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Dissertation Advisor: Professor Carol J. Oja Lucille Yehan Mok

Glenn Gould, Oscar Peterson, and New World Virtuosities

Abstract

This dissertation centers on virtuosity as a source of creative genesis, boundary-pushing, and musical debate. Focusing on the careers and works of pianists Oscar Peterson (1925-2007) and Glenn Gould (1932-1982), I examine the role of the virtuoso in twentieth-century music-making, and his encounter with Canadian national identity. Gould and Peterson were contemporaries, and despite their differences - Gould was a white classical musician from Toronto, and Peterson, an African Canadian jazz artist from Montréal - their career paths share points of connection. Using archival material from the Glenn Gould fonds and the Oscar Peterson fonds at Library and Archives Canada, I analyze the work of both figures as sources of musical creativity through musical performance and composition.

The first part of this dissertation demonstrates how Gould's and Peterson's respective performances sparked furor through their contestation of musical boundaries. In the first chapter, my analysis of outtakes from Gould's 1955 recording session of the *Goldberg Variations* illuminates how his radical musical philosophies emerged from his early recording practices. In chapter two, I examine critiques of Peterson's performance aesthetic from an extensive collection of reviews, and argue that his style of virtuosic jazz allowed him to push back against musical expectations. In the third chapter, I examine the work of Canadian filmmaker Norman McLaren whose experimental animation provided opportunities for partnerships with both musicians; with Peterson in 1949 and with Gould in 1969.

The second part of my dissertation takes the reader outside the realm of performance and demonstrates how Gould and Peterson engaged with landscape through sound composition. The fourth chapter investigates the spatial and sonic interpretation of Canadian locales in Gould's *Solitude Trilogy*, a series of three experimental radio documentaries. In the final chapter, I unravel the biographical and musical influences in Peterson's multi-movement suite for jazz trio, *Canadiana Suite*. By studying these iconic virtuosos side-by-side, my dissertation illuminates the significance of the performer in Canada's cultural life in the second half of the twentieth-century and yields a new understanding of how Gould and Peterson exploded expectations in their respective musical communities.

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Acknowledgements

As I reflect on the past six years I am overwhelmed with emotion and gratitude for the many people who have made the completion of my dissertation possible. I thank my partner, Owen, for his endless support and love. I thank my parents, Lou and Doris, and my sisters, Leanne and Laura, for their unconditional acceptance during the good times and the bad. And I thank my daughter Leyla, who forced me to keep it all in perspective.

I have benefited from the generosity of several individuals and organizations during my doctoral program and I am grateful for their support: John B. Lawson, the Faculty of Music at the University of Toronto, the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada, Oscar S. Schafer, the Harvard Department of Music, the Harvard Graduate School of Arts and Sciences, the Sosland family, and the Weatherhead Center for International Affairs Canada Program at Harvard University.

My research could not have progressed without the help of several individuals. I thank my undergraduate mentors at the University of Toronto - Mark Sallmen and Gregory Johnston - who helped me build the foundation for my graduate research. Thanks also to Jim Kippen, whose suggestion that I apply to Harvard University set me on this path in the first place.

I would like to express my gratitude to Judith Tick who has been an ardent supporter of my work from the beginning of this project. Thanks to our discussions about Ella Fitzgerald and Oscar Peterson, she planted the seed that blossomed into my dissertation topic. I am grateful for Tad Hershorn's guidance at the Institute for Jazz Studies at Rutgers University and for his generosity in allowing me to access his treasure trove of research materials from his scholarship on Norman Granz. Deepest thanks to Kelly Peterson for her warmth and friendship, and for welcoming me into her home. I would also like to thank Mark Miller and Phil Nimmons who

both, in the early stages of my dissertation, provided useful information about Oscar Peterson's reception and Canadian jazz.

My research on Glenn Gould relied heavily on the help of Faye Perkins of the Glenn Gould Estate. To her I am grateful for access to the CBC Radio Archives and material at Sony Music. I wish to express thanks to Ken Puley at the CBC Radio Archives for helping me locate items pertaining to my research on Gould's radio work. I thank Joe Auner for encouraging me to pursue a line of inquiry into Gould's use of technology that set me on a path to his outtakes. In August 2013, I spent an exhilarating morning with Anthony Fountain and Matt Cavaluzzo at Sony Music's Battery Studios in Manhattan. I am tremendously grateful to them for sharing that high point in my journey. Their time and enthusiasm contributed a great deal to a conceptual turning point in my dissertation research. I would also like to express gratitude to the many librarians and archivists at Library and Archives Canada who provided help and support during my two summers of research there. I am also indebted to the members of Carol Oja's Americanist dissertation writing group who have been incredibly generous with their time and feedback over the past three years.

Writing a dissertation is so often discussed as a solitary endeavor, but my experience has been anything but lonely. I have met many dear friends while studying at Harvard University whose love and support I have relied on to get me through the ups and downs of graduate school. Thank you to Gav Williams for always being up for a French press (or something stronger) during that inevitable lull in the day, Sarah Wright Sussman for huffing and puffing through road races and getting me through generals summer, Hannah Lewis for weekly Sauvignon blanc, Elizabeth Craft for study breaks and always good conversation, Michael Uy for the Asian invasion, Peter McMurray for Sac Sac and heart to hearts, Will Cheng for food adventures and reassurance that

it is ok to love zombies and vampires, Sarah Hankins for debauchery abroad and dance parties, Rowland Moseley for NEW YORK CITY, and to the members of Somerville's premiere brass band Hornography ("with an H"), for reviving the music fun-times I thought I'd left behind in high school.

I would like to express sincere thanks to Niti Seth, whose dedication and encouragement was crucial to my personal growth during my time at Harvard. I'm also appreciative of friends from the past who have stood by me during this time: Steve Liu, Mike Czajka, Carol Choi, Scott Tanaka, Meredith Szewchuk, and S. Trimble.

