice, like speeding up a piece of tape, without changing the pitch, to create a faster tempo. He also discussed (and tentatively experimented with) recording fugues in multi-track format, one voice at a time, for quadraphonic playback, the way they might have been recorded on a synthesizer. Gould discussed this possibility—and illustrated it with split-screen video—in his 1970 CBC television programme *The Well-Tempered Listener*. As with the A-minor fugue example, these are all cases in which Gould's use of recording extended to having it actually influence his interpretations in various ways—in other words, as a kind of performance practice, as much as rhythm or dynamics or ornamentation.

I can honestly say that I use splicing very little. I record many whole movements straight through. But I can also say that I have no scruples about splicing. I see nothing wrong in making a performance out of two hundred splices, as long as the desirable result is there. I resent the feeling that it is fraudulent to put together an ideal performance mechanically. If the ideal performance can be achieved by the greatest amount of illusion and fakery, more power to those who do it.

(From an interview with Bernard Asbell, *Horizon*, January 1962)

Acoustic Choreography

"Acoustic choreography" was the most conspicuous example in which Gould used recording technology in the service of interpretation. This technique involved making multi-track recordings using several different microphone perspectives simultaneously, then mixing the recording by moving back and forth between audio perspectives in order to underscore features of the music. Gould drew an analogy between this method and filmmaking: he treated the recorded product the way a filmmaker treats his material, editing for long shots, close-ups, zooms, pans, and so on. For Gould, the basic processes of recording ensured that it was a completely separate art form from concerts, one with its own premises, criteria, implications, possibilities, and ethics. Recording was to concerts what film was to theatre; the restrictions of real time were not relevant, and recording out of sequence, splicing, and the like were not "dishonest" practices, but were merely inherent to that art form.

Gould also applied the principle of "acoustic choreography" in other media. For example, he used it in his film score for *Slaughterhouse-Five*. And in his radio documentaries, he applied a similar technique, "pan-potting"—that is, moving a sound source from place to place within the stereo spectrum.

> I mean, why should we think in terms of one Bach fugue as being represented by one particular set of microphones, stationed in front of the piano and remaining there throughout, and I don't mean in terms of upping and downing the track or lowering it a bit in order to add emphasis to something like that. I mean precisely in the way in which a film track would have multiple perspectives applied to it to represent the kind of situation it was in—the horse leaning over and kissing the girl from the farm next door; that kind of scene as against the intimate shot by the Bonanza fireplace. But no one's ever thought of doing this except in relation to one symphony as against the next symphony.
>
> (From *The Well-Tempered Listener*, CBC Television, 1970)

The "Kit" Concept

Gould took his belief in the creative role of the performer to its logical limit, advocating the direct participation of the listener in the creative process through the intercession of technology. He believed that this new, more creative listener should have the right to tinker with the recording artist's work, just as the performer has the right to creatively tamper with the composer's work.

Gould recognized that even the crude "dial twiddling" that the hi-fi user of his day engaged in—adjusting tone and balance, for instance—was creative intrusion into the work, and he even advocated a future in which recording artists would not issue completed performances but rather "kits" consisting of variant takes that the listener would edit together into his own finished product.

For Gould, this "kit" concept had profound implications for the roles of composer, performer, and listener, a subject about which he spoke and wrote extensively, and one which places him firmly within the cultural context of his times. Like John Cage, Marshall McLuhan, and others of his day, he prophesied that the roles of composer, performer, and listener were, through technology, gradually merging again, after having been firmly separated for centuries. Before the 19th century, there had been more of a blurring of the distinction between composer, performer and audience. Members of the royalty were skilled composers and performers, and audiences were musically educated as well.

There were and continue to be signs, in fact, that this merging was and is happening, whether people know it or not, and Gould foresaw this. He was no doubt aware of the precursors to the "kit" concept that existed during his time. For example, John Cage and Lejaren Hiller's work, *HPSCHD* (1967-9), for harpsichords and computer-generated audio tapes, included a computer print-out sheet that instructed the listener to change his stereo balance controls during playback, in order "to become a performer."

Although Gould's notion of the audio "kit" was largely theoretical in his day, today, a listener outfitted with a home computer and audio editing software is capable of easily manipulating and editing digital sound files. Thus the "kit" idea eventually had implications beyond matters of interpretation, and touched on the whole area of the sociology and ethics of music.

> Dial diddling is in its limited way an interpretative act. Forty years ago the listener had the option of flicking a switch inscribed "on" and "off" and, with an up-to-date machine, perhaps modulating the volume just a bit. Today, the variety of controls made available to him requires analytical judgment. And these controls are but primitive, regulatory devices compared to those participational possibilities which the listener will enjoy once current laboratory techniques have been appropriated by home playback devices.
>
> (From "The Prospects of Recording", 1966)

Broadcasts

Gould and the CBC

During his concert years, Gould appeared with increasing frequency on CBC radio and television, in many different series (*Chrysler Festival*, *Sunday Concert* and so on) and in a wide repertoire—solo, concerto, chamber, Lieder—in studio recitals as well as broadcasts of concerts (including the Stratford and Vancouver festivals), and in interviews. By the 1960s, as his involvement deepened and his interest in concerts waned, he began to create more substantial scripted programmes, with his performances now combined with commentary. In 1961, with his television programme *The Subject is Beethoven*, Gould began what would be a long series of specials that combined performances with commentary, on subjects ranging from fugue to the state of music in the Soviet Union.

From 1964, after he had retired from concert life, into the late 1970s, Gould's involvement with CBC radio and television was much more intense than it had been during his concert days. The conventional recitals in most of his earlier broadcasts gave way to more complex talk-and-play shows, mixed recitals with commentary, and programmes devoted to a particular composer or subject or theme. He even began to make programmes in which he did not play at all, and programmes that had little or no relationship to music. He also occasionally acted as host and commentator for extended series of programmes, some featuring his own performances, some those of others. His relationship with the CBC ended some years before his death, as the network began to balk at the growing demands in time and resources of Gould's meticulous work; he also claimed, with the 1979 Strauss radio documentary, that he had lost interest in the genre.

Gould occasionally experimented with television technology, though not to the same extent as he did in his radio documentaries. He used unusual rear projections (for example, very Sixties swirling colours) in some of his CBC colour shows in the 1970s, to "accompany" impressionistic music (Ravel, Debussy, Scriabin, Berg...). He tried split-screen technology in *The Well-Tempered Listener*, a television special from 1970. In *Conversations with Glenn Gould* (BBC, 1966), and in some other television programmes of the 1960s, Gould got away from the staged feeling of most early television concerts, instead opting for a kind of "backstage" feel, with exposed microphones and cables and the like, as though the programme were being taped behind the scenes. (Marshall McLuhan, in one of his books, drew attention to the way Gould "opened up" the scene by revealing the workings of the television studio.) In the end, however, Gould never developed a fully satisfying style for presenting music visually, as he admitted.

As a pianist, the thing which has impressed me most in radio, is the feeling of being present in the studio for only one purpose—to make music. The human element, the excitement of performing on a stage for an audience will many times, it is true, enhance a performance. On the other hand, the realization that no visual effect can improve or detract from the performance has surely a strong effect on the attitude of the artist. To me, the concentration on purely musical detail is of utmost importance for any performance, a concentration which is much easier to achieve when there is no need to feel responsible for the visual pleasure of the listener.

(From an internal CBC personnel questionnaire, 1952)

From the moment I began broadcasting, that medium seemed like another world, as indeed it is. The moment I began to experience the studio environment, my whole reaction to what I could do with music under the proper circumstances changed totally. From then on, concerts were less than second best; they were merely something to be gotten through. They were a very poor substitute for a real artistic experience.

(From an interview with Elyse Mach, *Great Pianists Speak for Themselves*, 1980)

The reason, in fact, that I have my own studio here is precisely because the CBC got fed up indulging me when I would ask for five or six hundred hours of studio time to do a program. [...] They're such complicated programs that they really necessitate those seemingly extravagant hours of studio time.

(From an interview with Elyse Mach, *Great Pianists Speak for Themselves*, 1980)

Selected CBC Broadcasts, 1950-1963

• 24 December 1950, radio: his first national CBC broadcast, a recital of sonatas by Mozart and Hindemith.

• 29 October 1951, radio: a performance of some uncharacteristic early-Romantic concerto repertoire, Weber's *Konzertstück*, with Sir Ernest MacMillan conducting the Toronto Symphony. Gould must have come to think of this as a youthful indiscretion: he used a tape of this performance, to great satiric effect, in his humorous documentary *A Glenn Gould Fantasy*, recorded in 1980.

• 8 September 1952, television: Gould's first appearance on television.

• 21 December 1953, radio: Gould giving the Canadian première of Schoenberg's Piano Concerto, Opus 42.

• 16 December 1954, television: earliest surviving footage of Gould playing, in a concert performance of the first movement of Beethoven's Piano Concerto No. 1, with his own cadenzas.

• May 1956, radio: Gould's String Quartet, Opus 1, performed by the Montreal String Quartet.

• June 1957, radio: Gould interviewed in Vienna by Ted Viets, on his first overseas tour, after his triumphs in Russia.

• 1959, radio: Gould conducting the CBC Vancouver Orchestra, in some uncharacteristic repertoire: Mozart's Symphony No. 1 and Schubert's Symphony No. 4.

• 4 December 1959: *At Home with Glenn Gould*, a lengthy, wide-ranging, unscripted interview with Vincent Tovell.

• 3 August 1960, radio: broadcast of an all-Schoenberg lecture-recital at the Vancouver International Festival.

• 14 January 1961, television: *Parade* series, Gould at the Vancouver International Festival giving a lecture to an audience of children.

• 6 February 1961, television: *The Subject is Beethoven*, Gould's first important "theme" broadcast, with performances and spoken comments between pieces, on his equivocal relationship with Beethoven.

• 14 January 1962, television: *Music in the U.S.S.R.*, featuring performances of Prokofiev and Shostakovich, with commentary.

• 8 April 1962, television: *Glenn Gould on Bach*, featuring performances including Gould conducting the cantata *Widerstehe doch der Sünde* and the Brandenburg Concerto No. 5, with commentary. In this broadcast, he played his notorious "harpsi-piano," a small grand piano with steel pins in the hammers, intended to convey something of the tinny sound of the harpsichord without sacrificing the piano's tonal and dynamic capabilities.

• 8 August 1962, radio: *Arnold Schoenberg: The Man Who Changed Music*, one of the most sophisticated of Gould's documentaries before his "contrapuntal" documentaries of the later 1960s—this is one of his best essays in conventional radio form.

• 15 October 1962, television: *Richard Strauss: A Personal View*, performances with commentary, in which Gould was first able to bring his championing of Strauss to a national audience—not, incidentally, to the universal pleasure of the critics or his colleagues.

• 15 October 1963, television: *The Anatomy of Fugue*, devoted to the nature and history of fugue, with commentary and excerpts of music from Bach to Hindemith, including the première of *So You Want to Write a Fugue?*.

Selected CBC Broadcasts, 1964-1982

This list demonstrates the wide range of forms and subjects Gould tackled in his more sophisticated later CBC broadcasts. In addition to these, he made many simpler recital shows, with or without commentary, with repertoire from the sixteenth through twentieth centuries: some mixed recital programmes; some shows featuring a single composer (Bach, Mozart, Beethoven, Schoenberg); some united by themes (all sonatas, all fugues, all works in variation form, all works in B minor, all Romantic repertoire, all Norwegian music). Many of these broadcasts were "dry runs" for repertoire he was, at the time, recording for Columbia, or had just recorded and wanted to promote.

• 17 June 1964, television: *Concerti for Four Wednesdays*, a programme of works from the Baroque through modern periods, all in variation form, with commentary.

• 10 January 1965, radio: *Dialogues on the Prospects of Recording*, Gould's most definitive statement on recording, featuring his own narration and interview segments, and the basis for his 1966 published manifesto "The Prospects of Recording."

• 18 May 1965, television: *Duo: Yehudi Menuhin and Glenn Gould*, performances of Bach, Beethoven, and Schoenberg, with commentary.

• 13 November 1966 through 30 April 1967, radio: *The Art of Glenn Gould*, weekly series airing all of Gould's recordings, some programmes including his commentary. The first programme, *On Records and Recording*, is particularly interesting for its discussion of recording versus live performance. In two other programmes, he discusses his own String Quartet and *So You Want to Write a Fugue?*

• 23 November 1966, radio: *The Psychology of Improvisation*, documentary on the nature of improvisation, one aspect of music that Gould always objected to.

• 2 April 1967, radio: *Conference at Port Chilkoot*, humorous mock documentary about a music critics' conference; a transcript of the programme was later published.

• 15 November 1967, television: *Centennial Performance*, special performance in honour of the Canadian Centennial, featuring concertos by Bach and Strauss (the *Burleske*, which Gould never recorded for Columbia).

• 11 December 1967, radio: *The Search for Petula Clark*, documentary.

• 4 February through 17 March 1968, television: *World of Music*, Gould hosts a six-week series.

• 20 May 1968, radio: *Anti Alea*, documentary, with interviews, on the subject of "chance" procedures in music (Gould objected to the aleatoric music of his day—indeed, to all use of randomness in art).

• 11 June 1968, radio: complete performance of the Beethoven-Liszt *Pastoral* Symphony, with commentary. Gould completed only the first movement of his planned studio recording of this work; that, and the Fifth Symphony, were all that materialized of what was once a plan to record all of the Beethoven symphonies in Liszt's transcriptions.

• 11 June 1968, radio: "The Stratford Festival", Gould discusses music festivals with Canadian composer Louis Applebaum.

• 10 November 1968, radio: *Sunday Supplement* news magazine and public affairs programme, in which Gould discusses the film *Charge of the Light Brigade*, Newfoundland, and the Moog synthesizer.

• 13 March 1969, radio: *Glenn Gould in Recital*, works by Bach, Berg, and Brahms, all in B minor, with commentary on the importance of keys in diatonic music.

• 8 May 1969, television: "Variations on Glenn Gould", in the series *Telescope*, documentary portrait of Gould, privately and professionally.

• 20 May through 7 October 1969, radio: *The Art of Glenn Gould*, weekly series in twenty-one "takes": broadcasts of various Gould recordings, with extensive commentary, often on specialized themes: concerts vs. recording; Strauss; Schoenberg; Mozart; interview with Istvan Anhalt; the "psychology of the virtuoso"; twelve-tone music; Gould's "desert-island discography"; his rift with the Juilliard Quartet; concert programmes; film soundtracks; Bach; fugue; critics and criticism; and the Moog synthesizer. Also some rebroadcasts of documentaries, some humorous skits and appearances in character.

• 18 February 1970, television: *The Well-Tempered Listener*: discusses Bach, counterpoint, fugue, and recording technology, and includes performances on piano, organ, and harpsichord, along with some spliced-together and split-screen performances.

• 23 July 1970, radio: *Glenn Gould in Recital*, including Gould's first adult public performance of Chopin (the B-minor sonata), as well as Songs without Words by Mendelssohn, along with commentary on Romantic music and a prepared mini-documentary on musical currents in the 1960s.

• 8 December 1970 (unconfirmed), radio: *Glenn Gould in Recital*, including Gould's only complete performance of Beethoven's great "Hammerklavier" Sonata, which he never recorded commercially for Columbia.

• 9 December 1970, television: *Glenn Gould Plays Beethoven*, includes solo works and the "Emperor" Concerto. On this occasion, Gould replaced an indisposed Arturo Benedetti Michelangeli on literally a few hours' notice.

• 27 September 1971, radio: recital of works by Bach, Beethoven, Bizet, Byrd, and Webern, all in variation form; co-production with European Broadcast Union (EBU).

• 26 August 1972, radio: *The Scene*, Gould discusses his soundtrack for *Slaughterhouse-Five*.

• 7 October 1972, radio: *The Scene*, interview-documentary on competitive sports, partly humorous.

• 27 February 1973, radio: *Glenn Gould in Recital*, with commentary on his Wagner transcriptions.

• 1974 through 1977, television: *Music in Our Time*, series of programmes intended to offer a complete survey of twentieth-century music, and including rare solo and ensemble performances of uncharacteristic repertoire, including music he hated. The series was not completed beyond four programmes:

- No. 1, "The Age of Ecstasy, 1900-1910" (1974): Berg, Debussy, Schoenberg, Scriabin, with commentary.
- No. 2, "The Flight from Order, 1910-1920" (1975): Prokofiev, Ravel-Gould, Schoenberg, Strauss, with commentary.
- No. 3, "New Faces, Old Forms, 1920-1930" (1975): Hindemith, Poulenc, Schoenberg, Walton, with commentary, including Gould in character.
- No. 4, "The Artist as Artisan, 1930-1940" (1977): Casella, Hindemith, Krenek, Prokofiev, Webern, with commentary.

• 11 September through 13 November 1974, radio: *Music of Today*, special ten-part weekly series on Schoenberg, divided thematically, with detailed discussions and interviews on aspects of his work, including recordings by Gould and others.

• 29 August 1975, television: *Radio as Music*, documentary—only apparently spontaneous—on Gould's "contrapuntal radio documentaries."

• 22 through 26 August 1977, radio: *August Arts National*, Gould hosts a week-long series in which he comments on recordings of favourite music, favourite performers, etc.

• 7 May 1978, radio: *From the Masters*, important discussion of recording techniques, including the "acoustic choreography" in his Scriabin and Sibelius recordings.

• 23 October 1980, radio: *Mostly Music*, wide-ranging Silver Jubilee interview with Barclay McMillan.

• 1982, radio: *Booktime*, Gould discusses and reads from one of his favourite books, the Japanese novel *The Three-Cornered World*, by Natsume Soseki, along with shakuhachi music.

On CBC Records

• *Glenn Gould's Solitude Trilogy: Three Sound Documentaries*. CBC Records PSCD 2003-3 (1992). CD release of *The Idea of North*, *The Latecomers*, and *The Quiet in the Land*, Gould's original "contrapuntal radio documentaries". It marked the first release for "The Quiet in the Land"; the other two programmes had appeared years before on LP from CBC Learning Systems.

• CBC Records PSCD 2004 (1993). This CD includes early broadcast performances from 1952 and 1955 of three works by Beethoven: the Opus 34 variations in F major; the "Eroica" Variations, Opus 35; and the Piano Concerto No. 3, with Heinz Unger conducting the CBC Symphony.

• CBC Records PSCD 2005 (1993). This CD includes early broadcast performances from 1952 to 1955 of four works by Bach: the Partita No. 5 in G Major (the 1954 performance, originally released on a Radio Canada International transcription disc, that Gould considered superior to his 1957 Columbia recording); the fifteen three-part Sinfonias; the Italian Concerto; and the Clavier Concerto No. 1 in D Minor, with Sir Ernest MacMillan conducting the Toronto Symphony.

• CBC Records PSCD2007 (1995). This CD includes early broadcast performances form 1952 to 1954 of works by Bach: the Goldberg Variations and four preludes and fugues from Book II of *The Well-Tempered Clavier*.

• CBC Records PSCD 2008 (1995). This CD includes early broadcast performances from 1952 to 1954 documenting Gould's championing of twentieth-century music at a time when it was scarcely known in Canada. The programme includes Schoenberg's Piano Concerto, Opus 42 (with Jean-Marie Beaudet conducting the CBC Symphony), three piano pieces of Opus 11, and Suite, Opus 25; Berg's Sonata, Opus 1; and Webern's *Variations*, Opus 27.

• CBC Records PSCD 2013 (1997). This CD includes early broadcast performances from 1952 and 1954 of works by Beethoven. There are four solo works taken from 1952 radio recitals: the Bagatelles, Opus 126; the Sonata in A Major, Opus 101; the second movement (*Largo*) of the Sonata in E-flat Major, Opus 7; and the Sonata in G Minor, Opus 49/No. 1. These are the only preserved Gould performances of the last three of these works. The performance of the Opus 101 sonata is especially important: Gould called it his favourite of the Beethoven sonatas, yet he rarely played it in concert, and, surprisingly, never got around to recording it in the studio. The CD also includes two chamber-music performances of Beethoven, taken from a 1954 performance at the Stratford Festival. Gould joins violinist Alexander Schneider and cellist Zara Nelsova in the Allegretto in B-flat Major, WoO 39, and the "Ghost" Trio in D Major, Opus 70/No. 1.

Other Broadcasts and Films

At various points throughout his career, Gould made some important films and television programmes for institutions other than the CBC.

In 1959, the National Film Board of Canada produced a series of two half-hour documentary films that remain among the best documents of the young Gould: *Glenn Gould: Off the Record* and *Glenn Gould: On the Record*. The films date from the height of his international celebrity as a concert artist. The first shows him in a casual, private setting, conversing and practicing at the family cottage on Lake Simcoe; the second shows him at work in New York, recording Bach's Italian Concerto in the studios of Columbia Records. (These important—and, in their day, influential—documentaries are available as a commercial videotape from the National Film Board.)

In 1966, Gould participated in a series of four television programmes for the BBC, collectively titled *Conversations with Glenn Gould*. Filmed in Toronto, the programmes, each about forty minutes in length, feature Gould in conversation with the English writer and broadcaster Humphrey Burton, as well as playing (sometimes extended) musical examples at the piano. The first programme deals with Bach and the art of recording, the others with, respectively, Beethoven, Schoenberg, and Strauss.

Gould made two film appearances in 1979. "Glenn Gould's Toronto" was his typically idiosyncratic introduction to his beloved hometown; he is featured as narrator, and is shown leading the viewer around various Toronto sites—those of importance to him as well as the more conventional tourist draws. In one sequence, Gould, after discussing his childhood love of animals, sings to a group of elephants in a local zoo. The hour-long programme, in the series *Cities*, was directed by John McGreevy, and an edited version of Gould's text is published in *The Glenn Gould Reader*.

In 1979, Gould also appeared in *The Music of Man*, a wide-ranging series, hosted by Yehudi Menuhin, on music of all places and styles. Gould appeared in one of the last programmes, in an encounter with Menuhin in which he defends the recording medium over the concert hall. The encounter was somewhat strained, and it shows in the finished segment: apparently, Gould had written out a script for their "impromptu conversation," which Menuhin balked at reading.

In 1974, Gould established what would prove to be a long and fruitful working relationship with the French violinist and filmmaker Bruno Monsaingeon. The initial result was a series of four films for ORTF (i.e., French television), in the series *Chemins de la musique*, broadcast at the end of 1974. The films include interviews with Gould on many subjects (his retirement from concerts, recording technology, twentieth-

century music); a long sequence showing him at work in the studio, recording Scriabin pieces using his technique of "acoustic choreography"; and some of Gould's most interesting performances, of works by Byrd, Gibbons, Bach, Wagner, Schoenberg, Berg, and Webern. (To date, the films have only been released commercially in France, on a European-format videotape.)

A few years later, Gould and Monsaingeon began work on a German-Canadian co-production, a film series collectively titled *Glenn Gould Plays Bach*. Three films were completed before Gould's death: *The Question of Instrument* (1979), on Bach's "magnificent indifference to instrumental sonority"; *An Art of the Fugue* (1980); and *The Goldberg Variations* (1981). All feature extended conversation segments—as usual, scripted by Gould, and illustrated with musical examples—as well as some of Gould's best-ever performances of Bach. (The film of the Goldberg Variations, incidentally, documents the recording sessions that were the basis of Gould's second recording of the work, released by CBS Masterworks in 1982.)

At the time of his death, Gould had begun discussing, with Monsaingeon, a film on Wagner's *Siegfried Idyll*, of which he had just made a recording as conductor, and they planned to make other films related to Gould's future conducting projects; indeed, according to Monsaingeon, Gould planned to end his career as a performer with a film of Bach's monumental B-minor Mass.

Though these plans did not come to fruition, Monsaingeon's relationship with Gould's work did not end: in the mid-1980s, he edited a three-volume French edition of Gould's writings—a source considerably more comprehensive than *The Glenn Gould Reader*—and in 1992 he organized the Sony Classical CD *Glenn Gould: The Composer* (SK 47 184), performing, with his own ensemble, in Gould's String Quartet, Opus 1, and in *So, You Want to Write a Fugue?*.

> As you know, most of the television programming I've been involved in has been of or about music; by contrast, relatively few of my major radio specials (always excluding conventional broadcast recitals) have been musically derived and, in due course, I will, quite tentatively, make one musical and one extra-musical proposal. Necessarily, however, my experience with music on television has convinced me that in the vast majority of cases it simply does not come alive via the home screen, and the reasons for that failure, I think, are not too difficult to ascertain. The most obvious reason is that most television producers have attempted to bring the ambience of the concert-hall with all proscenium liabilities thereunto pertaining into the home. Inevitably, the results are influenced by this decision and, more often than not, the shooting that accrues, while it may be done with extra-ordinary care and finesse, appears rigid and predictable. I'm not saying that one cannot make the studio-oriented, concert-hall-imitating, videotape production come alive, but, particularly where an orchestra is involved, there are very few occasions, in my opinion, where that vitality has been built into the production.
>
> (From a letter to Helen Whitney, 3 September 1971)

[...] There's no need to assume that simply because you've got a screen you've therefore got to use it—and certainly not with routine coverage of sideman or soloist at work. Indeed, all aspects of the interplay between audio and video badly need reconsideration. There are musical moments of such grandeur that no screen can represent or interpret them adequately and for which the only appropriate visual response is abstraction, test pattern, or post-test-pattern snow. Similarly, a video component could surely go unaccompanied for significant stretches and the two forces be brought together even more significantly through a denial of that absurd unity which they've been forced to observe heretofore.

That audio and video should serve one another rather than simply come packaged together seems obvious enough. Yet up till now, no one active in the field has done more than pay lip service to the premise. And if McLuhan's right and it's a trend of our times to take an interest in the process of production, then surely that interest should do more than involve us with a notion of how, and why, and what happens when. It should free us from an expectation of a redundant coordination between production components. It should permit us to treat art as a source of greater mystery than symmetry and unity and all those analysis-imposed and analysis-limited conventions can define.

When that happens, a postprocess situation will exist. That shallow fidelity to an uncertain memory of an unsatisfactory past will no longer suffice, and the dream of Charles Van Doren will come true.

(From "Oh, for Heaven's Sake, Cynthia, There Must Be Something Else On!" *Musical America*, April 1969)

Contrapuntal Radio Documentaries

Gould's rather frustrated compositional desires were channeled into many forms—his idiosyncratic interpretations at the piano, his writings, his film music. Perhaps the most complex, interesting, and innovative were his so-called "contrapuntal radio documentaries," a series of programmes that he made for the CBC in the 1960s and 70s, in which he took his broadcasting work to a new creative level.

In these programmes, Gould combined interview material, sound effects, and music to create intricate, evocative tapestries of sound that explore a particular topic both explicitly and subliminally. As Gould saw them, these programmes combined elements of both radio documentary and radio drama (of which he had been a fan since his earliest days as a CBC listener, in the 1940s), but also musical principles like counterpoint, cadence, rhythm, melodic arch, dynamics.

Gould always referred to these programmes as musical compositions of spoken-word material—music, in short, by the standards of McLuhan and the avant-garde of the 1950s and 60s. Gould himself placed his contrapuntal radio documentaries in the company of composers like Cage, Stockhausen, Berio, and other experimental composers of the day.

The resulting works were at once highly dramatic and musically structured, yet also conveying enough information and even didactic content to qualify as documentaries. A unique synthesis of forms and genres that, though initially difficult to grasp (often more than one thing going on at a time, even speaking), repays close consideration—and which, indeed, has had some influence, especially in Germany, on experimenters in radio form. Indeed, these were—much more so than his "real" compositions—Gould's most important original creative works.

The radio works in question are:

- Gould's Solitude Trilogy, a series of three programmes (including his first two in the form), all dealing with different aspects of people and communities in isolation—geographical, cultural, and religious:
  - *The Idea of North* (1967), on Canada's North;
  - *The Latecomers* (1969), on Newfoundland;
  - *The Quiet in the Land* (1977), on the Mennonites of Manitoba.

  (According to a published letter from 1978, Gould seriously contemplated a fourth documentary in this series, on China—now tackling the subject of political isolation.)

The Solitude Trilogy includes the most creative, original products in this form, but Gould's other documentaries—all on musical figures he greatly admired—made use of the form to different degrees:

- *Stokowski: A Portrait for Radio* (1971).
- *Pablo Casals: A Radio Portrait* (1974).
- *Schoenberg, The First Hundred Years: A Documentary Fantasy for Radio* (1974), a much more creative approach to the subject than his original 1962 programme on Schoenberg, far more conventional in structure.
- *Ernst Krenek* (1976; produced for the BBC but never aired).
- *Strauss, The Bourgeois Hero*, Parts I and II (1979).

(And though it doesn't really belong here... *A Glenn Gould Fantasy*, a humorous hour-long programme, with Gould doing a handful of voices, released in 1980, on *The Glenn Gould Silver Jubilee Album*. Though humorous in form and featuring Gould interviewing himself on pet topics, the programme makes some use of the contrapuntal techniques that Gould had perfected in his CBC programmes, which he by this time was no longer making.)

I think that much of the new music has a lot to do with (and I don't mean to sound like that chap, Marshall something-or-other) the spoken word. With the rhythms and patterns and the rise and the fall and the inclination of the spoken word. And the human voice. I've worked a lot with the spoken word because I've been doing radio documentaries. It has occurred to me in the last five years that it's entirely unrealistic to see that particular kind of work—that particular ordering of phrase and regulation of cadence which one is able to do taking, let us say, the subject of an interview like this one, to a studio 'after the fact' and chopping it up and splicing here and there and pulling on this phrase and accentuating that one and throwing some reverb in there and adding a compressor here and a filter there—that it's unrealistic to think of that as anything but composition.

(From a conversation with John Jessop, "Radio as Music", 1971)

GG: [...] most of the documentaries have dealt with isolated situations—Arctic outposts, Newfoundland outposts, Mennonite enclaves, and so on.
gg: Yes, but they've dealt with a community in isolation.
GG: That's because my magnum opus is still several drawing boards away.
gg: So they are autobiographical drafts?
GG: That, sir, is not for me to say.

(From "Glenn Gould Interviews Glenn Gould About Glenn Gould", 1974)

Writings

Gould as Writer

Gould always had a strong desire to communicate, and though he never formally taught piano or any other subject, he was a born teacher and a born raconteur—someone who loved to communicate his feelings and ideas. For a self-declared hermit and loner, he had a powerful need to communicate with the outside world, even if only “at a distance”—that is, through various media, from the piano to the recording studio to broadcasting.

Writing was an important medium, even if, in many respects, he was not a “natural” as a writer. (He was more a talker than a true writer.) Though he developed his interest in writing throughout his life, he struggled to express himself in print, and rarely achieved the level of sophistication and craftsmanship that he sought. Sometimes, especially later in his career, he succeeded in expressing himself with clarity and subtlety in print; often, however, his writing was laboured, overwritten, alternating between pretentiousness and heavy-handed humour. But even at their stylistic worst, his writings—which are voluminous in number—are important documents of his artistic ideas.

The piano remained Gould’s best medium, and though prolific as a writer, and frequently provocative and original, his writing was indifferent. He seems to have recognized this: in 1956, to Jock Carroll, he noted that he was far more sensitive to criticism of his writing than of his playing or composing, and when he had the authority after he became famous, he did not permit a comma to be changed in anything he wrote for publication—all of which suggests a certain insecurity.

The drafts preserved in the National Library of Canada show him, often, going from version to version without improvement. Characteristic errors of spelling, punctuation, etc. suggest a provincial upbringing and the self-taught nature of his writing. (He would spell Brahms as “Bhrams,” for example, and also had some problems with pronunciation.) Secretaries improved only his typing, often not his errors.

Not surprisingly, there has been a wide range of critical response to his writing: some find it profound, prescient, others tiresome and banal; he has been cited by musicologists and philosophers, but also dismissed by many musicians. In 1959, in the broadcast interview “At Home with Glenn Gould”, he said that if he hadn’t been a pianist he would have most liked to have been a writer. Gould clearly had the desire to write, and the temperament for it, though his greatest talents undoubtedly lay elsewhere.

Gould was probably never completely fulfilled as a writer during his lifetime, and did not live to do what would have been his most important writing. By about age 50, he was apparently winding down his activities as a pianist, and was turning to conducting; after that, he planned to settle down to a full-time career as a writer—and perhaps, composer.

Gould long wanted to try his hand at fiction, and later spoke of writing an autobiography, which, he said, "will certainly be fiction!" There are signs late in life that he was making a first stab at autobiography. Robert Silverman, founder and editor of *Piano Quarterly*, recalled that Gould had planned to write one or more articles on his concert years, perhaps even an autobiographical book, eventually; notes and sketches titled "A Year on the Road", in the National Library, are apparently rough work toward this project.

> [...] actually, if I had not turned out to be a musician, I think the thing I would have most liked to have done would have been to be a writer.
>
> (From "At Home with Glenn Gould", 1959)

Early Writings, to 1964

Writing was important for Gould from the very beginning of his life, even if his very earliest efforts, at home and at school, were modest and (to say the least) far from prodigious. They reveal an enthusiastic but undisciplined writer, and underline certain stylistic faults—over-writing, awkwardness, obscurity, verbosity—that he never wholly outgrew.

The first writings that Gould presented to the public as a professional musician date from the early 1950s, and were geared directly to his performing activities—concerts, broadcasts, recordings. Perhaps his first important piece of writing was an early set of programme notes, “A Consideration of Anton Webern,” read aloud (reportedly, by a hapless CBC announcer who had no idea what he was saying) at a 9 January 1954 concert in Toronto.

The success of his American début recitals in 1955, and especially of his first Columbia recording of the Goldberg Variations, released in 1956, gave Gould instant credibility as a musician, and assured him of an audience even for his activities away from the piano. Just as he used his fame as a pianist to create performance opportunities for his own String Quartet, Opus 1, he used it to find homes for his writings, which greatly increased in number during his international touring years (1955-64).

Gould continued to write programme notes for his recitals and concerto appearances—often extended essays that definitely show his ambitions as a writer.

The topics he covered in these programme notes included Webern; Bach’s Goldberg Variations; works by favourite twentieth-century composers like Berg, Krenek, Hindemith, and Strauss; Russian music; his own String Quartet, Opus 1; a Stratford “theme” concert called “Panorama of Music of the 20’s”; “N’aimez-vous pas Brahms?,” a defense of his notorious interpretation of Brahms’ Piano Concerto No. 1; and especially Schoenberg, whose solo-piano works, piano concerto, and legacy were the subject of many of Gould’s programme notes in the 1950s and 60s, a time when Schoenberg’s music was not generally accepted by the public and when, in fact, Gould was an important champion of this composer.

Gould’s earliest independent periodical article, published apart from any concert or recording or broadcast, was his 1956 article on currents in serialism, with the punning title “The Dodecacophonist’s Dilemma,” in the première edition of the *Canadian Music Journal* in 1956. It would prove to be the first of dozens of articles. With age, his net grew wider and wider, more and more articles straying from the piano and its repertoire and taking in wider musical—and sometimes non-musical—subjects.

Though his writings after 1964 would prove most controversial of all, his writings from his concert days already show him as a skilled and passionate polemicist, not afraid—indeed, eager—to espouse unpopular or controversial views. For example, he was championing twelve-tone music, in North America and Europe, at a time when such music was not yet widely accepted by the public. At the same time, he wrote notes rationalizing his own quartet, which is highly retrogressive in style. He was already deploring the concert medium, even though he was a highly successful performer, and advocating recording. He was championing Strauss, and shouldering criticism and even mockery from colleagues, at a time when Strauss's reputation was at a very low ebb. He caused much comment with his notes on the late Beethoven sonatas, refusing to take a reverent attitude toward them. And he wrote an article to rationalize a highly eccentric interpretation of Brahms' D-minor concerto.

> The names of Schoenberg, Berg, and Webern are so frequently linked as a trinity that the casual listener might presuppose a basis for stylistic identity among the masters of the modern Viennese school.
>
> (From "A Consideration of Anton Webern", 1954)

Early Writings, to 1964

• “Bodky on Bach,” review of *The Interpretation of Bach’s Keyboard Works*, by Erwin Bodky, *Saturday Review* 43/48 (26 November 1960): 48, 55.

• “Let’s Ban Applause!,” an early sample of Gould’s battle against the concert hall, *Musical America* 82/2 (February 1962): 10-11, 38-9.

• “An Argument for Richard Strauss,” an early defense of Strauss at a time when it was not fashionable, and at a time when he was involved with other projects devoted to Strauss (concerts, broadcasts, recordings), *High Fidelity* 12/3 (March 1962): 46-9, 110-11.

• “Reminiscence and Prediction,” article about musical life at Stratford, published in the 1962 Festival booklet.

• “Strauss and the Electronic Future,” further develops arguments about Strauss, *Saturday Review* 47/22 (30 May 1964): 58-9, 72.

• “Music at Stratford: — A Personal View,” ca. 1964, first published in *GlennGould* 3/1.

• “The Music of Proteus: Being Some Notes on the Subjective Character of Fugal Form,” article that is extended note on his piece *So You Want to Write a Fugue?*, and accompanying a floppy-vinyl single release of the piece, *HiFi/Stereo Review* 12/4 (April 1964): 48-50, 53-4.

Lectures

Such was Gould's desire to communicate that, during his concert days at least, he even occasionally lectured in public. Throughout the 1950s and 60s, he would sometimes talk to his audiences as part of his concerts, sometimes simply providing verbal programme notes, other times creating more elaborate and developed lecture-recitals, particularly at Canadian festivals like those at Stratford and Vancouver, where he felt less constrained and more free to experiment. Some of his Stratford talks, in fact, seem to have had a theatrical quality, complete with costumes, impersonated characters, and staged "bits"!

But by the end of 1964, Gould must have known that he was not likely to give any more concerts, and he withdrew from public life entirely by stopping giving lectures at the same time. His lecture career had not been an unalloyed success anyway: many audiences found his lecture style too long-winded, convoluted, opaque, and many apparently expected him to play more than talk, which he stubbornly refused to do. Audiences would applaud when he played a musical example, wanting to hear more music, but he would wave them off, determined to return to his text. Some walked out, because of both the preponderance and the incomprehensibility of the talk; even those who found the lectures enlightening also found them difficult to follow. The reviews were not completely positive, and he was sensitive to this sort of reaction, and, lacking positive feedback, was unlikely to continue.

One happy by-product of Gould's lecture career was the publication of the only book bearing his name to appear in his lifetime. In 1964, the University of Cincinnati Press brought out his lecture *Arnold Schoenberg: A Perspective* as a small monograph, No. 3 in its series University of Cincinnati Occasional Papers. A thoughtful introduction by Arthur Darack, a musicologist at the university, discusses Schoenberg as well as Gould's particular thesis. It also refers flatteringly to the "capacity audience" of the original lecture, "the excitement of the event," "the genial magic of Gould's lecture manner" and states that: "Gould the lecturer is an extension of Gould the interpreter, and those qualities of lucidity and warmth, style and wit, that shine through his performer's art, animate his speaking as well and make his lecture style as formidable as his musical performance."