I could not have completed this journey without the everyday encouragement of the faculty members and staff at the Harvard Department of Music. I am deeply appreciative of the staff at the Loeb Music Library for their patience through all stages of my doctoral research. I am confident that the administrative staff at the Department of Music remain unmatched on any university campus with respect to the energy and verve they bring to work everyday. Although they are frequently surrounded by tired and undernourished graduate students, they never fail to make us smile. Many thanks go to Lesley Bannatyne, Eva Kim, Mary Gerbi, Karen Rynne, and Fernando Viesca. Special thank yous to Nancy Shafman for impromptu chats and always-excellent advice, to Charles Stillman and Kaye Denny for their obvious and contagious zest for life, and to Jean Moncrieff for always being up for talking about Canada and everything else. I love you all.

I would especially like to acknowledge the support I've received from the members of my dissertation committee. Alexander Rehding always welcomed me to his office for discussion and guidance. Robin Elliott has remained involved in my work since serving as my undergraduate thesis advisor and although he is hundreds of *kilometres* away at the University of Toronto,

generously offered his time to meet and read chapter drafts. Kay Kaufman Shelemay is a force to be reckoned with both as a scholar and as an advisor; she challenged me as only the most effective and loving mentor could. My advisor, Carol J. Oja, has been a steadfast and devoted advocate of my research and of me from the moment I stepped onto Harvard's campus, and for that I will always be grateful.

Introduction

Glenn Gould, Oscar Peterson, and New World Virtuosities

This dissertation centers on virtuosity as a source of creative genesis, boundary-pushing, and musical debate. Focusing on the careers and works of pianists Oscar Peterson (1925-2007) and Glenn Gould (1932-1982), I examine two main issues: the role of the virtuoso and virtuosity in twentieth-century music-making, and the encounter between virtuosity and Canadian national identity. Gould and Peterson were contemporaries, and despite their differences - Gould was a white classical musician from Toronto and Peterson, an African Canadian jazz artist from Montréal - their career paths share many points of connection. Gould's and Peterson's early creative development took place in Canada of the 1930s and 40s. Their international debuts both took place in New York City, albeit five and a half years apart: Peterson's, at Carnegie Hall in September 1949, and Gould's, at Town Hall in January 1955. Both gained international prominence as icons of pianistic virtuosity, at the same time as both remained Canadian residents throughout their lives. Perhaps unsurprisingly in that context, the idea of national identity emerged in their public image and their compositions. Moreover, by living in Canada and therefore at some remove from the United States, Gould and Peterson exercised certain creative freedoms even if their musical decisions were unpopular and controversial.

As I show in this dissertation, Gould and Peterson challenged the notion of virtuosity, expanding their musical ideas into uncharted territory. Using archival material and recordings primarily from the Glenn Gould fonds and the Oscar Peterson fonds at Library and Archives Canada, I analyze the work of both figures as sources of musical creativity through musical performance and composition.[1] Performance is at the center of the first part of my dissertation

[1] Located in Ottawa, Ontario.

where I examine controversies that arose at key moments in Gould's and Peterson's careers. The second part of my study centers on Gould's and Peterson's respective compositional projects in the 1960s in which both artists looked to Canadian landscape for artistic inspiration. In these final two chapters, my analysis sheds new light on the way that Gould and Peterson mapped aspects of their identities onto their sonic landscapes.

This research topic developed from my longtime admiration for the work of these two figures and in response to several trends in musicological scholarship. At the outset of this study, it is important to mention that from a Canadian perspective, Glenn Gould and Oscar Peterson are a natural pairing if not simply because of their shared iconic status as Canadian piano virtuosi unmatched by any other. In 2014, they still stand as the two best-known Canadian pianists, which emphasizes my point. Growing up in Toronto in the 1980s, my piano teachers discussed Gould and Peterson as musical beacons, examples of the absolute pinnacle of skill and musicianship - best of all, they were Canadian. As a newly transplanted Canadian living in the United States for graduate studies, I undertook this dissertation in an attempt to assess several questions that could be applied to the study of both musicians. What relationship exists between the careers and works of Gould and Peterson, other than their nationality, concurrent career trajectories, and shared adulation in Canada? What is the interplay between musical virtuosity and nationality in the twentieth century? How did Canada, still a young country in the 1950s, influence Gould and Peterson when they broke out of small-scale notoriety and into international recognition? What has been the impact of Gould's and Peterson's decisions, against the prevailing trend among Canadian artists, to stay in Canada in the face of their international stature?

These questions gain particular relevance in response to increased attention in musicological scholarship on performance. The study of ethnomusicology has arguably done a

tremendous amount to shift the focus of music research from primarily text-based research to oral traditions. But in the past thirty years especially, Western music scholarship has also turned to performance and virtuosity as an issue of paramount importance that opens a window onto a series of historical and cultural concerns such as the role of the listener, the ontology of the musical work, and the transformative role that technology has played in the practice of creating music. Scholarship relating to performance practice and performers themselves has also grown to include innovative modes of research that extend beyond traditional archival methodologies.

Musicological scholarship has historically prioritized musical composition, but the links between performance and music scholarship have slowly and steadily gained favor and interest. The trend towards the consideration of musical performance are seen in such texts as Carolyn Abbate's groundbreaking "Drastic or Gnostic?" (2004) and Richard Taruskin's collected essays on the historical performance movement in *Text and Act* (1995).[2] Taking the intersection of performance and scholarship in a different and more practical direction, Nicholas Cook's CHARM project demonstrates a deep engagement with musical recording through various technological means, reframing the meaning of performance in a post-digital age.[3] More recently, Swiss musicologist Olivier Senn has applied digital analysis to musical recordings to gather micro-timing data, uncovering information about musical performance that could not be obtained previously by the human ear alone. These scholars and increasingly others have demonstrated new ways of engaging with performance beyond that which can be printed on the page.