> The things that one can do with music, the speculations that he can make about it, the theories behind the reasons that we involve ourselves with these strange twitchings that music produces in us fascinate me and I want to write about them and to think about them. Whether I actually deliver these thoughts from the platform is not important, but I do want to write about them.
>
> (From a CBC Radio interview with Patricia Moore, 1964)

Some of Gould's noteworthy lecture-recitals:

• His earliest lecture seems to have been 17 December 1953, on the subject of Schoenberg.

• Moscow Conservatory, 12 May 1957: informal lecture-recital to an audience of students and professors; the programme was mostly twentieth-century music, officially proscribed at the time in the Soviet Union. In the surviving tape of the event, you can hear Gould's voice, then the simultaneous Russian translation, and often the audience's reaction, especially when it comes to the modern music.

• Vancouver International Festival, 1960: Gould gave a lecture-recital on Schoenberg.

• Vancouver International Festival, 1961: lecture-recital on Bach.

• Vancouver International Festival, 1961: "A Piano Lesson with Glenn Gould," one of his strangest appearances, talking about Beethoven and performance in front of an audience of children, with costumes, accents, etc.

In the early 1960s, as his concert appearances grew less frequent and his retirement loomed, Gould had a brief career as a public lecturer:

• "Forgery and Imitation in the Creative Process": No. 1 of the inaugural MacMillan Lectures (University of Toronto, 1963); repeated at McMaster University (Hamilton, 1963). This was the first annual lecture series in honour of Sir Ernest MacMillan, who, as head of the Toronto Conservatory of Music and as conductor of the Toronto Symphony, was involved in Gould's early career in Canada.

• "Music in the U.S.S.R./The Music of Russia": lecture, based on 1962 television show, delivered at a Kiwanis Club meeting (Toronto, 1963), as MacMillan Lectures No. 3 (University of Toronto, 1963), and as the Corbett Music Lecture (University of Cincinnati, 1964).

• "Arnold Schoenberg: A Perspective": lecture delivered as the Corbett Music Lecture (University of Cincinnati, 1963), and as MacMillan Lectures No. 2 (University of Toronto, 1963).

• "The History of the Piano Sonata": two-lecture series, presented at Hunter College in New York and at the Gardiner Museum in Boston (1964). The series strayed well beyond the piano—at one point, analyzing in detail Bruckner's Eighth Symphony—to become a kind of capsule history of tonality and form in the Baroque, Classical, and Romantic periods.

• "An Argument for Music in the Electronic Age": lecture at the June convocation of University of Toronto, given on the occasion of Gould's receiving an honorary doctorate (1964). Published in the University's *Varsity Graduate* 11/3 (December 1964).

• "Address to a Graduation": lecture given at graduation ceremonies of the Royal Conservatory in Toronto (1964), in which Gould basically tells the students not to listen to what they've been taught and to rely on their own imaginations! Published in the *Bulletin of the Royal Conservatory of Music of Toronto* (Christmas 1964).

Liner Notes

Many of Gould's Columbia/CBS recordings featured his own, reliably idiosyncratic observations on the music at hand, and he developed liner notes into a real art form. He often stirred as much controversy with the notes as with the performance—as in his recordings of late Beethoven sonatas and the "Appassionata," in which he suggested, none too politely, that the works may not merit their enormous reputations. The topics he covered in the liner notes from his concert days included Bach's Goldberg Variations; the last three sonatas of Beethoven; concertos by Bach, Mozart, Beethoven, and Schoenberg; twentieth-century piano music; Strauss' salon piece *Enoch Arden*; and, in a 1963 release of the complete Bach Partitas, liner notes in the form of a conversation, perhaps the first of what would be many interviews in which he scripted both questions and answers in advance.

After 1964, Gould's liner notes included a wide variety of topics, some treated seriously, others humorously, including: the music of Schoenberg (piano and other); twentieth-century Canadian music; the Beethoven-Liszt Fifth Symphony (parodic); scandalous remarks on one of Beethoven's most famous sonatas, the "Appassionata"; Scriabin and Prokofiev sonatas (notes whose jocular tone was not well received when they became known in Russia); Byrd and Gibbons; Bach's *Well-Tempered Clavier*; Gould's own Wagner transcriptions; works by Grieg and Bizet, with a humorous "Confidential Caution to Critics" on the subject of his family relationship to Grieg; a defense of the original 1924 version of Hindemith's song cycle *Das Marienleben*; Korngold's piano music (written as notes for a recording by another pianist, for which he served as producer); Sibelius' solo-piano music; and Mozart's piano sonatas—including some of his most controversial public pronouncements. In fact, the only Grammy Award Gould ever received in his lifetime was for "Hindemith: Will His Time Come? Again?," the liner notes for his 1973 album of Hindemith's piano sonatas.

> Writing appeals to me very much. It's confined at the moment to writing my own jackets, those for recordings and things like that [...] The only thing I've ever done is writing on music, but I've always been strongly tempted to try writing fiction. I am completely unprepared for it. It would be a real gamble, but one of those times I'll write my own autobiography, and it will certainly be fiction.
>
> (From "At Home with Glenn Gould", 1959)

Later Writings, 1964-1982

What Gould said in 1959 about wanting to be a writer if he hadn't been a pianist was more true after 1964. After his retirement form concert life and from public lecturing, he became considerably more prolific as a writer, even though there was no downturn in his work as a pianist (now relegated to the studio). He tried to reinvent a new life and a new career for himself, one focussed on the media, and one increasingly branching out beyond matters directly related to performance. To express his deepening, broadening ideas—ethics, philosophy, aesthetics, etc.—he had to turn more and more to the pen, and certainly, by the later 1960s and 1970s, his skills as a writer improved considerably—technically and intellectually.

This was a struggle: Gould never graduated from high school, and his self-education in matters outside of music had been considerable but highly eclectic; his efforts, after 1964, to develop his mind in areas away from the piano were difficult, and the strain sometimes shows in his writings. Still, he persevered, and ultimately the list of his writings—liner notes, radio and television and film scripts, periodical articles and reviews—grew to impressive length, and the range of these writings extended far beyond anything in his concert days: studies of composers and works, genres and styles, articles on recording technology and broadcasting, think-pieces on ethics and other topics, profiles of performers, reviews of books, reports on events, humour pieces and parodies, and much else.

The quality of his writing was now sometimes impressive; he wrote some very sound, readable, intellectually challenging pieces on various of his passions, like recording, Hindemith, Stokowski, and much else. He remained controversial, though, in his classic manifesto "The Prospects of Recording," in his highly unconventional ideas about Beethoven and Mozart, in his self-interview on aesthetic and ethical matters, in a review comparing Barbra Streisand to Elisabeth Schwarzkopf, in his defense of the synthesizer, and in many other writings.

> I think that the finest compliment one can pay to a recording is to acknowledge that it was made in such a way as to erase all signs, all traces, of its making and its maker.
>
> (From "What the Recording Process Means to Me", 1982)

Articles on recording technology and broadcasting

• "Dialogues on the Prospects of Recording," based on 1965 CBC radio documentary, his first major statement on technology after his concert years, *Varsity Graduate* 11/5 (April 1965): 50-62, revised version published as his opus magnum on the subject, "The Prospects of Recording," *High Fidelity* 16/4 (Apr. 1966): 46-63.

• "Oh, for Heaven's Sake, Cynthia, There Must Be Something Else On," *High Fidelity/Musical America* 19/4 (April 1969): MA13-14, 28, on the subject of music on television.

• "Radio as Music," *Canada Music Book* 2 (Spring-Summer 1971): 13-30.

• "(Take Four) An Epistle to the Parisians: Music and technology: Part I," *Piano Quarterly* 23 (No. 88, Winter 1974-5):17-19, originally intended to promote the *Chemins de la musique* series for French television.

• "An Experiment in Listening: The Grass Is Always Greener in the Outtakes," *High Fidelity* 25/8 (August 1975): 54-9. In this very revealing article, Gould proved that splicing does not harm the integrity of a recorded performance—if it is done right.

• "What the Recording Process Means to Me," *High Fidelity/Musical America* 33/1 (January 1983): 56-7, written 1982 for CBS in-house video project.

Think-pieces

• "Glenn Gould Interviews Glenn Gould About Glenn Gould," *High Fidelity* 24/2 (February 1974): 72-8. A wide-ranging self-interview that reveals strongly Gould's ethical view of music.

• "On Critics and Criticism," *The Canadian*, 26 February 1977: 10-12.

Studies of composers and repertoire

• "Should We Dig Up the Rare Romantics?... No, They're Only a Fad," *New York Times*, 23 November 1969: XIV, 1, 16.

• "Admit It, Mr. Gould, You Do Have Doubts About Beethoven," *Globe Magazine*, 6 June 1970: 6-9; includes some scandalous comments on Beethoven's best-known works.

• "Speaking of Records: His Country's 'Most Experienced Hermit' Chooses a Desert-Island Discography," *High Fidelity/Musical America* 20/6 (June 1970): 29, 32.

• "Take 8: On Mozart and Related Matters: A Conversation with Bruno Monsaingeon," *Piano Quarterly* 24 (No. 95, Fall 1976): 12-19; includes some controversial views on Mozart's nature, development, and works.

• "Sibelius and the Post-Romantic Piano Style," *Piano Quarterly* 25 (No. 99, Fall 1977): 22-4.

Studies of performers

• “Yehudi Menuhin: Musician of the Year: Some Thoughts,” *High Fidelity/Musical America* 16/13 (15 December 1966): 7-9.

• “The Search for Petula Clark,” *High Fidelity* 17/11 (November 1967): 67-71, text based on a CBC radio documentary.

• “Rubinstein,” *Look* 35/5 (9 March 1971): 52-8.

• “Stokowski in Six Scenes,” *Piano Quarterly* 26 (Nos. 100-2, Winter 1977/8-Summer 1978).

Reviews and reports

• “The Ives Fourth,” review of a Stokowski concert, *High Fidelity/Musical America* 15/7 (July 1965): 96-7.

• “We Who Are About to Be Disqualified Salute You!,” on music competitions, *High Fidelity/Musical America* 16/12 (December 1966): MA23-4.

• “The Record of the Decade, According to a Critic Who Should Know, Is Bach Played On, of All Things, a Moog Synthesizer?,” *Saturday Night* 83/12 (December 1968): 52-8.

• “Liszt’s Lament? Beethoven’s Bagatelle? Or Rosemary’s Babies?: A Humble British Housewife Transcribes Compositions From Dead Composers,” *High Fidelity* 20/12 (December 1970): 87-90.

• *Slaughterhouse-Five*, review of the film (based on a CBC radio broadcast).

• “Data Bank on the Upward Scuttling Mahler,” *Globe and Mail*, 10 November 1973: 33.

• “The Future and ‘Flat-Foot Floogie’”: review (1974).

• “Krenek, the Prolific, Is Probably Best Known to the Public at Large as—Ernst Who?,” *Globe and Mail*, 19 July 1975 and later versions.

• “Back to Bach (and Belly to Belly)” (review of P.D.Q. Bach), *Globe and Mail*, 29 May 1976: 29.

• “Streisand as Schwarzkopf: The Voice That Is ‘One of the Natural Wonders of the Age’ Confronts the Masters,” *High Fidelity* 26/5 (May 1976): 73-5.

• “Boulez by Joan Peyser,” *New Republic* 175/26 (25 December 1976): 23-5, review of a Boulez biography.

• “Portrait of a Cantankerous Composer” (review of a Schoenberg biography), *Globe and Mail*, 18 March 1978: 38.

• “Gould by Payzant/Payzant by Gould,” his own cheeky review of the first book about him, *Globe and Mail*, 27 May 1978: 41.

Parody

• “Take Two: The Conference at Port Chilkoot,” *The Piano Quarterly* 22 (No. 86, Summer 1974): 4-9, on an imaginary music critics’ conference in a northern outpost.

• “Memories of Maude Harbour; or, Variations on a Theme of Arthur Rubinstein,” *Piano Quarterly* 28 (No. 110, Summer 1980): 27-30, a parody of Rubinstein’s autobiography, *My Young Years*.

Pseudonymous articles

• Herbert von Hochmeister, “The CBC, Camera-Wise,” *High Fidelity/Musical America* 15/3 (March 1965): 86P-Q.

• Herbert von Hochmeister, “Arctic Report: Of Time and Time Beaters,” *High Fidelity/Musical America* 15/8 (August 1965): 136-7.

• Herbert von Hochmeister, “Arctic Report: L’esprit de jeunesse, et de corps, et d’art,” *High Fidelity/Musical America* 15/12 (December 1965): 188-90, on a youth orchestra.

Interviews

It should be noted that many of Gould's interviews (published and recorded alike) from about the mid-1960s on were scripted by him alone, questions as well as answers, though they were often based on impromptu discussions beforehand. After his withdrawal from concerts in 1964, he exercised greater and greater control over the image of himself that was presented to the public. By the later 1960s, he was boasting that he had not spoken a spontaneous word in public for a number of years, and for the remainder of his career he insisted on controlling all conversational situations intended for publication.

> A spontaneous, off-the-cuff, top-of-our-heads conversation between Tim (Wing It) Page and Glenn (Ad Lib) Gould.
>
> (Comment written at the beginning of one of Gould's scripted interviews, 1982)

This list does not include Gould's self-interviews; the scripted conversations that he used as liner notes for some recordings (Bach's Partitas, Wagner, Mozart); or the countless commentaries, in conversation format, that he wrote for various CBC radio and television broadcasts (for example, his 1978 script for a programme in the series *From the Masters*). None of these really qualify as "interviews."

- With Eric McLean, CBC radio, 25 April 1956.
- Jock Carroll, "'I don't think I'm at all eccentric,' says Glenn Gould," *Weekend Magazine* 6/27 (7 July 1956).
- With Ted Viets, CBC radio, June 1957. This interview was recorded in Vienna, during Gould's first overseas tour; he was just about to play at the Vienna Festival, after triumphs in Russia and Berlin.
- With an unidentified person, "Newsmag: Return of a Prodigy", CBC television, 23 June 1957, on his recent tour of Russia.
- With Hugh Thomson, *Assignment*, CBC radio, 15 July 1958.
- Dennis Braithwaite, "I'm a Child of Nature—Glenn Gould," *Toronto Daily Star*, 28 March 1959: 21, 28.
- With Alan Rich, CBC radio, 30 October 1959, recorded in Berkeley, CA.
- "At Home with Glenn Gould", recorded conversation with Vincent Tovell, for the CBC radio series *Project 60*, 4 December 1959. CD release: Sony CDNK 1190, for the Glenn Gould Foundation's Friends of Glenn Gould society, 1996.
- With Bernard Asbell, in *Horizon* 4/3 (January 1962): 88-93.
- With Betty Lee, in *The Globe Magazine*, 1 December 1962.

• With Alfred Bester, “The Zany Genius of Glenn Gould,” *Holiday* 35/4 (April 1964): 149-56.

• With Pat Moore, interview recorded 15 December 1964 for CBC radio, but never aired; published for the first time in *GlennGould* 4/2 (Fall 1998).

• With Alex Trebek, *Intertel, The Culture Explosion*, CBC television, 9 November 1966.

• *Glenn Gould: Concert Dropout*, recorded conversation with John McClure, Columbia BS 15, a bonus LP released in 1968 with Gould’s album of the Beethoven-Liszt Fifth Symphony. CD release: CBS/Sony XBDC 91002 (Japan, 1986).

• James Kent, “Glenn Gould & Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart,” *Canadian Composer* 38 (March 1969): 39-41. Published version of a conversation on CBC radio.

• Jonathan Cott, *Conversations with Glenn Gould* (Boston and Toronto: Little, Brown & Co., 1984), book version of a long interview originally published in *Rolling Stone*, in 1974.

• With Yehudi Menuhin, in Menuhin and Curtis W. Davis’ television series *The Music of Man* (book version Toronto: Methuen, 1979, pages 290-5).

• With Elyse Mach, *Great Pianists Speak for Themselves* (New York: Dodd, Mead, 1980).

• Andrew Stephen, “A Rare Meeting with the Bobby Fischer of Music,” *The Sunday Times* [London], 16 March 1980.

• With Jim Aikin, in *Contemporary Keyboard* 6/8 (August 1980): 24-8, 30-2, 36.

• With Barclay McMillan, *Mostly Music*, CBC radio, 23 October 1980.

• With Ulla Colgrass, in *Music Magazine* 4/1 (January-February 1981): 6-11.

• Martin Meyer, “Interview: Glenn Gould, ‘...the inner movement of music...’”; originally published in German (*FonoForum*, June 1981), and reprinted in English translation in *GlennGould* 1 (Fall 1995): 16-20.

• With Tim Page, in *The Glenn Gould Reader*, edited and with an introduction by Tim Page (Toronto: Lester & Orpen Dennys, 1984): 451-61; originally published the fall of 1981.

• “Private Performer: Glenn Gould Talks to Dale Harris,” *Performance Magazine* (December 1981): 51-4.

• With Tim Page, recorded interview conducted August 1982, on the subject of Gould’s new recording of Bach’s Goldberg Variations; the recording was released in 1984 as a bonus LP with *Glenn Gould: Bach, Volume 1* (CBS M3X 38610), a boxed set containing both Goldberg recordings.

• With David Dubal, in *Reflections from the Keyboard: The World of the Concert Pianist* (New York: Summit Books, 1984); Gould’s last interview, conducted in 1982.

Posthumous Publications

Controversial or not, Gould's writings attracted attention, including publishers: by the early 1960s, he was well enough known that at Stratford he was announcing that Viking wanted to publish a book of his writings, though it never materialized. Only after his death were most of his published writings collected in book form.

- *Glenn Gould: Variations*, an anthology about and sometimes by Gould published in 1983, and including some previously unpublished and uncollected items—the first such posthumous reprinting.

- *The Glenn Gould Reader*, published in 1984 and edited by Tim Page. At about 500 pages, this volume collects most of his published writings and liner notes, some interviews and broadcast material, and a few unpublished items. Later foreign-language editions of Gould's writings appeared—some, most notably Bruno Monsaingeon's three-volume French edition, *Écrits*, larger than the *Reader* itself.

- *Glenn Gould: Selected Letters*, published in 1992.

- Many previously unpublished writings have appeared in the *Bulletin of the Glenn Gould Society* (1982-92), and in the journal of the Friends of Glenn Gould society, *GlennGould* (1995-); a few items have appeared in other publications. Among these have been some important pieces: essays on Anton Webern, Fartein Valen, and Sviatoslav Richter; the script for Gould's 1978 programme for the series *From the Masters* on CBC radio; his 1963 lecture "Forgery and Imitation in the Creative Process"; his liner notes on his Wagner transcriptions and on the Bach Partitas; a late interview with Martin Meyer, originally published in German; recollections of the Stratford Festival and the Toronto Symphony; thoughts on recording technology; and much more. And many more significant Gould writings—old periodical articles and interviews, broadcast scripts, essays, lectures—remain unpublished, or uncollected.

Musical Tastes

The Gould Aesthetic

Gould's musical tastes and interests ranged widely: he was a champion of music that was serious, dense, esoteric, "structural"—whether Sweelinck or Bach, Schoenberg or Hindemith, Valen or Krenek—and yet he also loved *Enoch Arden* and Petula Clark and Barbra Streisand. The books and recordings Gould owned (now preserved in the National Library of Canada) make clear his eclectic tastes. The books range from Krenek's *Studies in Counterpoint Based on the Twelve-Tone Technique* to *The Definitive Biography of P. D. Q. Bach*, from *Yale Studies in Structuralism* to *The Psychic Source Book*, from *Technical Analysis of Stock Trends* and *Crisis in Iran* to *The Blue Book of Dogs* and *The Dogs Scrapbook*. And the recordings range from Bach's *Art of Fugue* and Berio's *Sinfonia* to the Beatles' *Revolver* and private recordings of bird songs and wolf calls...