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[2] Carolyn Abbate, "Drastic or Gnostic?" *Critical Inquiry* 30 No. 3 (Spring 2004), 505-536; Richard Taruskin, *Text and Act* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995).

[3] AHRC Research Centre for the History and Analysis of Recorded Music, http://www.charm.rhul.ac.uk/, last accessed September 10 2014.

In many ways, my dissertation can also be considered a response to Christopher Small's call for greater musicological attention towards the enlivened act of "musicking," the endeavor of

> tak[ing] part, in any capacity, in a musical performance, whether by performing, by listening, by rehearsing or practicing, by providing material for performance (what is called composing), or by dancing.[4]

Small's *Musicking* (1998) highlights the crucial role of the performer to "break from the composer's vision of the work" an idea that has been widely influential among musicologists and ethnomusicologists.[5] In this study, I have adopted the impulse behind Small's philosophy, that musicking - the act of engaging with music as an intellectual and physical act - is of utmost importance in any musical study and bears special relevance in a study of Gould and Peterson. Indeed, when Small wrote:

> The gestural language of a musical performance never means one and only one set of relationships but is open to reinterpretation over and over again as listeners create new contexts for their reception and their ritual use of it,[6]

he might have been reflecting on Gould's philosophy towards the musical work and the relationship of the performer to the composer. Fifteen years after Small's provocative volume, there still exists a gap between the study of musical works and the act of musicking within musicological discourse, although this gap is slowly closing. By focusing on the work of performers here my goal is to shift the dominance of attention on the composer as creative source towards that of the performer, highlighting both the performative act and its reception, as well as the performer's other artistic endeavors such as composition.

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[4] Christopher Small, *Musicking* (Middletown: Wesleyan University Press, 1998), 9.

[5] Small, 217.

[6] Small, 214.

New World Virtuosity

In the title of my dissertation I refer to "New World Virtuosities," a description of a twentieth-century perspective on virtuosity, taking into account the way that it has changed and adapted to an increasingly globalized and technological culture.[7] In contrast to a virtuosity associated with such nineteenth-century figures as Franz Liszt, Niccolò Paganini, Jenny Lind, or Sigismund Thalberg, the term virtuosity has since evolved into greater complexity. Musicians and musicologists have adapted virtuosity to the development of vernacular and hybrid music genres in the early years of the twentieth-century and beyond. The spaces where virtuosity were routinely presented have moreover, shifted away from traditional historical settings such as the public concert hall, and audience demand for and expectations of their musical commodities has also changed in turn. As a result of an increasingly globalized culture the relationships among musical agents and their roles as listeners, composers, and performers has also changed.

The careers and works of Glenn Gould and Oscar Peterson are intimately connected to the concerns of this New World virtuosity as it was shaped by cultural developments in the second part of the twentieth-century. The industrialization of sound reproduction, for instance, is relevant to both artists. The record industry transformed musical performance from a public, social event to a private one that was nevertheless shared among many listeners (though not necessarily at the same time). Musical recordings have made musical performances more widely available and in doing so they have transformed the relationship between audience and performer, forcing a reassessment of the virtuoso and her relationship to the listener.[8]

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[7] Kiri Miller, for instance, has pointed out the prominent role that Youtube has played in the democratization of the musical experience and virtuosity. By making private music lessons, previously limited to the domain of the wealthy middle class, widely available, virtuosity is now a skill that can be commodified and transmitted digitally, transforming the relationship among musical agents. See Kiri Miller, *Playing Along, Digital Games, Youtube, and Virtual Performance* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012).

[8] Glenn Gould argued a similar point that technology changed the nature of music in the everyday lives of listeners.

Another shift in the conception of a twentieth-century virtuosity is its role in jazz performance.[9] As a hybrid musical genre, jazz incorporated musical features from Western classical and African American musical traditions. The classical music training of many jazz musicians, Peterson included, led to the adaptation of technical skills and values associated with classical training to their performance aesthetic while it also challenged the values of jazz musicians who explicitly rejected the influence of Western classical music. The performances and compositions of these classically influenced musicians can subsequently be read as an active negotiation of values, a discussion between the performer and the musical community at large.

Despite the changes that I have highlighted, certain aspects of virtuosity have remained constant. The theatrical aspect of virtuosic performance for instance, was a topic of extensive commentary in the nineteenth-century, during which time Romantic pianists became known for their physical features, eccentric behaviors, and dramatic on-stage antics. Researchers at Harvard recently speculated that the visual aspects of a performance remain centrally important to the musical performance and that the visual may in fact, trump the audio in importance. The 2013 study confirmed their hypothesis when researchers asked participants to predict the winners of a piano competition by assessing silent videos of the performances.[10] (They could). Harvard researchers merely confirmed what certain music critics have suspected all along. Indeed, virtuoso performers have received mixed reception for decades as a result of their perceived superficiality. Although praised for their incredible musical achievements, many dazzling performers have also experienced negative backlash for being regarded as shallow or, even worse, for being morally

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[9] The relationship between virtuosity and improvisation has been discussed in Philippe Borer, "Paganini's Virtuosity and Improvisatory Style" in *Beyond Notes: improvisation in Western music of the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries*, ed. Rudolf Rasch (Turnhout: Brepols, 2011) and "Virtuosity and Improvisation" in Paul Griffiths, *Modern Music and After* (New York : Oxford University Press, 2010).

[10] Peter Reuell, "The Look of Music," *The Harvard Gazette,* August 19 2013, http://news.harvard.edu/gazette/story/2013/08/the-look-of-music/ , last accessed January 25 2014.

degenerate. The best-known case is the enigmatic violinist Niccolò Paganini, whose audiences regarded him as a simultaneously fascinating yet suspicious figure.[11] As I examine in the second chapter of this dissertation, virtuosity's mixed reception, the case of Oscar Peterson specifically, remains rooted in a similar critique.

Nationality played a central role in the culture surrounding of nineteenth-century virtuosic performance and this study demonstrates how it similarly played into the reception of twentieth-century performers. Nationality heavily factors into the rhetoric surrounding international music competitions, particularly public perception of musical artists. Increasingly, these discussions have taken place among the general public, not just music specialists. As Joseph Horowitz has pointed out, piano competitions have been a point of mainstream access to high culture and subsequently international piano competitions have attracted public discussions.[12] The most famous example is U.S. pianist Van Cliburn's success at the 1958 International Tchaikovsky Piano Competition which was regarded as a victory of national importance in the United States because the competition took place in Moscow during the Cold War.[13] Nationality has also factored into musical considerations such as performers' repertoire choices. Take, for instance, the Russian-American pianist Vladimir Horowitz who, after fleeing Russia to the U.S. during the Second World War, was compelled to express his loyalty to the United States through music. As homage to his new home nation, Horowitz opened all of his recitals with his

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[11] Maiko Kawabata unravels the reasons behind the burgeoning of the "Paganini cult," and the social craze that gripped audiences, following Paganini across Europe in the 1830s. Maiko Kawabata, *Paganini: The 'Demonic' Virtuoso* (Woodbridge, Suffolk and Rochester, NY: The Boydell Press, 2013), 17-19.

[12] Joseph Horowitz, *The Ivory Trade: Music and the Business of Music at the Van Cliburn Piano Competition* (New York: Summit Books, 1990), 14.

[13] As Horowitz described it, van Cliburn's career marked "a turning point in our cultural evolution." See *The Ivory Trade,* 36.

arrangement of the "Star-Spangled Banner."[14] Horowitz was outspoken about his thoughts on the relationship between nationality and musical performance, saying

> You see, a pianist can be a good American when he plays Barber, a good Pole when he plays Chopin, a good Russian with Tchaikovsky, a good Frenchman with Debussy, or a good German in Beethoven. A pianist is a citizen of the world. And that is the most important thing to be.[15]

But the role of the pianist also extends beyond the concert stage. Musical performance has also played an important in cultural diplomacy.[16] In a North American context, jazz has played a particularly important role as representative of U.S. culture abroad.[17] Gould's and Peterson's careers coincided with the development of an increasingly connected global network of musical cultures and their national identities had a profound impact on their reception and creative output.

These twentieth-century examples echo issues that emerged in the culture of nineteenth-century virtuosity as well. Dana Gooley has examined Franz Liszt's audiences and their response to his chameleon-like ability to fit into different national identities throughout his career. Responding to political circumstances and currying favor among key power-holders, Liszt

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[14] Glenn Plaskin, *Horowitz: A Biography of Vladimir Horowitz* (New York: W. Morrow, 1983), 229-230.

[15] David Dubal, *Evenings with Horowitz* (Pompton Plains, NJ: Amadeus Press, 2004), 135.

[16] Gould and Peterson were also part of this system of exchange. Gould's first international tour in 1957, for example, was internationally newsworthy because he was the first musician from the west to perform behind the Iron Curtain since before the beginning of the Cold War. Beginning the tour in Moscow and Leningrad (St. Petersburg), Gould quickly shot to international fame after performing a series of solo recitals that made a deep impression on his Russian audiences. The Canadian press and the public regarded Gould's tour as an enormous boost to Canada's international reputation around the time when the nation had been in discussions about government support for the arts and performance. Gould's journey to Russia and Europe has been considered an important moment in Canada's post-war development. See also Emily Theodosia Abrams Ansari, *"Masters of the President's Music": Cold War Composers and the United States Government*, Ph.D. thesis (Cambridge: Harvard University, 2009) and Penny von Eschen, *Satchmo Blows Up the World: Jazz Ambassadors Play the Cold War* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2004).

[17] Penny von Eschen's monograph about international jazz tours sponsored by the U.S. State Department during the Cold War illuminates the role that music and performance had in international relations.

intentionally negotiated his national allegiances in order to build his audience and rally support for his tours.[18]

The term New World Virtuosity acknowledges the impact of social, political, economic and historical factors in virtuosic performance and its reception. It describes a cultural shift from understanding virtuosic performance as a primarily European-centered phenomenon to an expanded concept in which non-Europeans - specifically North Americans - were taken seriously as world-class performers. Issues pertaining to nationality underlie my analysis of Gould and Peterson. I turn to them now, delving deeper into their personal backgrounds as Canadian artists and the mutual cultural and historical issues between their two careers.

Gould and Peterson as Canadian Artists

As it pertains to this study, virtuosity intersects with Canada's cultural history. The lives and careers of Glenn Gould and Oscar Peterson spanned a period of rapid change in music-making from the 1930s to the end of the century. Although Gould and Peterson were musically active in their respective hometowns of Toronto and Montréal in the 1930s and 40s, they rose to international fame at roughly the same time. Their birth dates are seven years apart, thus they were around the same age at the time of their American debuts (Peterson was 24, Gould was 23). Both in terms of their geography and in their artistic sensibilities, Gould and Peterson emerged from a country that was, during their formative years, removed from the main cultural and commercial centers of their respective musical communities.

Gould's early musical training during the 1940s and early 1950s was deeply interconnected with Toronto's musical history. The city's local Kiwanis Festival and the Royal

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[18] See especially "Liszt and the German Nation" and "Cosmopolitan as Nationalist" in Dana Gooley, *The Virtuoso Liszt* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2004).