Still, one can point to many consistencies, a real sense of continuity, in Gould's work as a musician—enough so that one can speak of a real "Gould aesthetic" and a real "Gould style" of performance. In fact, his most basic ideas and beliefs about art and music were well established early in his career, and never wavered. Many of the consistencies in Gould's artistic outlook united different aspects of his work. His practical work as a musician—his playing, recording, broadcasting—was invariably connected to broader ideas about art and life, and he was often keen to make explicit these connections in his writings and interviews. Geoffrey Payzant, author of the first book about Gould, *Glenn Gould: Music and Mind*, put it this way: "Gould is not a pianist who takes time away from the piano to think. He is a musical thinker who makes use of all available means to thought, including the piano."

Often, one can draw a direct connection between some mundane aspect of Gould's work—his fondness for non-legato phrasing, say, or his sitting posture at the piano—and some much more elevated aspect of his thought, like his moral outlook. In other words, there are many consistencies and connections between very broad matters of philosophy and aesthetics and very particular, practical matters of pianism and performance in Gould's work. To take one example: his unusual digital technique and sitting posture were both closely geared to his obsession with counterpoint, which in turn largely determined his preferred repertoire, which in turn was the music that he thought most suited to studio recording rather than live performance, which in turn was a distinction that he considered to be fraught with aesthetic, ethical, and sociological implications. One of the things that has made Gould's work so appealing to so many people is precisely this sense of higher purpose—the sense that the most mundane matters of performance served a higher purpose, one which can be inferred directly from the performances themselves. Gould's performances "resonate" with ideas, and express a coherent world-view.

By all accounts, Gould was a very rational person—passionate, sensitive, expressive, without a doubt, but still someone who sought to submit his instincts and emotions to the control of reason. This aspect of his character strongly influenced his music. Though his playing could never be called dry or colourless or inexpressive, and though he never neglected expression, drama, or sonority in the music he played, it is still true that his primary consideration, in approaching and then realizing a musical score, was to understand the music rationally, abstractly, idealistically—that is, in terms of its structure before its sound, imagination before realization, idea before instrument.

All of the other aspects of music were made dependent on Gould's assessment of the work's structure. From this obsession with structure derived many important aspects of Gould's aesthetic and playing style: his obsession with the counterpoint of Bach, for example, and with the twelve-tone works of Schoenberg—works whose complex architecture appealed to the mind first and the senses second. Gould's was a very analytical mind; it tended to perceive music abstractly—analytically rather than emotionally, structurally rather than expressively, as concept first and sound second. This bias is constantly made clear in his writings and interviews, and of course profoundly influenced his piano style. In fact, Gould once spoke of "trying to forget the piano altogether"—that is, of conveying an impression of the music as though freed entirely from the trappings of the instrument.

Gould's idealistic, highly structural view of music is revealed in several interesting anecdotes:

- The vacuum-cleaner story—an anecdote in which Gould, while practicing, finds himself unable to hear the piano's sound, but, paradoxically, gains greater insight into the music because of the increased demands on his imagination and the decreased emphasis on fingers and keys and sounds. Gould told the story to Curtis Davis, in the 1970 CBC television special *The Well-Tempered Listener*:

> I was definitely homophonically inclined until the age of about 10, and then I suddenly got the message. Bach began to emerge into my world then and has never altogether left it. It was one of the great moments of my life, and although it was not with the Bach fugue, it was with a fugue, and its relevance is entirely fugal. I was exposed to my own performance of the Mozart fugue, Kochel 394, the C major one. I was learning it when I was an early teenager (I don't remember exactly how old) and suddenly a vacuum cleaner was struck up beside the piano, and I couldn't quite hear myself play (I was having a feud with the housekeeper at this particular time and it was done on purpose). I began to feel what I was doing, the whole tactile presence of that fugue as represented by finger positions. And it's represented also by the kind of sound that you might get if you sit in the bathtub or in the shower and shake your head, with water coming out both ears. It was the most luminously exciting thing you can imagine, the most glorious sound. It took off all of the things Mozart didn't quite manage to do—I was doing it for him— and I suddenly realized that there was a particular screen through which I was viewing this, and which I had erected between myself and Mozart. It was exactly what I needed to do, and exactly why, as I later understood, this certain mechanical process could indeed come between myself and the work of art that I was involved with. It was a great moment, and although this was not a Bach experience, it was the first great recognition of what the contrapuntal experience properly is. How really involving it is, of what a great number of layers it in fact consists, and precisely in what way one

might go about enhancing those layers. It was a very private experience, of course, because it had sealed off all areas of that room, even the acoustics, if there were any to talk about now that the vacuum cleaner was on. The vacuum cleaner became the void in which I was working. And that fugue and my relation to it was the only thing that existed. That was the first great contrapuntal awakening.

• "The Chickering in the desert"—an anecdote about Gould in Israel, in 1958, imagining the sound and action of his beloved Chickering back home, in order to counteract the effects of a terrible piano on which he is forced to give a concert; thus, he sought to use the imagination to transcend the physical. Gould related this anecdote to Jonathan Cott in *Conversations with Glenn Gould*:

> [In] Tel Aviv [...] in the fall of 1958 [...] I was giving a series of concerts on an absolutely rotten piano, the manufacturer of which shall be left unnamed [laughing]. Israel was, after all, a desert country, as they kept explaining to me, and they had desert pianos, understandably enough. I was playing I think eleven concerts in eighteen days, which for Isaac Stern would be like nothing, but for me is very difficult—*was* very difficult, I should say—and I think eight of the eleven were given on this monstrosity.
>
> In any event, one day I was switching programs, which was a real problem, because till then I'd coasted on a kind of tactile memory based on the experience of playing the earlier repertoire, and now suddenly I had to change, and it was at that moment that things began to run downhill. So on the afternoon of the first of that series of concerts, I'd gone through a miserable rehearsal at which I really played like a pig because this piano had finally gotten to me. I was playing on *its* terms. [...] I was incapable, apparently, of responding on any terms but those which were immediately presented to me through the medium of that piano.
>
> So I had a car, rented from the Hertz agency in Jerusalem (the idea of which delights me), and I was in any case staying about fifteen miles outside of Tel Aviv at a place called Herzliyya-by-the-Sea (it's an American colony where there are rather nice hotels and you feel as though you're in the San Juan Hilton). And I went out to a sand dune and decided that the only thing that could possibly save this concert was to re-create the most admirable tactile circumstance I knew of. And at that time *that* was in relation to a piano which I still own, though I haven't used it in many years, a turn-of-the-century (about 1895) Chickering—supposedly the last classic piano built in America—classic by virtue of the fact that it had a lyre that looked as if it were off the cover of the old B.F. Wood edition—short, stubby legs and slightly square sides. This piano was the prototype of the piano that I now use for my recordings and the other one that I have in my apartment as well, in that I discovered a relationship of touch to aftertouch, which admittedly had to undergo a considerable amount of modification for a Steinway. It couldn't just be transferred across the board (no pun intended), and both of the pianos that I won were modified along the lines of this turn-of-the-century Chickering.
>
> So I sat in my car in ye sand dune and decided to imagine myself back in my living room... and first of all to *imagine* the living room, which took some doing because I'd been away from it for three months at this point. And I tried to imagine where everything was in the room, then visualize the piano, and... this sounds ridiculously *yogistic*, I'd never done it before in precisely these terms... but so help me it worked.
>
> Anyway, I was sitting in the car, looking at the sea, got the entire thing in my head and tried desperately to live with that tactile image throughout the balance of the day. I got to the auditorium in the evening, played the concert, and it was without question the first time that I'd been in a really exalted mood throughout the entire stay there—I was *absolutely* free of commitment to that unwieldy beast. Now, the result, at least during the piano's first entrance, really scared me. There was a minimal amount of sound—it felt as though I were playing with the soft pedal down, which at times I often do, but without the intention of creating quite so faint-hearted a piano tone.
>
> I was shocked, a little frightened, but I suddenly realized: Well, of course, it's doing that because I'm engaged with another tactile image, and eventually I made some adjustment, allowed for some give-and-take in relation to the instrument at hand. And what came out was really rather extraordinary—or at least I thought so. And so, apparently, did a couple of elderly souls who wandered backstage after the concert. One of them was the late Max Brod—the Kafka scholar who wrote for the Tel Aviv German paper. He came backstage with a lady, whom I took to be his

> secretary, and made a few nice sounds, and the lady in question, whose name I didn't catch, came up to me and in a rather heavy German accent, said—bear in mind I'd just played Beethoven Two—and said [conspirational half-whisper], "Mr. Gould, ve haf attended already several of your pairformances in Tel Aviv, but tonight's, zis vas somehow, in some vay, somesing vas different, you vere not qvite one of us, you vere—you vere—your being vas *removed*.' And I bowed deeply and said, "Thank you, madam," realizing of course that she had in fact put her finger on something that was too spooky to talk about even, and I realized that with her obviously limited English there was no way I could convey what I'd really done. But then she finished it off by saying, "Yes, I haf just been saying that zis was unquestionably ze finest Mozart I haf ever heard" [laughing], and of course it was Beethoven.

• One might refer to Gould's as a "black-and-white" view of music, in which music is perceived more as line than as colour. In fact, Gould had a strong aversion visually to bright light and bright colours: "Behind every silver lining there's a cloud" was his motto. He claimed to be unable to work or think in a room painted in primary colours, and he said that his mood was inversely related to the degree of sunlight on a particular day. One can draw a direct connection between this aversion and his disinterest in highly "colourful" music, like that of Chopin or Liszt or Debussy. Gould once told his record producer, Andrew Kazdin, a revealing childhood anecdote on just this subject:

> When he was four or five years old, some woman gave him [Glenn] a present of a red toy fire engine. Despite the issue that no other colour would have been appropriate for such a vehicle, the fact that it was red caused him to fly into a tantrum. He recalled that he became completely uncontrollable and had to be calmed down at some length. Exactly what it was about the colour red was never made completely clear, but he stated that 'I wouldn't have, as a child, any toy that was coloured red at all.' He went on: 'I hate clear days; I hate the sunlight; I hate yellow…To long for a grey day was, for me, the ultimate that one could achieve in the world.'

In a reminiscence of Leopold Stokowski written in 1977, Gould recalled getting his first headache at the age of eight, after his parents took him to see the Disney film *Fantasia*, the garish colours of which apparently overwhelmed him. In "Glenn Gould Interviews Glenn Gould About Glenn Gould", he declared his favourite colours to be navy blue and battleship grey.

> 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.

Characteristically, Gould took his colour preferences into the moral sphere, equating bright, vibrant colours with violence and the less desirable emotions—the same things he said about piano concertos and Lisztian virtuosity and the concert platform.

One does not play the piano with one's fingers, one plays the piano with one's mind.

(From an interview with David Dubal, *Reflections from the Keyboard*, 1982)

Ethical View of Music

Like the ancient Greeks and countless philosophers since, Gould believed that musical decisions had ethical consequences—that certain types of music were morally good or bad. His aesthetic opinions—on genres, composers, works, media—were always as much moral as aesthetic; he equated a certain kind of musical order or structure with moral rectitude. The music that he considered structurally best (Byrd, Bach, Schoenberg) was also the most "moral," because it was the music that most encouraged contemplation, repose, rational understanding, and that least encouraged titillation and the mass public response he associated with concerts and virtuoso Romantic concertos.

Gould's opposition to mechanistic virtuosity, the associated repertoire, the concert medium, and so on reflected ethical concerns about the effects of certain kinds of art. There is a key quote, from a 1962 article, that perhaps best sums up his ethical view of music, and might serve as a kind of epitaph for him, since it reflects a belief that is at the heart of much of his work and thought: "The purpose of art is not the release of a momentary ejection of adrenaline but is, rather, the gradual, life-long construction of a state of wonder and serenity." Gould was fond of calling himself "The Last Puritan" (borrowing a book title from George Santayana): he thought of his musical predilections as representing not only good music but also a Good Life. Even the most mundane performance matters for Gould often ended up in the realm of ethics: technique, repertoire, interpretation, piano mechanics, recording technology, concert hall—all ultimately had moral implications for him. Gould discussed this matter himself in a 1968 radio documentary about the "theological implications of technology." He linked the practical (the Moog-synthesizer recordings of Walter Carlos) with the theoretical (the speculations on technology by the Canadian theologian Jean le Moyne) in order to "illustrate the fact that even the most practical consideration and the most apparently mechanical manipulations of machinery have a more profound level."

One of Gould's key concepts was "ecstasy," which for him meant not excitement or exaltation, but rather the sense of standing outside oneself, of complete absorption into the music itself, without regard for more mundane matters like the aura of the concert occasion or the performer's ego. This concept goes back a long way in music history—to the almost devotional view of music of many Romantic artists, but even farther back, to Ptolemy and the ancient Greeks. For Gould, "ecstasy" was the goal of the music he most admired, his own goal as a performer, and the state he hoped to induce in his listeners: out-of-body contemplation of the music itself, unhampered by the kinds of emotions stirred up by the concert occasion.

Gould's ethical view of music is most clearly and strongly revealed in his life-long opposition to competition. Gould hated the competitive instinct in all its manifestations: from actual piano competitions

and festivals to the very spectacle of concert performance and the solo-concerto form. For example, in the concert medium and in the Romantic solo concerto, he saw an extrovert virtuosity, an element of showing off, that amounted to the performer's effort to "conquer" the audience and to "conquer" certain mechanistic hurdles in the music—which he considered morally distasteful aspects of music.

Gould did have some childhood experiences with competitions—with the Kiwanis Festivals, in which he participated for a few years as a child. (For the record, he generally won the competitions he entered, so his objections to them were not the sour grapes of a loser.) But he came to hate them, and to mock them, and his professional life was not at all bound up with the competition circuit. In 1966, he wrote a very pointed article about music competitions, titled "We Who Are About to Be Disqualified Salute You!" The article concludes passionately: "The menace of the competitive idea is that through its emphasis upon consensus, it extracts that mean, indisputable, readily certifiable core of competence and leaves its eager, ill-advised supplicants forever stunted, victims of a spiritual lobotomy."

Gould also deplored the competitive aspect—the factionalism—of much contemporary music in his day, the concern for being "up-to-date" or "revolutionary" or "avant-garde." In the 1950s, for example, he was highly critical of composers like Pierre Boulez who defended post-Webern serialism as the only relevant compositional style. Gould was more of a post-modern in this respect: he was not bothered by anachronism, and indeed relished it, relished the mixing of styles and the undercutting of ideas like "fashion" and "progress" in music. He was perfectly willing to champion "reactionaries" like Strauss, Hindemith, and Sibelius along with "revolutionaries" like Schoenberg and Webern—all that mattered to him was the quality of the music, not its currency. (He often spoke in praise of his friend Ludwig Diehn, a wealthy amateur composer from Virginia, who wrote symphonies in the style of Bruckner without any concern about their being "irrelevant.") And of course his own String Quartet, Opus 1, from the early 1950s, almost polemically disregarded the reigning craze for serialism, preferring instead an old-fashioned, Straussian vocabulary. As Gould said in a 1968 interview, he was not a self-consciously "twentieth-century" person; he was not concerned about feeling "contemporaneous" or following the *Zeitgeist*. He resisted the one-up-man-ship of the avant-garde, precisely because of its competitive implications.

But there were contradictions, too, for Gould clearly had a competitive streak of his own that showed up frequently—he may have hated it, but he could not fully control it. Even in childhood, he hated to lose: when he and Alberto Guerrero played "friendly" games of croquet at the cottage, according to witnesses, both played to win. Other Gould acquaintances have reported similar examples from later life, like Gould's fierce refusal to back down even in a casual game of "20 Questions." And certain of Gould's recordings have been considered by some to be tacit "challenges" that "compete" with certain illustrious

predecessors. For example, his début recording of the Goldberg Variations was a kind of challenge to Wanda Landowska and Rosalyn Tureck, Bach specialists who, up until then, had “owned” that work. And his second album, of late Beethoven sonatas, might be seen as an attempt to compete on the same ground as his idol, Schnabel, renowned as a Beethoven specialist.

In the best of all possible worlds, art would be unnecessary. Its offer of restorative, placative therapy would go begging a patient. The professional specialization involved in its making would be presumption. The generalities of its applicability would be an affront. The audience would be the artist and their life would be art.

(From “The Prospects of Recording”, 1966)

Repertoire

From the beginning of his professional career, Gould distinguished himself through his unusual, highly selective repertoire, which was geared to his very particular tastes in music and had little regard for conventional wisdom about what is properly the focus of a professional pianist's career. His American début recitals immediately attracted attention for his repertoire, which would be considered unusual even today but which, in 1955, was astonishing: the Elizabethan composer Orlando Gibbons; the seventeenth-century Dutch organist Jan Pieterszoon Sweelinck; Bach (in those days by no means standard concert fare for a pianist); late Beethoven (at a time when his middle-period, nicknamed sonatas were most common, particularly for younger pianists); and Berg and Webern (two pupils of Schoenberg whose music was scarcely known at the time). It is especially odd repertoire for a début programme, since it shows off none of the virtuoso pyrotechnics and Romantic repertoire considered de rigueur for a young pianist displaying his wares. Yet, such music would remain the core of Gould's repertoire throughout his career, both in concert and on recordings.

As a child, it is true, he played a good deal of more conventional piano fare—works by Romantic composers like Chopin, Mendelssohn, Czerny, Liszt, and so on. In his student concerts and early professional recitals in Canada, he was occasionally playing Romantic warhorses like the famous variation sets by Czerny, Chopin's impromptus and waltzes and études, Mendelssohn's *Andante and Rondo Capriccioso*, Liszt's *Valse oubliée*, not to mention non-German Baroque works—Scarlatti sonatas, Couperin's great B-minor Passacaille. As late as the fall of 1956, after his American début, he would still occasionally programme a work like Mendelssohn's *Variations sérieuses*.

Still, such pieces were never central to his repertoire, and were later dropped entirely, recalled only with scorn. Already in childhood he was playing an unusual amount of Bach, encouraged by Alberto Guerrero, who was something of a local Bach specialist, and by Rosalyn Tureck's recordings. Through Guerrero, he also discovered Schoenberg and his school, and became an enthusiastic convert to the twelve-tone idiom, as both performer and composer. The two major axes of his repertoire—Bach and Schoenberg—along with his selective interest in Classical and late-Romantic music, were fully established by his teens, and are reflected in some of his earliest programmes.

Though he was never a new-music specialist, Gould was certainly an unusually serious student of modern music. Some of his performances of music by Schoenberg and Canadian composers, for example, were Canadian and world premières. And in 1952, the nineteen-year-old Gould and his friend Robert Fulford even founded a short-lived business called New Music Associates, with the intention of giving concerts promoting modern music. At the last of their three concerts, he played the Goldberg Variations for the first

time in public (when asked why he was playing Bach in a new-music series, he replied, “Bach is ever new”). By the 1950s, at a time when Canadian classical-music tastes were highly provincial and not accustomed to the likes of Gibbons and Krenek, Gould was playing just such music—yet earning a major reputation nonetheless. And it was this repertoire that he insisted on playing overseas, where it was no less rare, and even in places like Russia and Italy, where heady Romanticism was still the order of the day.

As for concertos, Gould did play Weber’s glittery *Konzertstück* at least once, in 1951. And according to the Canadian composer John Beckwith, who knew Gould from his youth, he did once plan to play Rachmaninov’s *Rhapsody on a Theme of Paganini*, and heatedly defended this uncharacteristic piece. But generally, Gould steered clear of the most popular Romantic virtuoso concertos—Chopin, Schumann, Liszt, Grieg, Tchaikovsky, Rachmaninov—and (as in Rome, in 1958) stiffly refused specific requests to play them. Instead, in his concert days, he preferred less audience-pleasing concertos like the Bach D-minor, or the Brandenburg Concerto No. 5, or the Schoenberg concerto (which, at one point, he claimed never to turn down an opportunity to promote), or else Strauss’s rarely played *Burleske*. He ignored and hated the Mozart concertos, except the C-minor, and he almost always preferred to play early Beethoven concertos rather than the more popular “Emperor.” And his reading of the Brahms D-minor concerto was designed to play down the element of solo virtuosity, and became highly controversial as a result. While Gould focussed largely on solo and concerto repertoire, he did occasionally perform chamber music and Lieder, particularly at venues like the Stratford Festival, and frequently in the recording and television studios.

Though his concert repertoire was unusual for its day, Gould was no different from other performers in that he tended to play a lot of the same pieces over and over again—and this, indeed, was precisely one of the things he hated most about concert life. Occasionally he would vary a programme with something like Bach’s Italian Concerto, Beethoven’s “Eroica” Variations, an early-Beethoven or Haydn sonata, some different Schoenberg pieces or a different Bach concerto, but otherwise it was pretty much the same dozen or twenty solo works, the same handful of concertos, over and over... Not surprisingly, this was also the repertoire that formed the bulk of his early recordings. But once he left concert life in 1964, and devoted himself solely to recording, his repertoire quickly expanded.

While the centrepieces of Gould’s repertoire were Bach and Schoenberg—the two composers most influential on his ideas about music and performance—he had other major interests: Elizabethan virginal music; Viennese Classical music (albeit subjected to highly idiosyncratic interpretation); late-Romantic music, whether or not written for the piano; and a select group of Austro-German, Canadian, Russian, and Scandinavian composers of the twentieth century. Some of these choices—like Mozart, Haydn, and Beethoven—are certainly conventional, but much else in his repertoire was unusual for a professional

pianist: seventeenth-century music for virginal (i.e., harpsichord) and organ, by Byrd, Gibbons, and Sweelinck (he was fond of calling Gibbons—not Bach!—his "favourite composer"); transcriptions of orchestral music by Beethoven, Wagner, Strauss, Sibelius, and others; obscure late-Romantic works by Grieg, Bizet, Strauss; obscure twentieth-century composers like Valen and Krenek; and works by some of his Canadian contemporaries.

But nothing was more unusual about his repertoire than what was absent from it, for the music that he never, or rarely, played reads like a list of the core repertoire for most professional pianists: Scarlatti, Mozart concertos, middle-period Beethoven, Schubert, Schumann, Chopin, Mendelssohn, Liszt, Debussy, Ravel, Rachmaninov, Bartok. As he once told an interviewer—with some exaggeration, admittedly—he had a century-long blind spot approximately demarcated by Bach's *Art of Fugue* at one end and Wagner's *Tristan und Isolde* at the other (i.e., between about 1750 and 1860).

Gould's negative view of the early-Romantic repertoire—perhaps the most important of all piano repertoire—was particularly controversial. Because he tended to view music abstractly, and therefore was drawn to music (like Bach's fugues) that appealed to an analytical temperament, he found little to admire in music, like Schumann's or Chopin's or Liszt's or Debussy's, that so flattered the tonal resources of the piano and so appealed to the virtuosity of the performer. He accused such composers of "falling inside the piano"—that is, of being more concerned with showing off the instrument than with assuring the integrity of their musical structures. The accusation was not really defensible—Chopin's music is no less structurally sound than Bach's—but it was certainly revealing of Gould's peculiar aesthetic preferences.

> I've often said that I have a century-long blind spot with regard to music. It's roughly demarcated by *The Art of Fugue* on one side and *Tristan* on the other, and almost everything in between is, at best, the subject of admiration rather than love.
>
> (From an interview with Elyse Mach, *Great Pianists Speak for Themselves*, 1980)

Gould as Romantic

Gould's repertoire preferences—Gibbons, Bach, Schoenberg—suggest a kind of anti-Romantic personality, an image he seemed to encourage; yet, as his admiration for Wagner and Strauss suggests, he was in many ways a Romantic—even a compleat Romantic.

There was a deep Romantic streak in Gould's character and aesthetic preferences: he was a sucker for the most Romantic music of all, the big late-nineteenth-century orchestral and operatic works of Wagner, Bruckner, Mahler, Strauss; there were some unusual Romantic "blips" in his repertoire (the Wagner and Brahms albums, Strauss's *Enoch Arden*); he composed in a Romantic style; he resurrected some stylistic traits reminiscent of Romantic players who can be heard on recordings from the turn of the century; he admired highly Romantic performers like Furtwängler, Rubinstein, and Stokowski; his view that the performer's role was properly creative and his disinterest in historical performance could not have been more Romantic; he cultivated a real Romantic cult of personality; and he was as choreographic at the keyboard as any Romantic pianist in history.

There were clearly more Romantic aspects to Gould's character and playing than he was willing to acknowledge, yet he could not suppress them. Gould himself, especially early in his career, was occasionally willing to admit to a strong Romantic streak: in a 1959 interview, for example, he referred to himself as "very much a Romantic" and "an arch-Romantic", and even praised the dreaded Tchaikovsky; in a later letter, on the subject of his "sexy" recording of the Brahms Intermezzi, he called himself an "incurable Romantic." In later life he seemed less willing to make such admissions about himself, yet the Romantic side of his character never went away: somewhere inside him was the fifteen-year-old who wept openly when he first heard Wagner's *Tristan und Isolde*.

You know what an incurable romantic I am anyway.

(From a 1961 letter to Silvia Kind)

I am very much a romantic. [...] I am really an arch-romantic.

(From an interview with Dennis Braithwaite, *Toronto Daily Star*, March 28 1959)

I am immensely influenced by late romantic music and always have been—Mahler, Strauss, and early Schoenberg. The trouble is that the late nineteenth-century is badly represented on the piano.

(From an interview with Bernard Asbell, *Horizon*, January 1962)

Piano Style

Virtuosity

There is near-universal agreement—even among those who despise his particular style of playing—that Gould was a commanding piano virtuoso, with an outstanding natural technique, and great control over all of the factors that make for first-rank piano playing—tone colour, pedalling, articulation, dynamics, rhythm, and so on. So it is not the case that he avoided Liszt and Rachmaninov because it was too hard for him, and that he railed against virtuoso music because he couldn't play it.

Gould was an unquestioned virtuoso, but he simply abhorred the Lisztian sort of extrovert virtuosity; his particular tastes and technique were not geared to pianistic gymnastics, but rather to music that demanded precision, dexterity, and control. Gould often seemed determined to convince himself (and us) that he was everything but a pianist: he once referred to himself, rather disingenuously, as a writer, composer, and broadcaster who played the piano in his spare time, and he claimed in many interviews that he didn't like the piano much as an instrument and preferred the organ or harpsichord.

Yet, for all this, he was one of the greatest pianists on record, and was clearly most at home at the piano: that was where his best work was, whether he liked to admit it or not. He was never content to be restricted by the label "concert pianist," and it was probably a source of some frustration that the piano was really the only place where he was truly at home and where he truly worked at the highest levels of skill and inspiration and imagination.

Dubal: It seems many pianists are compulsive practicers but as afraid of approaching the piano as they are of leaving it. You have stated that you do not necessarily "practice" the piano. Do you separate the idea of practice from the idea of playing?

Gould: Well, quite frankly I'm at a loss to understand the compulsiveness that accompanies the notion of practice—that—in effect, most view as an appropriate relationship to the instrument. I've talked about this frequently, to be sure, and I'm in some considerable danger of repeating myself, but to me the relationship to the piano—to any instrument, really, but I can only speak of the piano with first-hand authority—which involves some sort of tactile servitude, which demands six or eight or ten hours a day of kinetic contact, which seems to need, for example, backstage pianos at the ready so that, presumably, one can reassure oneself that one's relationship to the instrument remains secure before one walks on stage is simply beyond my ken. I couldn't even begin to emphasize how far from my own experience—my own belief—if you like—such a relationship really is.

(From an interview with David Dubal, *Reflections from the Keyboard*, 1982)

Keyboard Posture

Gould was, from the beginning, a figure of comment—and fun—because of his unusual appearance at the keyboard: hunched over the keys, nose close to the keyboard, precise finger-based technique, sitting on a very low (specially designed) chair with the piano raised on blocks, often with his legs crossed, humming and singing, arms conducting whenever they had the chance, rocking and flailing like a Bernstein. None of this was merely for show, however, though many assumed it was.

In fact, most of these aspects of Gould's playing are quite logical extensions of his particular musical preferences and style: for instance, he sat low and close to the keys because this approach was well suited to his preferred repertoire, like the counterpoint of Bach. For such music, he needed only the tips of the fingers; he rarely needed the power, the sheer arm weight, called for in, say, Liszt and Rachmaninov, whose music requires that one sit further back in order to find the necessary leverage and strength.

Gould played music like Byrd and Bach and Mozart, which required almost no arm weight, required no Lisztian fortissimos, and demanded less than the full range of the keyboard; thus he could sit closer to the piano keys and rely almost entirely on his fingers. In fact, he was not alone in this; other pianists who have shared his repertoire preferences—Guerrero, Schnabel, Gieseking, Tureck—have sat low for the same reasons. And if Gould crossed his legs from time to time at the keyboard (enduring the howls of critics in his concert days), it was because he often did not need to use the pedals: his was a relatively spare sound, particularly in Bach, and he did without the sustaining pedal far more often than most pianists. Many photos and videos of Gould playing early music show his feet miles from the pedals.

As to the humming and the choreographic piano style: Gould was not the only major performer whose involvement with the music led him to make vocal noises—Casals, Serkin, and Toscanini were among many other legendary "grunters" in classical music. In part it was inolvement in the music; in part it was childhood encouragement from his mother to sing; in part, as he once said, there was a wishful-thinking aspect to his singing. It represented how, in his mind, he wanted to music to sound, which he was never quite able to realize perfectly at the keyboard.

This is certainly also the case with Gould's conducting, which helped him to shape phrases as he played. His choreographic piano style was also not unprecedented; he claimed that he played in this physically very involved way throughout childhood and adolescence, at a time when he was playing very little in public, only in private, and never thought anything of it; he claimed that it came as a surprise that his style was so criticized later in life—which may be disingenuous, since newspaper critics were already warning

him about his stage demeanour when he was less than twelve years old. In any event, by adulthood it was too late for him to change.

To me control increases in direct relationship to one's proximity to the keyboard.

(From an interview with Elyse Mach, *Great Pianists Speak for Themselves*, 1980)

View of the Piano

Gould rejected conventional, Romantic notions about how a piano should sound: melody-oriented, lots of sustaining pedal, legato phrasing, rich and vocal tone, frequent and generous nuances of tempo and volume. Instead, he developed a more “modern” or “classical” sound—more highly articulated, cleaner, refined tone, sparing use of the sustaining pedal, discretion in nuances of rhythm and volume, emphasis on counterpoint more than just melody, much non-legato phrasing. This style derived in part from Gould’s rather abstract view of music—the tendency to think of music structurally or analytically above all.

Unlike Romantic fans of the piano, Gould thought of the piano as a kind of “neutral” instrument, without much character or colour of its own, and so one which could be well used to realize a sort of abstract view of music—that could be used, for example, to imitate all manner of other instruments, voices, orchestra, synthesizer, and so on. Gould often said he didn’t like the piano much as an instrument, preferring the harpsichord and organ and fortepiano, but thought of the piano as a good workhorse that could render all sorts of music.

This may seem a little dishonest, given Gould’s evident pianistic gifts, yet it is true that he always avoided the repertoire and performance practices most designed to show off the piano as an instrument—those of Chopin and Liszt and Rachmaninov—and that his own playing always exploited the capacity of the piano to analyze, to take apart, the music he played.

I don’t happen to like the piano as an instrument. I prefer the harpsichord. Of course I’m fascinated by what you can do with the piano, and I can sit for hours and play it, but I love to force it out of its inhibitions.

(From an interview with Alfred Bester, *Holiday*, April 1964)

[...] as far as the format of the recital is concerned, I personally don’t particularly relish a sequence of the same instrumental sounds all evening, especially if they’re piano sounds. There are, as you well know, many piano freaks. I just don’t happen to be one of them. I don’t much care for piano music. [...] I’m not really hooked on the instrument per se—on any instrument, per se. I’m kind of instrumentally indifferent, I guess.

(From an interview with Elyse Mach, *Great Pianists Speak for Themselves*, 1980)

Mechanical Adjustments to his Pianos

Gould went farther than most pianists to achieve the particular qualities of tone and action that he desired, to the point of making significant mechanical adjustments to his pianos. He was not fond of the average modern grand piano: its tone was too large, too resonant, too thick for his taste; he preferred a lighter tone, a quicker and more highly controlled action. These were qualities associated with earlier pianos—the fortepianos of the Classical and early Romantic eras, but also the grand pianos of the early part of this century. He compared the average modern piano to a car with power steering: it drove you, you didn't drive it. He wanted, by contrast, a "car" that was sensitive to the slightest command and nuance.

Gould always maintained that his ideal piano was the 1895 Chickering baby grand that he acquired in the 1950s, though this instrument, which he kept at home, was not suitable for concerts or recordings. For those purposes, he settled, in the early 1960s, on Steinway CD 318, a concert grand built just before World War II. It was a piano that naturally offered the kind of tone and action he desired, but to enhance its effectiveness he had his piano technicians make significant alterations—like moving the hammers closer to the strings. This increased his degree of control over the action and refined the sound. As a result, his ability to make hall-shattering fortissimos was compromised, but then he was never fond of the music—Liszt, Rachmaninov—that demanded such effects. The gains were an increased control over contrapuntal textures, a refinement of dynamic shading at the quiet end of the spectrum, absolute evenness of touch from register to register, a relatively thin and highly articulated sound—in short, a piano that was ideally suited to producing that unique Gould sound and convey his singular interpretations of his preferred repertoire.

The instrument represented on this disc is a pre-World War II Steinway which answers to CD 318, and to which I feel a greater devotion than to any other piano that I have encountered. For the past few years, it has been reserved exclusively for our sessions at Columbia Records—not as great a sacrifice on the part of the makers as you might imagine, since no one else has ever expressed the slightest interest in it. This has enabled me to carry out some rather radical experiments in regard to the action of this piano—in effect, to try to design an instrument for baroque repertoire which can add to the undeniable resource of the piano something of the clarity and tactile felicity of the harpsichord.

For those sessions in which more recent or more conventionally pianistic repertoire has been our concern, we have not made any special demands upon this instrument, but prior to each of the Bach sessions of the past few years, CD 318 has undergone major surgery. The alignment of such essential mechanical matters as the distance of the hammer from the strings, the "after-touch" mechanism, etc. has been earnestly reconsidered in accordance with my sober conviction that no piano need feel duty-bound to always sound like a piano. Old 318, if released from its natural tendency in that direction, could probably be prevailed upon to give us a sound of such immediacy and clarity that those qualities of non-legato so essential to Bach would be gleefully realized.

In my opinion, the present disc brings us within reach of this objective. The operation, performed just before the sessions which produced the "Inventions," was so successful that we plunged joyfully into the

recording without allowing old 318 its usual post-operative recuperation. Consequently, our enthusiasm for the rather extraordinary sound it now possessed allowed us to minimize the one minor after-effect which it had sustained—a slight nervous tic in the middle register which in slower passages can be heard emitting a sort of hiccup—and to carry on with the sessions without stopping to remedy this defect. I must confess that, having grown somewhat accustomed to it, I now find this charming idiosyncrasy entirely worthy of the remarkable instrument which produced it. I might even rationalize the matter by comparing it with the clavichord's propensity for an intra-tone vibrato. However, in our best of all worlds, we would hope to preserve the present sound while reducing the hiccup effect; so, as the television card says on those occasions when sound and video portions go their separate ways—"STAY TUNED IN: WE'RE FIXING IT."

(Disclaimer from Gould's 1964 album of Bach Inventions)

Performance Style

Perhaps the single most important aspect of Gould's piano style was counterpoint. Almost all of the music he loved was music with a strong contrapuntal component—whether it was Gibbons, Bach, Haydn, Brahms, Strauss, or Schoenberg. He said repeatedly that his interest in a piece of music was roughly dependent on the degree to which it was contrapuntal. He was bored, he said, by music that was not contrapuntal, in which he could not hear the "explosion of simultaneous ideas" that defined counterpoint for him.

Not surprisingly, Gould was particularly renowned, throughout his career, for his unusual genius for clarifying counterpoint at the piano: "Each of his fingers seemed to have its own brain," was how more than one critic put it. Even when he took up music—like Mozart's sonatas—that was melody-oriented, or in which the contrapuntal element was not strong, he used every means possible to try and make the music contrapuntal, emphasizing all sorts of left-hand and inner-voice activity in an effort to convey a multi-voiced texture. And he always insisted (like his youthful idols Schnabel and Tureck) that the piano was best used as a vehicle for counterpoint.

Gould's special gifts for rendering counterpoint at the piano seems to have been a reflection of a generally "omniattentive" mind, a mind that was able to process many inputs simultaneously. (You can't play counterpoint as clearly as Gould did unless you can think and hear contrapuntally first.) Gould seemed to thrive on multiple inputs. He once said that he could learn a difficult score more easily if he studied it while something else was going on—say, AM and FM radio playing at once in the background. Somehow, this allowed him to focus more clearly on the score. He used similar methods, for example, to repair a technical problem at the keyboard: by adding background sounds while practicing, he could concentrate on the digital problem at hand rather than the sound of the music.

Gould's "contrapuntal radio documentaries," in which several sound events are frequently happening simultaneously—even five people talking at once—were clearly the products of a mind comfortable with a barrage of input, though Gould claimed that all people had much more potential for contrapuntal hearing and thinking than they generally realized. For Gould, at least, learning a score while talking on the telephone and listening to two radios and a television was simply a normal part of life.

But counterpoint was not the only factor that distinguished Gould's piano style. From the beginning of his career, he was renowned for the rhythmic dynamism of his playing, and his incredible rhythmic control: at extremely slow tempos as well as the most breakneck speeds, he had a rare ability to infuse music, in every bar, with rhythmic energy. And he was a great proponent of rhythmic continuity.

Though he did not advocate literally metronomic playing, Gould insisted that rhythm could provide an overarching sense of order to a performance, even that a piece of music should seem unified in its control of rhythm. (In this respect, he took much inspiration from symphonic conductors, and was generally critical of most pianists for their excessive indulgence in tempo fluctuations.)

Gould grew increasingly interested in large-scale rhythmic control throughout his career, and in many later performances one senses that whole works are unified through it. In his 1981 recording of the Goldberg Variations, for example, each variation is audibly linked rhythmically with its neighbours, such that the piece seems like a continuous unfolding of a single all-encompassing structure, rather than a series of related but independent short movements.

Gould's masterful control of dynamics, especially on the lower end of the spectrum, has also been widely admired: he was one of the great "pianissimists," one of the masters of quiet, gentle, though still greatly nuanced playing, and he had little use for volcanic dynamic eruptions. He was also famous for his fondness for detached articulation: no fan of Romantic legato, of the long-breathed singing melody, he preferred a light, crisp, highly articulated touch, which many considered anti-Romantic—even anti-piano. It was a touch developed to suit the contrapuntal music of Bach, but it became a general part of his style—no less so in Mozart or Schoenberg, and often highly controversial as a result. (He was criticized, for example, for his seemingly willful refusal to underscore the lyrical element in Mozart's sonatas.)