Conservatory of Music were pillars of Toronto's musical infrastructure, many of which still exist today.[19] Gould's earliest musical experiences depended heavily on these institutions which provided support and encouragement for his young talent. Yet another narrative that connects Gould's musical development with Toronto's musical history is Gould's musical mentorship by Chilean pianist Alberto Guerrero. One of the first immigrant musicians to settle in Toronto, Guerrero was Gould's piano instructor at the Royal Conservatory of Music for nine years.[20] Moreover, Guerrero played a more significant role in Canada's musical history than he has been given credit for. As teacher to many of the country's top composers and pianists, his influence was far-reaching. Guerrero went against prevailing Canadian musical trends in the 1950s by embracing new repertoire, including works by Canadian composers.[21] Composer John Beckwith argues that Guerrero strongly influenced his students because of his teaching methods and his choice of repertoire, Bach and Schoenberg especially.[22] Gould's familiarity with the *Goldberg Variations*, as Beckwith showed, was due to Guerrero. Long before Gould made the piece his trademark, Guerrero introduced his students to the work and performed it in a recital as early as February 11, 1937 at the Toronto Conservatory of Music.[23]

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[19] The best known and most important of these is the Royal Conservatory of Music, a community music school that, in 1987, also opened an associated professional school. In 1997 the professional school was renamed The Glenn Gould School. Founded as the Toronto Conservatory in 1886 by Edward Fischer, the Royal Conservatory of Music has evolved and current stands as the main institute of music education in Canada. This history is documented by Ezra Schabas, in *There's Music in these Walls: A History of the Royal Conservatory of Music* (Toronto: Dundurn Books, 2005).

[20] Toronto's history is full of immigrant musicians who came as music teachers in the 1940s onward. See Schabas, *A History of the RCM*.

[21] This statement has been made by Guerrero's former student and Canadian pianist William Aide in his memoir, *Starting from Porcupine* (Toronto: Oberon Press, 1996), 29.

[22] John Beckwith, "Shattering a Few Myths" in *Music papers: Articles and Talks by a Canadian Composer 1961-1994* (Ottawa: Golden Dog Press, 1997), 170-174.

[23] John Beckwith, *In Search of Alberto Guerrero* (Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier Press, 2006), 79.

Peterson's early life can be regarded as similarly entwined with the cultural history of his hometown, Montréal. The community of St. Henri where Peterson grew up was a railway hub and home to a diverse population of immigrants, making it a culturally rich environment.[24] Peterson recalled that because of his age and parental limitations, he had few opportunities to partake in a burgeoning jazz culture in Montréal as a youngster, yet he came into contact with jazz via recordings and live radio broadcasts. In a 1997 Jazz Oral History Project interview, Peterson reminisced about his father's Marconi radio which he listened to from his bedroom after bedtime. His musical tastes took shape around the live sounds of Duke Ellington, Benny Goodman, and Count Basie that emanated from the living room of his childhood home. The increased accessibility of radio programs in the 1940s spurred Peterson's musical education, despite his limited childhood experience with live jazz.

Listening to the radio was a common experience in Gould's and Peterson's early musical development. Both commented on the crucial role of radio broadcasting in making live music and musical recordings more accessible than ever before. Peterson and Gould both described similar childhood memories of staying up late with ears glued to the radio, a point corroborated by Robert Fulford's memories of his childhood soundscapes as experienced with Gould:

> In the early 30s, the Canadian Parliament decided that we would have a publicly owned broadcasting service and the CBC then became the delivery system for Canadian culture. It was the way I heard Sophocles, Shakespeare, Mozart, Duke Ellington - for the first time. That's where all those things came to me - Glenn too - the CBC radio service. It was the way Canadians could be in touch with each other and with their own culture. It was crucial to the relationships among the people and to their educational experiences as well. That was what I grew up with, what he grew up with.[25]

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[24] More will be said about the multicultural space and its influence on his life and work in the following chapter about his composition, *Canadiana Suite*.

[25] Robert Fulford, interview with Rhona Bergman in Bergman, *The Idea of Gould* (Philadelphia: Lev Publishing, 1999), 9.

Gould and his friends listened to CBC radio dramas while Peterson listened to jazz from radio stations in the United States. The CBC also played an important role in both Gould's and Peterson's early careers. Peterson gained local fame after winning an amateur music competition in Montréal and eventually, playing piano for a regular CBC short program and occasional spots for radio drama.[26] Gould also played live on CBC radio in the early 1950s, events that would bear significantly on his later work as a radio broadcaster and composer.

In the context of Canada's conservative musical outlook in the 1950s, Gould's and Peterson's international status is striking. Despite the multicultural identity that Canada has today, its cultural origins were that of a conservative nation which may in part, account for the prevailing musical aesthetic among many of its art composers. Gould's and Peterson's respective hometowns of Toronto and Montréal were cosmopolitan compared to smaller Canadian cities and rural areas, but they were nonetheless narrow in cultural perspective. Both cities, though geographically well appointed with easy access to other parts of the country and the United States, nevertheless carried the cultural and religious influences of the cities' early settlers. In Toronto, the dominant white Anglo Saxon Protestant population was known for its conservatism and puritan moral values, a trend that remained until only recently when an influx of immigrants from all over the world has offered a wealth of cultural perspectives.[27] Meanwhile, life in 1950s Montréal was shaped by its French Catholic origins and the struggle of its inhabitants to retain a

[26] Peterson, at his sister Daisy's suggestion, entered the Ken Soble Amateur Hour competition and won, receiving cases of Coca-Cola for his class at school as well as a regular fifteen-minute "sustainer" on CBC radio. Interview with John McDonough, Smithsonian Oral Jazz History Project, Part 2, Smithsonian National Museum of American History Archives Center.

[27] See Ninette Kelley and Michael Tribelcock, *The Making of the Mosaic: A History of Canadian Immigration Policy* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1998) and Christopher G. Anderson, *Canadian Liberalism and the Politics of Border Control* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2013).

sense of Québecois identity against a changing multicultural population.[28] Take for instance, comments by historian Karen Finlay whose study of Vincent Massey, Governor General and advocate of the arts in Canada reveals a deep relationship between Canada's religious origins and an attitude towards the arts in the 1940s:

> The vast majority of Canadians as Christians viewed the performing arts, except choral and organ music, with moral suspicion well into the twentieth century. . .The fine arts smacked of a refinement that was a threat to the vibrancy of a young nation and rendered it less able to resist the homogenizing influences of mass society, materialism and colonialism.[29]

Toronto's conservative cultural atmosphere trickled down into the musical practices of Canada's musicians as well. Canadian concert pianist William Aide described Toronto as culturally isolated and far from musically innovative in the late 1940s:

> Picture Toronto then. John Weinzweig and Barbara Pentland are just beginning to write twelve-tone music. No Boulez to trumpet the news that Schönberg is dead. No Toronto premiere of Pierrot Lunnaire; not until two decades later. Dullsville shaking itself awake.[30]

Aide acknowledged that Toronto was considered cosmopolitan at the time, and a "mecca for small-town music students," suggesting that the rest of Canada was likely even further closed off to new ideas and outside influences.[31]

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[28] The relationship between Québecois, Canadian, and multi-ethnic identities is an ongoing issue in Québec. The Québec government passed the Charter of the French Language in 1977, its provisions continue to be a topic of controversy in the province, often in direct conflict with the use of the English language as well as language use of other ethnic groups. More recently, debate has simmered in Québec since the summer of 2013 over the Charter of Values which proposes a prohibition on religious clothing and symbols of public employees. Critics argue that the charter targets Muslim and Sikh employees while allowing for Catholic employees to freely wear cross pendants, for instance, that can be covered with every day clothing. For more information about Québec's language policy see Marc Chevrier, *Laws and Languages in Québec: The Principles and Means of Québec's Language Policy* (Québec: Gouvernement du Québec, Ministère des relations internationales, 1997). For more recent journalistic coverage of the Charter of Values, see Jake Flanigan, "The Dangerous Logic of Quebec's 'Charter of Values,'" *The Atlantic,* January 23 2014, http://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2014/01/the-dangerous-logic-of-quebecs-charter-of-values/283272/, last accessed August 31 2014.

[29] Karen Finlay, *The Force of Culture: Vincent Massey and Canadian Sovereignty* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2004), 241.

[30] Aide, *Starting from Porcupine,* 36.

[31] Aide, *Starting from Porcupine,* 25.

Canadian music scholarship has pointed out the dominance of European and U.S. cultural influences in the decades leading up to the mid-twentieth century, but considerably less has been written about Canada's cultural exports during this time. Canadian composers and musicians have long ventured outside of Canada to seek out musical opportunities either as concert artists or for instruction abroad. Writing in 1955, Canadian conductor and composer Ernest MacMillan lamented the tendency of Canadian musicians to leave Canada and take up permanent residence in other countries:

> The pattern was thus only too often the same: a brilliant young student had to go abroad for his training and then, having succeeded, was absorbed into the world market and in danger of being lost to his own country. . . .They not only went overseas or to the United States for their training because the opportunities for advanced study and performance were not yet sufficiently developed in this country, but they soon lost their connection with Canada and became instead a part of the musical life of their country of adoption.
>
> It is interesting to note, by way of example, that at one time nine of the eighteen string players in the famed Boyd Neel Orchestra were Canadians who had gone to England on valuable scholarships offered elsewhere, including Frederick Grinke who was leader of the orchestra for ten years and a distinguished soloist and chamber music player.
>
> The "lost legion" of Canadian musicians during the first half of this century must surely be an unnecessarily large one.[32]

MacMillan's statement echoed the general concerns of Canada's political and cultural leadership. Canadian-born specialists in all areas have been known to leave the country for destinations with greater opportunities and resources. The hearings of the Massey Commission began in 1949, and the results emerged partly from a desire for an organized effort towards

[32] The Boyd Neel Orchestra was a London (UK)-based chamber orchestra led by the British conductor Boyd Neel who in the early 1950s came to Canada as Dean of the Royal Conservatory of Music in Toronto. Ernest MacMillan, *Music in Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1955), 108.

supporting the arts and culture through education and government patronage.[33] The sentiment was inherited from Canadians a generation before and expressed as early as 1886 in a quatrain by Sir Charles Roberts, an expatriate in the U.S.:

> You've piped at home, where none could pay,
> Till now, I trust, your wits are riper,
> Make no delay, but come this way,
> And pipe for them that pay the piper.[34]

It seems that Canadians have long had anxieties over losing their best and brightest to opportunities outside of the country. Gould and Peterson, perhaps against the odds, bridged the gap between a successful international presence while they firmly maintained cultural and personal connections within their home country. Canadian jazz critic Gene Lees wrote the liner notes to the Oscar Peterson Trio's 1964 album *Canadiana Suite* that included the following statement:

> Oscar is one of the first of what I think of as a new breed of Canadian artists - as is the great concert pianist Glenn Gould. They are ones who stayed. They let their fame go out from Canada, instead of themselves going.[35]

Gould's and Peterson's careers, in addition to providing a link between Canadian and international musical communities also occurred at the same approximate historical moment. Their similarities and differences provide a fruitful opportunity to interrogate their professional challenges and artistic impacts both at home and abroad.

This dissertation is not the first to group together what might initially appear as disparate Canadian figures. The fragmented nature of Canadian identity, described by Paula Romanow in

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[33] For more discussion about the Massey Commission hearings and the political and cultural forces at work during this period in Canadian history see Paul Litt, *The Muses, The Masses, and The Massey Commission* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1992).

[34] W. Stewart Wallace, *The Growth of Canadian National Feeling* (Toronto: MacMillan Company of Canada, 1927). Quoted in Vincent Massey, *On Being Canadian* (Toronto: J.M Dent, 1948), 43.