Even Gould's use of ornamentation in early music was a distinctive part of Gould's style. Though he clearly had a good historical understanding of ornamentation, and was considered something of a historically literate performer in his early days, his ornaments tended to be highly unusual: often staccato rather than legato, witty rather than expressive, sometimes precisely measured rhythmically, often strange in shape, highly personal in character, and often in places where they would not be expected—like the late sonatas of Beethoven.

In all of these respects, Gould was clearly influenced by Rosalyn Tureck: many of the surprising tempos and dynamic shadings and crisp phrases and odd ornaments that seem so distinctively "Gouldian" can be heard in Tureck recordings dating back to the 1940s, Gould's formative teen years.

I try to invent 'happenings' for inner voices, even if they don't really exist.

(From a television broadcast with Humphrey Burton, *Conversations with Glenn Gould*, 1966)

Interpretations

Creativity as Interpreter

Though his playing style—lean, fleet, highly articulated—seems in many ways quintessentially modern, Gould was also, temperamentally, the ultimate Romantic, in that he viewed the role of the performer as properly creative. He believed that the performer had the right—even the duty—to impose his own ideas, standards, and tastes, and those of his times, on the music he played.

In a 1962 interview, for example, Gould acknowledged openly, “There are many times when I am quite sure Mozart would not approve of what I do to his music”; yet it would not occur to him to play Mozart in any other way except his own, no matter how highly idiosyncratic. This was an approach to interpretation de rigueur in the Romantic era but one that, by Gould’s day, had become suspect. In the latter part of this century, fidelity to the score has been taken for granted by most performers, and Gould, for many, was seen as an aberration, even a perversion.

Given Gould’s view of performance, it is not surprising that his interpretations of music were filled with eccentricities, and have been the subject of much comment and criticism for decades. But Gould held up against the criticism, and openly promoted his point of view: when he lectured a group of children at the Vancouver International Festival in 1961, and when he addressed the graduating class of the Royal Conservatory of Music in 1964, he told the youngsters that their first duty as performers was to themselves and their own vision, not to the composer or the score or the habits and traditions—the conventional expectations—with which they were raised. And in his own performances, he was as good as his word.

In a sense, Gould was a frustrated composer who channeled much of his creative energy into performing the works of others. He had only moderate success as a conventional composer, but was more successful in the other outlets he found for his creativity—his writings, his “contrapuntal radio documentaries,” and especially his piano performances. He insisted that a performer should be a creative, not merely re-creative, force—should offer a truly personal and original take on everything he played; otherwise, there was no reason to play it.

This was a quality he admired in others, too: he professed a fondness for “italicizers” among performers, which is to say performers who put a strong personal stamp on what they play. This meant highly Romantic classical performers like Arthur Rubinstein and Wilhelm Furtwängler, Elisabeth Schwarzkopf and Sviatoslav Richter, but it meant Barbra Streisand, too. Gould loved truly creative performers, and despite

his ambivalence about Romanticism he seems to have had more kind words to say about the Romantic individualists among his colleagues than about the more discreet, respectful, hands-off executants.

Part of Gould's rationale for being a creative performer was to counteract what he perceived as the stifling conformity of modern classical-music performance, the tradition that demands that performers endlessly repeat the conventional interpretations they have learned. This seemed to him especially irrelevant in the era of recordings: since a century's worth of recordings has already preserved forever conventional interpretations of the classical canon, it was necessary for performers to find something new to say about this music. Gould could not justify making a recording of some standard repertoire unless he had a distinctive interpretation to offer; if it was simply another performance of the work that satisfied conventional expectations about it, there was no reason to add another recording to the catalogues.

This explains why Gould's eccentricities as an interpreter were greatest in the most entrenched canonical repertoire, like the sonatas of Mozart and Beethoven. It was these well known, beloved works that had the longest traditions of performance practice, the most conventional expectations; and so it was in just these works, according to Gould, that the performer had to find something new and startling to say. (He felt less need to be shocking in Strauss's piano sonata or in pieces by Bizet because these pieces were less well known.) With warhorses like Mozart's K. 331 sonata and Beethoven's "Appassionata," the average classical-music lover knows, from long experience, how the pieces are "supposed to go," so it was with them that Gould was most determined to find his own way of playing. (And indeed, these are two of his most shockingly unusual recordings.) If there was one thing that was predictable about Gould the interpreter, it was his unpredictability.

> I refuse to conceive the recreative act as being essentially different from the creative act.
>
> (From a 1980 interview with Jim Aikin, in *Contemporary Keyboard*, August 1980)

Idiosyncratic Interpretations

Given his belief that the performer was properly creative, it is no surprise that many of his interpretations were highly personal, idiosyncratic, even shocking. A constant of the Gould criticism is surprise over his latest startling breach of interpretive decorum, for he was frequently willing to go much farther than any other performer of his day in his quest to find something new to say about familiar pieces, and he had no qualms about making changes to a composer's score in the process of shedding new light on the music.

What makes such interpretations difficult to ignore is, first, that they are always played so well, simply in terms of pianistic command, but also that they were clearly not made in ignorance: there is no doubt that Gould knew perfectly well how Mozart's and Beethoven's sonatas were supposed to be played; he was simply choosing another path. In fact, there are broadcasts in which Gould discusses some of his interpretations, first playing the piece the way it is "supposed to go," then playing his own outrageous alternative.

Some of Gould's most unusual—and highly criticized—interpretations include the following:

- Brahms, Piano Concerto No. 1 in D Minor (5, 6, and 8 April 1962 concert performances, with Leonard Bernstein conducting the New York Philharmonic). This was perhaps the most controversial performance of Gould's concert career, even without Bernstein's pre-concert speech where he stated his disagreement with Gould's conception of the piece. Gould used this interpretation as an opportunity to play down the elements of solo concertos to which he had musical and moral objections. He sought to play the piece as a kind of "symphony with an extra piano part," restraining the element of solo virtuosity and independence. He sought to make a coherent symphonic statement in this piece, rather than to underscore the element of conflict between solo and orchestral parts. He sought to convey the work as the gradual unfolding of a series of intricate thematic developments, rather than as a dramatic interplay of contrasts—in his view, to see the work through Schoenberg's eyes, rather than Liszt's or Rachmaninov's. To these ends, Gould chose an unusually slow tempo that shocked many listeners—and, moreover, built in precise rhythmic relationships within and between movements that served to bind the interpretation as a coherent whole. His playing of the piano part was often restrained rather than virtuosic, sometimes withdrawing behind the orchestra. He explored counterpoint latent within the texture of the piano part, and he made many changes to Brahms' dynamic markings. It was an effort to play a Romantic solo concerto by the more "democratic" standards of the Baroque concerto grosso, and by the structural criteria of a twentieth-century composer like Schoenberg. Gould wanted to listener to contemplate the work as it gradually unfolded, rather than to be excited by its drama and turbulence. The concert performances, though good enough to convey Gould's conception and shock the critics, were not without serious flaws; it is regrettable that Gould's interpretation did not get the performance it deserved—namely, the studio recording that had been planned only to be abandoned after the concerts caused a minor scandal.

- Beethoven, "Appassionata" Sonata (1967 Columbia studio recording). Gould quite openly admitted to hating this piece, the way he hated most of the big, famous, nicknamed works of Beethoven's middle years. The blustery Romantic rhetoric and pianistic fireworks of the work were anathema to Gould, and so he used the occasion of his recording to offer a kind of deconstruction. He intentionally undercuts just those rhetorical and pianistic elements to which he objected, using slow tempos, choppy articulation, crisp ornaments, and other devices. The result is a kind of mockery of the piece, with Gould endeavouring to express directly through

performance what it is about the work that he so despises. It is one of his most notorious performances, and it earned him some of his most heated critical notices.

• Mozart, Sonata in A Major, K. 331 (1970 Columbia studio recording). In the first movement, Gould totally reconceives the tempo relationships and so the structure of this theme-and-variations movement. Instead of a moderate theme with several moderate variations, concluding with a slow and fast variation, Gould imposes a scheme in which each variation is progressively faster than the previous. As a result, what should be a moderately paced theme becomes incredibly slow—indeed, in slow motion—and what should be a slow Variation 5 (marked *Adagio*) is in fact played almost *Allegro*. Yet, in its own perverse way, the performance works; its cumulative momentum seems convincing, and Variation 5 works surprisingly well as *opera buffa* rather than *opera seria*. And in the famous "Turkish rondo" finale of this same sonata, Gould takes an unusually slow tempo, clearly conveying a tongue-in-cheek perspective. In a 1966 television programme, Gould admitted that his decisions in this performance were somewhat "arbitrary," but he also admitted that he "wants people to sit up and take notice." It is no coincidence that the first-movement theme and the "Turkish rondo" are two of Mozart's most famous and beloved products, familiar to everyone. It is just such familiarity that Gould always sought to upset—even, perhaps, to parody.

• Wagner, *Siegfried Idyll* (1973 Columbia studio recording, in Gould's own piano transcription; 1982 private recording, with Gould conducting a chamber orchestra made up of members of the Toronto Symphony). Gould perceived a special "languour" in this work that he felt had not been sufficiently explored in the past, and he gave it maximum attention in both recorded performances. The tempo is incredibly slow throughout; the total timing in both performances is about twenty-four minutes—six or seven minutes slower than the average performance. It is as though Gould wanted to wring every possible nuance of lyricism, counterpoint, and expression from the music—a gesture typical of his passion for extremes.

On his recording of the "Turkish Rondo", from Mozart's Sonata in A major, K.331: "I can't say that I'm entirely convinced about the tempo choice for the Alla turca. At the time, it seemed important to establish a solid, maybe even stolid, tempo, partly to balance the tempo curve of the first movement—and, I admit frankly, partly because, to my knowledge, anyway, nobody had played it like that before, at least not on records."

(From an interview with Bruno Monsaingeon, *Piano Quarterly*, 1976)

Variant Interpretations

Given his belief that the role of the performer was properly creative, it is not surprising that when Gould revisited a piece, especially after not having played it for many years, he tended to offer a startlingly new reading of it. He believed in creatively renewing pieces by coming up with ever-new perspectives on them, ever-new interpretations, and he was often as good as his word when it came to recording a piece more than once. Gould saw this as one of the inevitable creative advantages of the recording process: it allowed you to say what you had to say about a piece and then move on to other works, and so if you do choose to revisit a work again after some time has passed, you will be able to see it with fresh eyes. By contrast, he said, concert life encourages you to keep pieces constantly in your repertoire, to the point that they become stale.

The following is a list of some of the more important Gould performances that offer strikingly different interpretations on different occasions.

• Bach, *The Art of Fugue*, Contrapunctus 1. Four different Gould performances survive: from a 1957 Moscow concert, from a 1959 National Film Board of Canada documentary (played on the Chickering piano at Gould's cottage), from his 1962 recording on the organ, and from Bruno Monsaingeon's 1979 Bach film *The Question of Instrument*. In all three of the piano performances, Gould offers a very slow, intimate, almost mystical reading of the piece, but the turn to the organ in 1962 must have encouraged a new perspective: his tempo in Contrapunctus 1 here is almost twice as fast as the piano versions!

• Bach, Goldberg Variations. A comparison of Gould's 1955 and 1981 studio recordings offers many diverging interpretations of specific variations—for example, Nos. 6 and 19. In the later version, Gould also offers a much slower performance of the Aria, even slower in the closing Aria da capo.

• Bach, Two-Part Inventions and Three-Part Sinfonias. Gould played these pieces in concerts and broadcasts as well as for his 1964 studio recording, and many of the individual pieces offer some extreme contrasts of mood and tempo in different performances. In at least one case—the Sinfonia No. 11 in G Minor—there is one performance that is almost *three times* as fast as another—an astonishing reinterpretation of the piece's basic character.

• Bach, *The Well-Tempered Clavier*, Book II. in addition to his studio recording, Gould played several of the fugues in concerts, broadcasts, and films (a few on the harpsichord), often with significant changes. With the Fugue in C-sharp Major, for example, his 1967 studio and 1970 television performances differ in tempo by almost one hundred percent; with the Fugue in E Major, Gould's 1969 studio recording is almost *three times* as fast as his original 1957 recording.

• Berg, Sonata, Opus 1. Eight Gould performances of this work survive, from 1951 to 1974, and including studio recordings, television and radio broadcasts, films, and concerts. Throughout this period, Gould's conception of the work seems to grow progressively slower, broader, more meditative and contrapuntal, and, by his last performances, almost Wagnerian in the sense of gradual unfolding with which he plays it.

• Mozart, Sonata in C Major, K. 330, first movement. Of Gould's two studio recordings, the later, from 1970, is some fifty percent faster than the earlier, from 1958, and the whole character of the movement changes—from an intimate meditation to pure, scampering *opera buffa*.

• Mozart, Sonata in B-flat Major, K. 333, first movement. In his studio recording, made between 1965 and 1970, Gould rejects the commonly heard lyrical, sentimental interpretation of the movement; instead, he scampers through it, with an unusually detached touch and an almost ironic tone. In his CBC television performance from 1967, however, he takes a much slower tempo, and uses the opportunity to explore all sorts of hidden counterpoint in the left-hand—"adding vitamins to the music," as he told an interviewer.

My case is that the one is as absurdly fast as the other is absurdly slow, and both fail to penetrate to the true pulse of Mozart. Neither reveals the slightest awareness of that magical mix of constraint, contrast, and conflict, which are surely always at the heart of Mozart's dramaturgy. I always recall that, during the Last Unpleasantness, Dame Jocelyn played this very work at the National Gallery...

(Gould as Sir Nigel Twitt-Thornwaite discussing Gould's two recordings of Mozart's Sonata in C Major, K. 330, from *A Glenn Gould Fantasy*, 1980)

Personality

Eccentricity

Gould was almost as renowned as an eccentric as he was as a musician: both on stage and off, from the beginning of his career, his character and behaviour were the subject of much discussion and much press, for the idiosyncrasies of his playing style and interpretations were matched by those of his personality. But like all eccentrics, Gould didn't think he was the least bit eccentric, and though he took a good-natured interest in his own eccentricity, and certainly promoted it for its publicity value, still his ideas and behaviour were never meant for mere shock value, but were sincere reflections of his very stubborn insistence on leading the life he chose without compromise for the sake of fitting societal norms.

As Geoffrey Payzant put it in *Glenn Gould: Music and Mind*, the first book about Gould, he was simply someone who had decided how he wanted to live his life and was living it just that way; it was, in many ways, a consistent and logical lifestyle, eccentric only by conventional standards. Still, when Gould first burst onto the music scene in the early 1950s, his eccentricities were as much the attraction as his music making, especially in North America and England. (He claimed that Europeans were more interested in his music-making, North Americans in his eccentricities, and the press coverage does somewhat bear out this recollection.)

Gould was considered a sort of James Dean or Bobby Fischer of music, and newspaper and magazine profiles of him, especially in his concert days, couldn't get enough of his unusual ideas and behaviour, and Gould was frequently required to comment on press reports about his eccentricities. Predictably, there was much comment of a genius-madman type, a theme put most succinctly by the conductor George Szell famously said, "That nut's a genius."

Stolid, grey, unimaginative, eccentric...

(Gould on Gould, from the CBC television programme "Variations on Glenn Gould," in the series *Telescope*, 1968)

I don't think that my life style is like most other people's and I'm rather glad for that; I think it's in some way integrated with the kind of work that I want to do. As I said previously, the two things, life style and work, have become one. Now if that's eccentricity, then I'm eccentric. If eccentricity consists of wearing a scarf in an air-conditioned environment while recording, or playing with an overcoat on during my stay in Jerusalem, I'm guilty; but those things are organic to what I have to do.

(From an interview with Elyse Mach, *Great Pianists Speak for Themselves*, 1980)

Platform Manner

From the beginning of his public performing career, and especially in North America and England, Gould received much comment and criticism for his unusual demeanor and highly choreographic manner at the piano.

The first thing audiences often noticed about Gould was his appearance on the stage, where he often seemed fragile and unwilling, and slightly dishevelled (even when he was wearing a tuxedo, which wasn't always). He would slump toward the piano; afterward, he seemed embarrassed by the applause, he would bow awkwardly, and so on. He might ask for the air conditioning to be turned off, or ask that a far-away door be closed, or (as once in Israel) be surrounded by space heaters and play with gloves and scarf on to counteract a draft. In places like England, where proper deportment at concerts is taken seriously, Gould's manner on stage was often criticized as disrespectful, though in places like Germany critics sometimes conjured up all manner of Romantic "genius-madman" imagery to describe Gould's appearance.

Once actually seated at the piano, Gould's manner was no more conventional. He sat very low in his chair—about 14 inches off the ground (20 is normal)—with the piano up on blocks a little over an inch high. This gave the effect of him hunched over, his nose almost on top of the keys, and he would hum and sing, conduct, flail his arms, rotate and rock, stare at the ceiling as he played, sometimes with his legs crossed or splayed out—almost as though trying to absolutely minimize his physical contact with the instrument and carry on the musical argument in his body. During orchestral passages in concertos, he might fidget, conduct, stare at the ceiling, or sip from a glass of water—again, to the frustration of many critics, one of whom suggested that he might like a ham sandwich, too... His vocalizing became one of his most notorious traits, in concert and recordings, where it was clearly audible and often the subject of comment, though many listeners have great affection for it, too.

> Suppose I wear a gas mask while I play? Then you won't hear me sing.
>
> (From a profile by Joseph Roddy, *The New Yorker*, 1960)

Sense of Humour

Though he was a melancholy person in some respects, and certainly a control freak, both personally and musically, Gould was also a very humorous person—indeed, a profoundly humorous person, who enjoyed little jokes and puns and funny voices and witticisms but who also had a deep streak of irony that greatly influenced his musical interpretations. He had a degree of humour unusual for a "serious" classical performer. It is difficult to think of another classical musician so willing to dress up in costume and do terrible accents in public, or to write articles with titles like "The Future and 'Flat-Foot Floogie'," or "'Oh for Heaven's Sake, Cynthia, There Must Be Something Else On!'," or "The Grass Is Always Greener in the Outtakes." He wrote many articles of a humorous or parodistic nature, some under pseudonyms.

Gould's particular brand of humour certainly betrays his roots: articles like his parody of Arthur Rubinstein's autobiography, and radio programmes like *Conference at Port Chilkoot*, belong squarely in the comedic tradition of Stephen Leacock, Paul Hiebert, and Robertson Davies. (Orillia, the small town near Lake Simcoe where he spent so much time in his youth, was in fact Leacock's hometown, and he once made sketches for a song based on one of the poems of Sarah Binks, Hiebert's fictional "Sweet Songstress of Saskatchewan.")

Gould loved to do characters, inventing alter-egos for himself—a German avant-garde composer, an elderly British conductor, a New York beatnik, a Scottish radio technician... He would "put on" one of these characters at the drop of a hat in conversation with friends, but they also infiltrated his work. In radio and television programmes, even sometimes in public concerts, as well as in his writings, Gould often spoke through his alter-egos. Sometimes, as in his in-costume commercials for CBC television, it was all in fun, but other times, as in *A Glenn Gould Fantasy* and *The Scene*, he used humorous means to discuss ideas that, in fact, were very important to him—things like musical idealism, historical performance practice, ethics, radio documentaries, and so on. It says something about Gould's character that he was willing to bring together the most serious and most unserious aspects of himself together in his work.