[35] Oscar Peterson Trio, *Canadiana Suite*, Liner Notes, Toronto: Limelight Records, 1964.

her study of Canada's national radio culture as "divisive regionalism," calls for alternative techniques for understanding individual contributions to a sense of national culture.[36] Moreover, by grouping Gould and Peterson together in this study, my goal is not to suggest that they had similar careers as a result of their emergence from the same national backgrounds. Rather, as several writers and commentators have suggested in other studies of Canadian individuals, such comparisons frequently yield unexpected narrative threads and evidence of common and comparable response to musical challenges and changes. One such example comes from the writer and newspaper columnist (and childhood friend of Glenn Gould's), Robert Fulford. In 1997, he addressed members of The Hebrew University on the topic of Canadian culture and its international impact.[37] As the culture columnist and commentator for the Canadian national newspaper *The Globe and Mail* for many years, Fulford expressed his lifelong interest in Canadian cultural life by highlighting the significance of four Canadians - the screen actress Mary Pickford, Glenn Gould, Lucy Maud Montgomery's fictional literary character Anne of Green Gables, and Captain Kirk, depicted by the Canadian actor William Shatner. Fulford brought these figures together in an effort to "discover who they are as individuals and as communities" and to "outline certain aspects of Canadian culture and suggest how they fit into, or occasionally impress themselves upon, the culture of the world beyond Canada's borders."

Doing away with an argument for a common Canadian identity, cultural critic and writer Bruce W. Powe experimented with the grouping of Prime Minister Pierre Elliott Trudeau, Glenn Gould, Elias Canetti, Wyndham Lewis, and Marshall McLuhan in his 1996 book *The Solitary*

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[36] Paula Romanow, "'The Picture of Democracy We Are Seeking': CBC Radio Forums and the Search for a Canadian Identity, 1930-1950," *Journal of Radio Studies*, 12 (2005), 106.

[37] Robert Fulford, "Mary Pickford, Glenn Gould, Anne of Green Gables, and Captain Kirk: Canadians in the world's imagination," Lecture at The Hebrew University, Jerusalem, June 5 1997, http://www.robertfulford.com/hebrewu.html , last accessed January 25 2014.

Outlaw. Likening this motley crew to a series of "unwanted fragments," Powe argued that this group represents "divided men who often contained within themselves the turbulence of their time and place. . . . All five were engaged in contact with the post-literary society."[38] His text reveals the uncertainty with which he undertook his endeavor, asking whether this group can indeed compose a meaningful narrative or if instead it reveals the narrative to instead be meaningless?[39]

Artist and writer Richard Kostelanetz grouped a selection of his previously published articles about Gould, Marshall McLuhan, and Northrup Frye in a 1999 volume entitled *Three Canadian Geniuses*.[40] Aside from the preface, Kostelanetz does not link the work of the three figures directly. Their grouping under the umbrella term "Canadian geniuses," however, implies a recognition of their uncommonly high achievement in their respective fields.

In 2001, Anne Marie McKinnon explored texts by three prominent Canadians in her Ph.D. dissertation, again including Glenn Gould in the mix. Her analysis of director David Cronenberg's film *Crash*, novelist Michael Ondaatje's *In the Skin of a Lion*, and Gould's "The Idea of North" has a psychoanalytical perspective, arguing that each text represents Lacan's concept of the real as a death drive, undermining the natural world and its resources on which Canadian identity is based. By using a common theoretical lens across these three figures, McKinnon seeks to draw connections in the way that nationality and artistic vision intersect.[41]

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[38] Bruce W. Powe, *The Solitary Outlaw*: *Trudeau, Lewis, Gould, Canetti, McLuhan* (Toronto: Somerville House Paperbacks, 1996), 6.

[39] Powe, *The Solitary Outlaw*, 3.

[40] Richard Kostelanetz, *Three Canadian Geniuses: Glenn Gould, Marshall McLuhan, Northrup Frye,* edited by Oriana Leckert (Toronto: Colombo & Company, 1999).

[41] Ann Marie McKinnon, *The Death Drive: Cronenberg, Ondaatje, Gould*, Ph.D. thesis, U of Alberta, 2001.

Notably, Glenn Gould is included in every one of these groupings whereas Oscar Peterson is in none of them. There is, moreover, very little ethnic or racial diversity in these groups, revealing a limited perspective in which the white male experience stands as the only and best representative of the country's achievements. This lack of diversity also reflects the disappointing fact that the cultural paradigms that have long defined a perspective on Canadian identity have historically excluded a number of major contributors to the country's cultural and international legacy, including First Nations people. My dissertation has its own limitations. Although it reflects a mixed-race group it does not include any women. This grouping was guided by the decision to focus on pianists from a particular generation, although an expanded study of Canadian virtuosity could include such figures as singer/songwriter Joni Mitchell, singer K.D. Lang, concert pianist Angela Hewitt, and virtuoso guitarist Liona Boyd.

In studying Gould and Peterson, I take up a study of two contrasting and complementary musicians to offer a fresh perspective on Canada's history which takes solo concert performers into account as important cultural agents in the second half of the twentieth century. I hope that by conducting a cross-genre study with a focus on Canadian music, that my research will encourage others to also look beyond the traditional modes of thought that have guided inquiries into Canadian music or into broad-ranging notions of national artistic identity.