Gould's sense of humour was reflected in his playing in countless ways, to a degree perhaps unprecedented in a serious classical performer. These range from small scale witticisms, turns of phrase, "bits," jokes in his performances, to elements of irony and parody in some of his interpretations. For example, there is certainly parody, tongue-in-cheek humour, even sarcasm in performances like the fast Mozart movements, the self-consciously "different" tempos and phrasing in familiar pieces (Bach's C-major prelude, Mozart's "Turkish rondo", Beethoven's "Appassionata", etc.) There's even a sense of self-parody in performances like the Beethoven-Liszt Fifth Symphony, the Wagner transcriptions, and Ravel's *La Valse*: it's almost as though Gould were poking fun at the sort of heady, clangy, virtuoso showpieces

that he generally despised. But there is a broader sense of irony in Gould's whole relationship to his art form—irony in his rejection of so many conventions about classical music and its performance, about interpretation, and about the piano. In other words, in his playing as much as his writing or broadcasting, Gould was a joker and a nose-thumber as well as a serious artist.

Well, I'm a ham, as you know...

(From an interview with Dennis Braithwaite, *Toronto Daily Star*, March 28 1959)

Lifestyle

Geoffrey Payzant, in the first book on Gould, *Glenn Gould: Music and Mind*, wrote: 10"Perhaps the author of the second book on Glenn Gould will attempt a 'conventional' biography. He will fail. Gould has protected his private life from public scrutiny, firmly but courteously, as no other celebrity among artists in our time has done. Moreover, unless I am much in error, his private life is in fact austere and unremarkable. A book on his life and times would be brief and boring..." This is not entirely true, though it certainly represents how Gould wanted people to think about him.

Still, in many ways, it is true that Gould's life was "unremarkable"; certainly it was, for the most part, "austere." He was a workaholic, who led a punishing work schedule all his life, and seemed to put aside little time for matters unrelated to his work. He earned a good deal of money, even after he retired from concert life, but he did not spend it on creature comforts or the trappings of wealth; rather, he used it to fund his work projects and to permit him the schedule that allowed him to do what he wanted professionally. He was reportedly an artist at playing the stock market, and for a performer who had no concert income for twenty years and who funded his own projects, he left a relatively large estate. His first call upon waking was often to his stock broker, who once said that, during a notorious downturn in the market one year, Gould was his only customer to make money, through his own insight and initiative.

Gould lived alone all his life, and maintained an unusual schedule: working at night and sleeping by day. He maintained a penthouse apartment at 110 St. Clair West as well as a studio at the Inn on the Park hotel; both allowed him to be close to 24-hour food service. Few friends or colleagues knew his whereabouts or telephone number, and few were permitted to visit him at home.

Gould's life was Spartan in many respects; he was little concerned with "lifestyle." He was a non-smoker, he did not drink alcohol, he took no exercise and played no sports. He had almost no interest in food or drink, and friends say that he had no sense of smell or taste to speak of. He ate large meals in his younger days, but eventually became a vegetarian, subsisting on an ascetic regimen: scrambled eggs, Arrowroot biscuits, spring water, weak tea. (He declared that "greens are an abomination.") His ubiquitous Poland spring water—he was afraid to drink tap water—was the subject of much comment during his early days on tour and in the recording studio.

Gould's long drives are the stuff of legend, and there are numerous tales variously detailing his reputation for all forms of reckless driving. He had learned to drive at an early age, sitting on his father's knees, and initiated a long series of accidents by driving into Lake Simcoe. Leonard Bernstein recalled how one night Gould invited him to see Toronto in his overheated Sedan. It was too dark to see anything, and Gould

drove around at high speed, singing along with Petula Clark. Likewise, Jock Carroll describes how he helplessly stared from the “suicide seat” while Gould took him for a drive around the Bahamas, engaging in a soliloquy about the condition of the natives while menacing them, their children, their chickens and their shanties with his driving.

Gould felt in control—although his passengers never did—as long as he had one hand on the steering wheel. His posture at the wheel was no less eccentric than his stance at the piano. He would frequently cross his legs while driving, practice an imaginary piano on the steering wheel, and ignore traffic signals while chatting on his car phone. Needless to say, he crashed several vehicles, and his traffic infringements will probably never be fully documented. He always preferred large American models which provided him with comfortable seats and “more protection” in case of an accident.

Gould drove wherever he could. He had stopped flying because he feared death by air crash, and no doubt because of the sense of security he derived from feeling in control. He once recounted a recurring dream about being asked by the flight attendant to replace the disabled pilots in the cockpit. After protesting that he knows nothing about flying, he accepts and guides the plane back to safety. Gould disliked trains as well, which he considered too cold; and he was unimpressed by the cabin service.

Gould always insisted that solitude was necessary to him—indeed, necessary to the creative life. He preferred physical solitude—distance from others—but also intellectual solitude—isolation from the influences of others. This had both advantages and disadvantages for his work. He felt that solitude increased one’s creativity, and that it was dissipated by too much contact with outside influences; he even advised music students to stop listening to each other and rely on their own imaginations.

Gould liked to tell the story of the time, in 1958, when he was increasingly ill on tour, finally collapsing in Hamburg at the Hotel Vier Jahreszeiten, where he spent a month recuperating. He called it the best month of his life, because the most solitary—he was able to cancel many concerts and abandon concert life.

Though he lived physically alone, Gould was not really a hermit because he maintained constant contact with people, primarily through the telephone, of which he was a virtuoso. His telephone calls were often hours long (he might read an entire essay or sing an entire opera), and always on his own time, meaning in the middle of the night. Through technology, he was a very plugged-in hermit.

On his hotel suite: “Welcome to the workroom of the Marquis de Sade.”

(From a profile by Joseph Roddy, *The New Yorker*, 1960)

On a downturn in the stock market: “Another bad week like that and I’ll have to record Grieg and Tchaikovsky to recoup.”

(From a profile by Joseph Roddy, *The New Yorker*, 1960)

I suppose it can be said that I’m an absent-minded driver. It’s true that I’ve driven through a number of red lights on occasion, but on the other hand, I’ve stopped at a lot of green ones but never gotten credit for it.

(From an interview with Alfred Bester, *Holiday*, April 1964)

First of all, I can’t divorce the studio from my personal life. The recording studio and the kind of womblike security that it gives is very much integrated with my life style. I guess it’s all part of my fantasy to develop to the fullest extent a kind of Howard Hughesian secrecy. I’m a very private person, I think. I’m alone, or quasi-alone, a lot because the recording studio, with its small crew, provides me with the atmosphere that I need to work productively—to make music or, indeed, to work on a radio or television program. I stay up all night mostly. I very rarely go to bed until five or six o’clock in the morning, and it’s not unusual for me to hear the headlines on the “Today Show” before turning in. I tend to get up around three in the afternoon.

This schedule gradually evolved over a period of many years. During my concert-giving days, I either went to bed early, if I had a concert the next day, or late if I had one the night before. So, in the early years, my schedule was very erratic; but thereafter I gradually became a night person. I have a rather delightful studio in Toronto where I do a lot of my editing, late, late at night, sometimes working all night until the crack of dawn.

(From an interview with Elyse Mach, *Great Pianists Speak for Themselves*, 1980)

Hypochondria

Gould had many legitimate medical concerns throughout his life, like poor circulation, and he was constitutionally delicate, but he was also a legendary hypochondriac, constantly inventing or exaggerating ailments, undertaking medical treatments, fretting over the condition of his body, refusing to go near hospitals or sick people or crowds or other potential sources of germs, and medicating himself. (Some of this hypochondria seems to have originated in his mother's excessive concern with protecting him from disease.)

According to Lorne Tulk, Gould enjoyed being 'doctor', and his appetite for medical and pharmacological knowledge was at the root of his fascination. Tulk remembers a time when he mentioned to Gould a news story about recent pharmaceutical research, only to have Gould return the next day with detailed information about the new findings, scoured from his library of medical texts.

Gould chronicled his pill intake in detail, and frequently checked his pulse and blood pressure throughout the day, recording the results in diaries (he owned his own blood-pressure equipment). Yet, for all his concern, he did nothing, in terms of diet or exercise or lifestyle—nothing, that is, beyond taking pills—to alleviate the high blood pressure that would eventually kill him.

Gould took many pills from early on in his career, enough that it became the subject of jokes, his own and others'. Early press reports already noted that he always carried an assortment of pills with him: tranquilizers, sleeping pills, uppers, pain-killers, blood-pressure and circulation pills, anti-depressants, anti-convulsants, and more. Prominent among the books on his shelf was a *Compendium of Pharmaceuticals and Specialties*, yet he tended not to heed advice about self-medicating, and took large amounts of medication in alarming and dangerous combinations, receiving different prescriptions simultaneously from several doctors.

From an early age, Gould also sought out many types of medical treatment for muscle aches, poor circulation, and other problems. During his concert days, he came to know doctors and therapists in every town, and was part of a private network of friends and colleagues who shared medical advice. He tried all sorts of therapies that were unusual in his day: chiropractic, massage, ultrasound, heat, wax baths. He was hypersensitive at this time: once, he claimed serious injury after receiving a physical greeting from a Steinway employee, and a lawsuit against Steinway (eventually settled out of court) resulted.

Certainly, he used any such incident, however minor, as an excuse to cancel a concert. His concert schedule was hectic and stressful enough that his health concerns were partly justified, but even after his

retirement from public appearances he remained obsessed with his bodily state. Once, while filming a television show, he gently bumped his head on a microphone, then began to obsess over all of the inevitable symptoms to come from this “concussion”; he eventually realized that he had overreacted. The classic anecdote about Gould the hypochondriac has the pianist hanging up the phone on someone who sneezes on the other end; whether or not apocryphal, it has a ring of truth.

Gould’s hypochondria is certainly related to his famous habit of overdressing—wearing a coat, muffler, gloves, cap, and boots even in the warmest summer weather. In fact, one of his friends recalled seeing Gould don his full outdoor regalia merely to walk from one floor to another of a hotel. Perhaps these sartorial oddities originated in real circulatory problems; in any event, this overdressing, documented in countless photographs, became one of Gould’s trademarks, one of his most beloved most discussed eccentricities, and one which he often poked fun of himself.

I admit that I wear too much in the summer and not enough in the winter, but the fact is, there’s too much air-conditioning in the summer and too many cold drafts in the winter, so what can I do?

(From an interview with Alfred Bester, *Holiday*, April 1964)

I’ve always been prone to be fussy about the way the world has treated my hands and arms and shoulders in general. It’s not so bad when I can be prepared, but I’m rather alarmed when I don’t know what will happen; as in a crowd, for example. It’s true that some years ago the fact that I’m a hypochondriac was more obvious. I conceal it more today.

(From an interview with Alfred Bester, *Holiday*, April 1964)

Romantic Life

Gould's romantic life is a subject of much speculation and very little evidence. It is an issue about which he was fiercely private.

In his teens and twenties, Gould occasionally went out on dates that were reportedly relatively chaste affairs, friendly meetings with conversation about books and music. His childhood friend Robert Fulford says that Gould never speculated on the sexuality of girls, and his biographers have noted that he grew up in a sexually repressive environment, which influenced his adult behaviour.

Only his closest friends saw anything of Gould's romantic life, which was "off limits" as a subject for comment or conversation, especially to the press. His early interviews and media profiles are sometimes amusing in this regard. Very early, his mother was already fielding questions about why he didn't have a girlfriend, and in his touring days he responded discreetly to such questions by making coy remarks about not having time for a personal life, being married to his music, and so on. A 1959 interview with *Toronto Daily Star* reporter Dennis Braithwaite included this priceless and revealing exchange:

> Q: *Are you engaged, or do you have a steady girl friend?*
> A: I am not engaged.
> Q: *Getting back to your music...*

During Gould's concert years, he apparently had a significant homosexual following. The discretion with which he conducted his private life fuelled the speculation that he was homosexual, although he and his friends insisted he was not, and there is no evidence that he was. Particularly early in his career, there was something almost asexual, androgynous about Gould—a quality beautifully captured in Jock Carroll's 1956 photo-essay. One profile from the early 1960s refers to him as the classical pianist of choice for the Beatnik crowd, and other early press reports gave him epithets like the James Dean of the piano.

Yet, though he championed purity and restraint and called himself a Puritan, Gould was capable of great passion, even sensuousness, in life as in music. Despite his avowed hermitic tendencies, he did have some relationships with women, including one with a married woman that was serious enough for her to leave her husband and move to Toronto, though it ultimately ended.

Throughout his career, Gould proved very attractive to many women, and he even had a few encounters with obsessive female fans who wanted to contact—and sometimes marry—him. Gould's father had to chase away at least one woman from the cottage, and his record producer Andrew Kazdin recalls Gould cowering in the Columbia studios to avoid the attentions of a persistent admirer.

"Was he ever interested in girls?" "He never could take the time from his music."

(Gould's father, Russell Herbert Gould, from an interview with Alfred Bester, *Holiday*, April 1964)

Conducting

Tendency to Conduct

In a sense, Gould was forever “conducting.” He had one of the most choreographic piano styles in history, and much of his swaying and gesticulating and vocalizing at the keyboard seemed intended to try to direct or shape the music the way he heard it in his mind—physical manifestations of his mental picture of the music, as though he were seeking to “conduct” his piano-playing hands the way a conductor directs an orchestra.

This tendency to conduct is particularly clear in passages where one hand is free, even for the briefest period, and Gould inevitably conducts with the free hand. Gould once said that there was a “wishful-thinking” aspect to his vocalizing, that it represented how, in his mind, he wanted the music to sound, which he was never quite able to realize perfectly at the keyboard; the same was certainly true of his conducting at the keyboard: it helped him to shape phrases as he played.

Indeed, for someone whose conception of music was so cerebral, so intellectual, there was a remarkable degree of physicality in Gould’s perception of music: even while simply listening to playbacks or running through music in his mind, he was constantly humming, singing, gesticulating, sometimes passionately so. This apparent desire to express and communicate the music he was thinking through outward gesture, plus his interest in music beyond the piano, made it almost inevitable that Gould would one day take up the baton.

Even as a pianist, there was something “conductorly” or “orchestral” about Gould’s approach to performance, as he himself noted. For one thing, he claimed to be relatively uninterested in the piano as an instrument, and was particularly critical of the indulgent rhythmic nuances that many solo pianists allowed themselves, nuances that no conductor could get away with in front of an orchestra. Gould claimed to have modelled his playing to a great degree on conductors rather than pianists, and he had as many idols among conductors (Mengelberg, Furtwängler, Stokowski) as among pianists. Even in Romantic music, and certainly in Baroque and Classical repertoire, he wanted a degree of rhythmic control and structural shape and clarity that he associated with symphonic music, with conductors rather than piano soloists.

Gould’s playing was also orchestral in the sense that he, once again, thought little of the innate sounds and techniques of conventional Romantic piano music, and instead sought inspiration from other sources—orchestral instruments, above all, but also the harpsichord and organ, the human voice, the

synthesizer. Many of the unusual sounds and phrases in Gould's playing can be traced back to his desire to imitate on the piano some other sonority—a string instrument's *pizzicato*, for example, or the strumming and plucking of a lute, or the registrations of an organ or harpsichord. In fact, unusually for a pianist, he believed that the piano was best used when it was being the least pianistic, for example to make transcriptions of music for other keyboard instruments or for orchestra or opera.

> Part of the secret in playing the piano is to separate yourself from the instrument in every possible way. When I'm conducting, very often what I'm doing is creating some sort of imaginary picture in my own mind of a reluctant cello player who needs cajoling to phrase better or try harder. I need to feel that these are really not my fingers, that they are somehow independent extensions which I simply happen to be in contact with at that moment.
>
> (From an interview with Dale Harris, *Performance Magazine*, December 1981)

Fondness for Transcriptions

Not surprisingly, given his views about the piano, his wide musical interests, and his prodigious musical memory, Gould was fond of playing transcriptions of orchestral and operatic music on the piano, generally in his own improvised transcriptions. This certainly reveals at least a latent instinct for conducting. Friends and colleagues have testified to hearing Gould play entire operas—like Strauss's *Elektra* or *Capriccio*—from memory in his own piano versions, playing everything possible with his fingers and singing what his hands could not reach. His private repertoire of such music was apparently vast, taking in all manner of symphonies and tone poems, chamber music and Lieder, operas... The "official" studio recordings and broadcasts in which he played transcriptions are only the tip of the iceberg.

You know, *Meistersinger* has been a sort of partypiece of mine for more years than I care to count and, without ever bothering to concoct an "official" transcription, I used to play it strictly for my own amazement. But as you know, [...] the last three minutes represent Wagner's simultaneous send-up of, and homage to, the traditions of German musical academe and, ingeniously but inconsiderately, he condenses all previous motives into a kind of *Kunst der Fuge*-like congestion that is, literally, impossible to render on the keyboard unless you deliberately divest it of at least a portion of its contrapuntal invention.

(From *GlennGould*, Fall 1996)

I have the most hair-raising piano transcriptions of Strauss tone poems that you'll ever hear. I play them privately.

(From an interview with Bernard Asbell, *Horizon*, January 1962)

Gould's most important public performances of piano transcriptions

• An excerpt from Webern's *Passacaglia* for orchestra, played during his 12 May 1957 lecture-recital at the Moscow Conservatory.

• Excerpts from his own String Quartet, from Bruckner's String Quintet, from Strauss's tone poem *Ein Heldenleben*, and other works, in the 1959 CBC radio interview *At Home with Glenn Gould*.

• The opening of Schubert's Symphony No. 5, in the 1959 National Film Board of Canada documentary *Glenn Gould: Off the Record*.

• The orchestral accompaniment of Strauss's "Beim Schlafengehen," one of the Four Last Songs, with soprano Lois Marshall, performed during his 1962 CBC television special on Strauss.

• A number of excerpts from songs, chamber music, orchestral works, and other non-piano music by Schoenberg and Strauss, including a long segment from the opera *Elektra*, in the 1966 BBC series *Conversations with Glenn Gould*, with Humphrey Burton.

• Beethoven, Symphony No. 5, in Liszt's transcription (1968 Columbia studio recording).

• Beethoven, Symphony No. 6 (*Pastoral*), in Liszt's transcription (1968 Columbia studio recording); only the first movement was recorded, and it was not released until 1980.

• Beethoven, Symphony No. 6 (*Pastoral*), in Liszt's transcription (1968 CBC radio broadcast); complete performance.

• Three orchestral showpieces by Wagner, in Gould's own transcription (1973 Columbia studio recording): *Siegfried Idyll*, the Prelude to *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*, and "Dawn" and "Siegfried's Rhine Journey" from *Götterdämmerung*. (Gould also played the *Idyll* in a CBC radio programme that same year.)

• Wagner, Prelude to *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*, in Gould's own transcription, in the first film of Bruno Monsaingeon's 1974 series for French television, *Chemins de la musique*.

• Ravel, *La Valse*, in Gould's own reworking of the composer's solo-piano transcription, performed in "The Flight from Order: 1910-1920," No. 2 in Gould's programme "Music in Our Time", for the CBC television series *Musicamera*, 1975.

Early Conducting

Gould did have a few formal conducting experiences early in his career. For example, he led, from the piano, some concert performances of works that feature the piano along with a chamber or orchestral ensemble—works like Bach's Brandenburg Concerto No. 5, *Musical Offering*, and *Art of Fugue* , and Schoenberg's *Ode to Napoleon Bonaparte*—at the Stratford and Vancouver International Festivals, and occasionally elsewhere.

Gould did some conducting from the keyboard in later life, too, as when he led groups of instrumentalists in a cantata and a Brandenburg Concerto by Bach (CBC television, 1962), and in pieces from Schoenberg's *Pierrot lunaire* (CBC television, 1975).

Gould also did a little "straight" conducting in front of a full orchestra: on CBC television, in 1957, he conducted the fourth movement, "Urlicht," from Mahler's Symphony No. 2, with contralto soloist Maureen Forrester. That same year, for a CBC radio broadcast, he conducted the CBC Vancouver Orchestra in some rather uncharacteristic repertoire: Mozart's Symphony No. 1 and Schubert's Symphony No. 5. But at this time, Gould rejected taking on conducting as a serious sideline, because, he claimed, it made different demands on his musculature and, ultimately, had ill effects on his piano playing.

> I had many plans for myself as a conductor, but having done it twice this year, I've given them up. The concerts, in Toronto and Vancouver, were quite successful and I had a wonderful time. But after they were over, I couldn't go near a piano for two weeks. So I cancelled all my other conducting engagements. Don't ask me why; I don't even like to think about it.
>
> (Quoted in Otto Friedrich, *Glenn Gould: A Life and Variations*, 1989)

Later Conducting Plans

In the early 1980s, not long before his death, Gould spoke of entering a new phase in his career, and he began making plans for himself as a performer. It was clear that he did not see himself being primarily a pianist past the age of 50. Though he had not said all he wanted to say as a performer, he decided to turn his attention in earnest to conducting.

In his last year, Gould began to make lists of pieces he planned to conduct—favourite pieces like the Brandenburg Concertos, Beethoven's Symphonies Nos. 2 and 8, overtures and symphonies by Mendelssohn and Brahms, Schoenberg's Chamber Symphony No. 1, Strauss' *Metamorphosen*, and many more. He made plans to study the scores, and assembled a few "dream programmes" for potential albums. He even conceived of a plan to record concertos by conducting the orchestra himself, then recording the piano parts separately and overdubbing them. (When he conducted privately two movements from Beethoven's Piano Concerto No. 2, with the Hamilton Philharmonic and a pianist hired for the occasion, it was apparently a dry run for just such a project.) Some of these late conducting projects were to be coordinated with film projects with Bruno Monsaingeon; in fact, according to Monsaingeon, Gould had apparently planned to end his career as a performer with a recording and film of Bach's monumental B-minor Mass.

In preparation for his new career as a conductor, Gould began to undertake, at his own expense, private recording sessions with orchestral musicians in Hamilton and Toronto, to practice and experiment. In one of these sessions, in the summer of his last year, 1982, he led a group of Toronto Symphony musicians in a chamber-orchestra performance of Wagner's *Siegfried Idyll*, which he had recorded a decade earlier on the piano. This was the only studio recording of Gould conducting that has ever been released, and it offers only a small taste of what might have been.

At the time of his death, Gould was scheduled to meet with Monsaingeon to discuss a *Siegfried Idyll* film, and he had already scheduled sessions for a recording of Mendelssohn's "Hebrides" Overture. We can only imagine what body of work he might have left as a conductor, but we can predict that it would have been as idiosyncratic and controversial as his piano playing. The reception of his unusual *Siegfried Idyll* certainly suggests as much: the composer and conductor Gunther Schuller, in a recent book on conducting, called this recording "probably the most inept, amateurish, wrong-headed rendition of a major classic ever put to vinyl," while the Russian conductor Gennady Rojdesventsky told Monsaingeon that "if Gould is going to take up conducting he is going to put us all out of business."

Gould's interest in conducting, near the end of his life, included the idea of recording concertos by taping the solo and orchestral parts separately, then mixing them together, allowing him to serve as both pianist and conductor. He was apparently considering something like this idea at least as early as 1976, when the German conductor Herbert von Karajan was making guest appearances in New York. At that time, Gould proposed recording two concertos with Karajan—the Bach D-minor and the Beethoven Second—and actually wrote out a scenario in which he imagined how they might collaborate without physically performing together. In the end, the idea never materialized, but the surviving scenario provides some fascinating insight into Gould's comfort with recording technology, and into his view of the possibilities of conducting in a technological context.

Step. 1. HvK and GG would first discuss, via phone if poss., all relevant interpretative aspects—temp, dyn. relationships etc.
2. GG would then proceed to pre-record piano part, editing a two-track submaster which could be approp. leadered, either for tracking or a mix, for stop-tape cues (during tuttis), or ... in relation to brief orch-solo exchanges (these, if they do not work, could of course be tracked subseq.).
3. HvK would then record orch. part using piano pre-tape (and audio feed ear-phone). The procedure would def. necc. stop-tape points so that piano track could be recued etc.
4. Some segments would clearly benefit by being done the other way around—i.e. orch. material recorded first ....
Thesis and Resolution: That HvK and GG could have a meeting of minds without a meeting.
Antithesis and Retribution: The result could sound goddamn awful.

(From Gould's private journals, 1976)

Gorgeous! Magnificent! Heart-breaking! Your cheques are in the mail.

(Gould to his musicians, after conducting Wagner's *Siegfried Idyll*, 1982)

The End of Gould's Life

By about age 50, Gould was claiming to have largely exhausted the piano literature that interested him. After considerable reflection, he did renew his contract with CBS Masterworks, but it was clear that he was thinking of himself less and less as a pianist, or even a performer. In his final piano recordings—various Bach pieces, some Haydn and Beethoven sonatas, works by Brahms and Strauss—there is a sense of tying up loose ends, of getting to favoured repertoire that had been put off. He brought long-standing plans to record the complete keyboard music of Bach and the complete sonatas of Beethoven nearer to completion.

One wonders if there would have been any more piano albums had Gould lived longer; perhaps he was signalling an end to his public life as a pianist. Certainly, by the end of his life, his attention seems to have turned quite definitively to conducting, and one can imagine him spending the 1980s on the podium rather than at the keyboard. (Gould was generally as good as his word, even when it came to seemingly grandiose plans; we should recall that he was insisting that he would retire from concert life almost as soon as he entered concert life, though few believed him at the time.)

After spending some time conducting the orchestral music that interested him, Gould planned to retire entirely from performance, and devote himself to writing and composing. He had long expressed an interest in trying his hand at fiction, but he was also thinking about autobiography, and around 1982, at the behest of *Piano Quarterly* editor Robert Silverman, he made some handwritten notes for a projected autobiographical essay—or even book—on his touring years. These were merely realizations of plans to write and compose that he had been espousing since his earliest concert days, and there is every reason to believe him. He may also have realized his ambition to "retire" from city life and spend his time in the country—perhaps to that reserve on Manitoulin Island and the sanctuary for old animals that he dreamed of…

For all his rationality, Gould had a spiritual streak that sometimes showed itself in strange superstitions, phobias, obsessions. He often said that he did not think he would live long past the age of 50, and he was right: he lived scarcely a week longer. The fall of 1982 saw the release of Gould's digital re-recording of the Goldberg Variations, a release which garnered a great deal of critical attention (it would become his "theme song"). There was also the inevitable round of publicity for the new recording, new interviews and the like, as well as impending fiftieth-birthday celebrations, which Gould dreaded. Friends, especially those who saw him late in life after a long absence, noticed that his appearance had deteriorated, that he seemed tired. Years of unhealthy living were clearly catching up with him, exacerbating his family history of cardiovascular disease. Poor diet, lack of exercise, odd hours, the stress of a punishing schedule, and of

course his increasingly dangerous use of prescription medications—these are surely to blame for Gould's death at such a young age.

On 27 September 1982, Gould suffered a massive stroke. He was taken to Toronto General Hospital, where for a time he was in and out of consciousness, but it soon became clear that he would not recover. He was removed from life support and died on 4 October. He is buried, with his parents, in Mount Pleasant Cemetery, in Toronto. The benefactors of his estate are the Salvation Army and the Toronto Humane Society.

> I can only say that I was brought up as a Presbyterian; I stopped being a church-goer at the age of about eighteen, but I have had all my life a tremendously strong sense that, indeed, there is a hereafter, and the transformation of the spirit is a phenomenon with which one must reckon, and in the light of which, indeed, one must attempt to live one's life. As a consequence, I find all here-and-now philosophies repellent. On the other hand, I don't have any objective images to build around my notion of a hereafter, and I recognize that it's a great temptation to formulate a comforting theory of eternal life, so as to reconcile one's self to the inevitability of death. But I'd like to think that's not what I'm doing; I'd like to think that I'm not employing it as a deliberate self-reassuring process. For me, it intuitively seems right; I've never had to work at convincing myself about the likelihood of a life hereafter. It is simply something that appears infinitely more plausible than its opposite, which would be oblivion.
>
> (From an interview with Elyse Mach, *Great Pianists Speak for Themselves*, 1980)

Gould's Posthumous "Life"

Though popular and much discussed around the world while he lived—even years after his retirement from concert life—Gould's international fame has grown steadily, even exponentially, since his untimely death, and his work has been widely disseminated and intensely studied. But he is no less controversial in death; indeed, rarely has a classical performer provoked such a response.

Critical opinion of Gould was always divided: he has been called a genius and a charlatan and everything in between. He has been criticized, dismissed, and caricatured by many musicians and critics, and still has many vehement detractors, particularly among those musicians most directly challenged by his work (pianists, historical performers, musicologists). But he also continues to boast a huge following among musicians and non-musicians alike, and he has numbered among his fans some impressive names, musical and otherwise (Igor Stravinsky, Aaron Copland, Roland Barthes, Samuel Beckett).

Gould had rabid admirers already in his concert days, and since his death there have been some signs of a reverential cult following among some fans: many travel to Toronto solely to visit his grave, or other "Gould sites," and one reads reports from overseas of fan events like an "Arrowroot-Poland Water Day" in Japan. Gould has provoked unusually passionate and very personal responses in many listeners—perhaps predictably, given his eccentric character and lifestyle, provocative ideas and interpretations, intensity as a communicator, distinctive piano style, his many challenges to conventions of life and music, and the ways in which his music-making reflects larger aesthetic, philosophical, and ethical points of view.

Gould's sudden, untimely death was highly publicized, and focussed renewed international attention on him—attention that never went away, and in fact has only grown in the years since. The most obvious sign of this renewed interest is the many efforts, in the last fifteen years, to collect, disseminate, and study his work, in all its multifarious forms.

The most important single source for the preservation of the Gould legacy is the Glenn Gould Papers, housed in the Music Division of the National Library of Canada, in Ottawa, Ontario. The collection, created in October 1983, a year after Gould's death, and opened to the public in January 1988, includes all of the personal and professional effects in Gould's possession at the time of his death, plus many other related materials—a veritable treasure trove of Gouldiana. The Papers have become the most visited music collection in the Library, and were the source for several popular, international touring exhibitions of Gould effects.

Gould's performances and other media work have become increasingly accessible since his death, to the point that his work is now commercially available almost in its entirety. Digital recording was only in its infancy at the time of his death, and CDs of his recordings had not yet appeared; since his death, his recordings, some long out of print or never released in his lifetime, have returned to the public in digitally remastered form.

Throughout the 1980s and early 1990s, CBS Masterworks rereleased digitally remastered LPs and CDs of a wide range of Gould recordings, in various repackaged forms; in addition, pirate labels from around the world issued unauthorized CDs of concert and broadcast performances, some of which—Beethoven's "Hammerklavier," Weber's *Konzertstück*, Chopin's B-minor sonata, Ravel's *La Valse*—had never been released before. His earliest recordings, for the Hallmark label, also reappeared.

All of these releases were eclipsed by the Gould releases of Sony Classical, which had acquired CBS Masterworks during the 1980s. In 1992, Sony began release of a comprehensive Gould *opera omnia* including most of his preserved live and studio recordings, films, and broadcasts, in two series: the Glenn Gould Edition, on CDs; and the Glenn Gould Collection, on videotape and laserdisc. By 1998, the Edition comprised eight volumes and more than seventy CDs, the Collection sixteen hour-long volumes.

In 1992, Sony Classical also released a CD entitled *Glenn Gould: The Composer*, featuring new recordings of his most important original works. In addition to the Sony releases, the CBC Records label, also beginning in 1992, released a series of Gould CDs drawing on its vast catalogue of Gouldiana; comprising six releases to date, the series includes rare broadcast recordings from before 1955 (some previously issued on RCI transcription discs, and including works he did not otherwise record), as well as the three "contrapuntal radio documentaries" of the so-called Solitude Trilogy.

Gould's film and television work was also revived after his death, on television and at special Gould events around the world. *Glenn Gould Plays*, a series of half-hour programmes edited together from various of his CBC television programmes, aired internationally in the 1980s, and formed the basis for the material in Sony Classical's Glenn Gould Collection. Gould films from sources other than the CBC have also been shown with increasing frequency since his death, and some have been released as commercial videos: Bruno Monsaingeon's 1974 series for French television, *Chemins de la musique*; the two National Film Board of Canada documentaries from 1959 (*Glenn Gould: Off the Record*; and *Glenn Gould: On the Record*); and the three Monsaingeon Bach films (which appear in the Collection).

The most important of Gould's writings were collected in 1984, in the five-hundred-page *Glenn Gould Reader*, and have also appeared in translated editions—French, German, Japanese, and others, some of

them more comprehensive than the *Reader* itself. Other previously unpublished Gould writings have appeared in various collections since his death, including the anthology *Glenn Gould: Variations* (1983), and the periodicals published by the Glenn Gould Society and the Friends of Glenn Gould. A volume of Gould letters, and a book-length interview, have also been published.

Gould's original compositions have also enjoyed a minor revival since his death, with performances around the world, particularly of the String Quartet, and of course with the release of Sony Classical's CD *Glenn Gould: The Composer*. In 1995, a major German music publisher, B. Schott's Söhne, undertook an edition of Gould's most important compositions and arrangements. As of 1998, three volumes have appeared, including early solo-piano pieces, the Bassoon Sonata, the *Lieberson Madrigal*. Editions of an unfinished piano sonata and the String Quartet are in production.

While he lived, Gould was already the subject of a considerable literature, though mostly in periodicals aimed at general audiences. Only one book about him appeared in his lifetime, though it was a seminal volume that influenced most of the later literature: *Glenn Gould: Music and Mind*, by Geoffrey Payzant (1978), a concise but informed introduction to Gould's life, work, and aesthetic ideas. (Gould himself wittily reviewed the book when it appeared.)

The increased visibility of Gould's work in the last fifteen years has inspired a large and diverse literature, and a rapidly growing one. Countless more periodical articles have appeared, but there have been, internationally, at least three dozen books (original and translated) devoted to Gould. They range widely, in size and scope: there are biographies and psycho-biographies, life-and-works studies, picture-books, personal reminiscences, studies of the Gould aesthetic, studies of Gould as a performer and interpreter, philosophical studies, a book-length discography, a two-volume catalogue of the National Library of Canada's Gould papers, several collections of essays, a hypermedia computer program produced by the Banff Centre for the Arts, and much else. Writing on Gould also ranges widely in terms of tone: he has been discussed in scholarly journals on music, aesthetics, philosophy, and even political and social theory, but also in *Vanity Fair* and *Rolling Stone*; he is discussed by philosophers and musicologists, but also by fans on the Internet.

Gould's life and work have also posthumously inspired many radio and television profiles and documentaries, and even novels, plays, poems, works of art, musical compositions and arrangements, and the feature film *Thirty-two Short Films About Glenn Gould*. To date, there have been extended conferences devoted exclusively to Gould, in Montréal (1987), Amsterdam (1988), Toronto (1992), Groningen, The Netherlands (1992), and Toronto (1999), in addition to countless smaller Gould film festivals, exhibitions, and other events around the world. An international Glenn Gould Society, with its

own semi-annual *Bulletin*, was based in Groningen from 1982 to 1992. A Glenn Gould Foundation was created in Toronto, in 1983, to disseminate Gould's work and ideas. Since 1987, it has awarded a triennial Glenn Gould Prize in music and communications, and in 1995, it formed an international Friends of Glenn Gould society, with its own semi-annual journal, *GlennGould*.

Naturally, Gould has become something of a national treasure in Canada, and he has been the recipient of many posthumous tributes from the governments of Toronto, Ontario, and Canada, as well as other organizations: there is a park in Toronto in his name, his apartment has been declared a historic site, there is a Gould memorial scholarship fund at the University of Toronto, the Professional School of the Royal Conservatory of Music is named for him, and so on.

In the mid-1970s, Gould received recognition of extra-terrestrial dimensions: a recording of him playing a prelude and fugue by Bach was included on a special album of Earth's sounds affixed to NASA's Voyager spacecraft, and will presumably drift through the cosmos for all time. Some of the tributes to Gould, predictably, have hardly been appropriate: for example, in 1985 there was a Bach piano competition held in his name in Toronto—this for the most outspoken opponent of the very idea of competition—and in 1992 the new CBC building in Toronto dedicated a Glenn Gould Studio, which is intended for the broadcasting of concert performances, something Gould disdained. Gould has been honoured by a stamp from Canada Post; and there remain new recordings to be issued, new writings to be published, new broadcasts to be aired, and more tributes, both personal and public, to follow.

Given this enormous posthumous attention, one can make a good case for Gould as an important figure in contemporary music. At the very least, he has proven, since his death, to be one of Canada's most important cultural figures, and one of the world's most studied, admired, and beloved artists.

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gg: Well now, you've been quoted as saying that your involvement with recording—with media in general, indeed—represents an involvement with the future.
GG: That's correct. [...]

(From "Glenn Gould interviews Glenn Gould about Glenn Gould", 1974)

Selected posthumous releases outside the Glenn Gould Edition

(for CBC Records, please refer to the section, “Gould and the CBC”)

• Brahms, Piano Concerto No. 1 in D Minor, Opus 15, with Leonard Bernstein conducting the New York Philharmonic (6 April 1962). This was one of Gould’s most controversial public performances, both for his unusual, broadly scaled interpretation of the piece and for Bernstein’s pre-concert speech. Bernstein outlined his disagreement with Gould’s interpretation, but added that he agreed to accompany it because he considered the experiment worthwhile. His good-natured remarks were widely misinterpreted as a betrayal of Gould, and the result was a minor scandal in the press; however, the speech was given with Gould’s consent and cooperation, and Gould always defended Bernstein’s part in that incident. (Released on LP in 1987 as Radiothon Special Edition Historical Recording, Vol. VII, in coproduction with the New York Philharmonic; released on CD as Melodram 234, Music & Arts CD-682, and most recently, Sony SK 60675.)

• *Glenn Gould in Stockholm*, *1958*. BIS CD-323/324 (1986). These CDs document Gould’s week-long stay in Sweden, at the height of his fame as an international concert artist. Included are live concerto performances as well as studio recordings of solo pieces that Gould made for Swedish radio, all of favourite repertoire by Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven and Berg.

• Sony Classical *Festspieldokumente* SMK 53 474 (1994). This CD documents Gould’s last overseas solo recital: a 1959 appearance at the Salzburg Festival. It was one of his best live performances, to judge from the surviving tapes made by Austrian radio, and the audience and critical reaction was rapturous. His programme was characteristic: a Sweelinck Fantasia for organ; Schoenberg’s Suite, Opus 25; Mozart’s Sonata in C Major, K.330; and the Goldberg Variations.

• Music and Arts CD-678 (1991). This CD documents Gould’s triumphant Western European Début: his 26 May 1957 performance of Beethoven’s Piano Concerto No. 3, with Herbert von Karajan conducting the Berlin Philharmonic. After hearing this performance, Germany’s leading music critic, H. H. Stuckenschmidt, pronounced Gould the best pianist since the death of Busoni—that is, since 1924.

• *Concert de Moscou*. Harmonia Mundi France/Le Chant du Monde LDC 278 799 (1983). This CD documents one of Gould’s most famous concert appearances: his 12 May 1957 lecture-recital at the Moscow Conservatory. The recording includes the performances as well as Gould’s comments, complete with simultaneous translation. Gould described this appearance as one of the most exciting of his career.

• *The Young Glenn Gould*. KING Records CD KICC 2120 (1991). This CD includes a very early concert performance of some uncharacteristic early-Romantic repertoire: Weber’s *Konzertstück* in F Minor for piano and orchestra, in a 1951 performance with Sir Ernest MacMillan conducting the Toronto Symphony.

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