Canada's musical history has been frequently written alongside the country's political and social history, understood to have burgeoned as the diplomatic and political mechanisms behind its national independence from Great Britain took shape.[42] As Canadian settlement grew, developments such as the establishment of universities, the trans-continental railway, and radio

[42] Timothy McGee draws connections between Canada's development during the interwar period (increased industrial development, migration to cities, and subsequent development of cultural infrastructure) and a burgeoning sense of an artistic Canadian sensibility, not only in composition, but also visual arts and literature. McGee, *Music in Canada* (1985), 81-83. For more about Claude Champagne and Healey Willan as emblematic of this style, as English-influenced and French-influenced, see 92-93.

broadcasting provided greater cultural support and paths of communication across the country's considerable terrain, connecting previously disparate communities. The combination of Canada's physical vastness and its uneven population density (the statistic most quoted to support this is that ninety percent of the Canadian population live within 160 kilometers or about 100 miles of the American border[43]) has had an inevitable impact on the shape of the nation's musical life. The country's geographical features have also had a tremendous impact on Canadian art and music, including works by Gould and Peterson. But the challenge of overcoming the cultural isolation that resulted from the country's sheer size was particularly pronounced through the first half of the twentieth century.

Although the building of the Canadian Pacific Railway in the 1880s and the spread of national radio in the 1930s helped connect Canadians, the vestiges of geographical and intellectual isolation had long-lasting effects. Change was slow to occur and the consequences of this seclusion impacted the training and development of Canada's professional musicians. In his memoir, the Canadian conductor Victor Feldbrill recalled an exchange with Sir Ernest MacMillan in the early 1940s that attests to these challenges. When Feldbrill discussed a potential opportunity to move to Vancouver from Toronto in order to pursue his university education, MacMillan responded by sharing his concerns about the effect this decision would have on his career. "The mountains are very high between Vancouver and the musical world of Toronto," MacMillan observed.[44] This statement raised concerns both about the long distance between Canadian cities while it also addressed an awareness of the country's fragmented cultural state.

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[43] "By the Numbers," CBC website, May 12, 2009, http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/by-the-numbers-1.801937, last accessed January 26 2014.

[44] Walter Pitman, *Victor Feldbrill* (Toronto: Dundurn Press, 2010), 69.

Although this situation has improved considerably over the past sixty years, distance has remained a concern among musicians and artists until quite recently.[45]

Canadian music historiography has traditionally focused more heavily on the lives and works of composers - and on trends in Canadian composition - than on performers and performance.[46] In these histories, performance has traditionally been regarded as a byproduct of increased urban settlement and community development rather than a source of musical innovation. Ernest MacMillan's *Music in Canada,* for instance, adopts a teleological outlook on Canada's music history. MacMillan regards the years immediately preceding the date of publication as being especially fruitful for Canadian music, perhaps because composers' recent strides were regarded as a special achievement at the time of its publication.[47] In his view, composition held the authority to build a sense of national culture because of its capacity to capture meaning that could in turn reflect on national symbols and characteristics: "In order to be national an art must reflect the way of thinking, the social conditions, the aspirations of a people."[48] His statements and those of others imply a hierarchical valuation of composition over performance. Arnold Walter's 1967 follow-up to MacMillan's volume, *Aspects of Music in Canada,* reaffirms the perspective of MacMillan's study. Gilles Potvin's chapter about Canadian

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[45] Even today, certain rural communities especially Canada's Arctic region, feel the practical impact of such isolation much more so than the majority of Canadians who live in the country's southern regions and urban areas.

[46] George Proctor's study of Canadian music in the twentieth century, for instance, periodizes trends of compositional practice, narrating a trajectory that begins with the early nationalism of the interwar period characterized by prolific use of folk music, modernist and serialist compositions as a reaction to the traditional and conservative styles pre-WWII, and splintering off into different movements including that of electroacoustic music, neoclassicism, soundscape, new Romanticism, and other stylistic modes. George Proctor, *Canadian Music in the Twentieth Century* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1980).

[47] MacMillan's volume is a particularly important one in Canadian musical historiography for its consolidation of diverse perspectives: performance (solo and ensemble), composition, educational support and infrastructure, technology (radio and recording), and their contributions to Canadian musical culture. It is, notably, also narrowly focused on Western art music (deemed "serious" music) with limited views on "Popular Music" and "Folk Songs" and no mention of music of the First Nations.

[48] MacMillan, *Music in Canada,* 55.

composition is over twice as long as the chapter about performers, substantiating his claim that "composers, by virtue of the fact that they are creators, play *the* fundamental role in the establishment of a national form of music in any given country."[49] Potvin subsequently backpedals, conceding that the performer plays a role that is "not at all secondary" to that of the composer. While some composers lament a dearth of Canadian content in international music markets, I submit that Canada has seen international recognition, though more strongly in the realm of performance than in composition.[50] That is, Canadian-composed art music has not made as much of an international impact as music performed by Canadians.[51] This dissertation argues for a consideration of solo virtuoso performance as central to discourses on musical innovation, contesting composer-centered histories of Canadian music.

Literature on Gould and Peterson

In this dissertation, I have faced the disparity in scholarship between Gould and Peterson in relation to both quantity and quality. Perhaps because of Gould's eccentric personality he quickly became a popular icon after the release of his first commercial LP, *The Goldberg Variations,* in 1955. Gould was often outspoken, sparking debate and controversy from his earliest interviews on issues pertaining to music, technology, and the relationship between audience and performer. As a result, casual listeners and scholars alike have taken an enthusiastic interest in Gould as a performer, radio broadcaster, and writer. Peterson is well-known within the jazz community, but

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[49] Emphasis mine. Gilles Potvin, "Performers" in *Aspects of Music in Canada,* edited by Arnold Walter (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1967), 143.

[50] For comments on the relative absence of Canadian music in International encyclopedias, journals, and texts on musical topics, see John Beckwith, "About Canadian Music: The P.R. Failure, 1969, 1970" and "A 'Failure' Revisited" in Beckwith, *Music Papers* (Ottawa: Golden Dog Press, 1997), 35-39 and 111-121.

[51] This difference is especially pronounced if we consider the explosion of prominent Canadian popular artists who have broken into the U.S. market since the 1980s including Céline Dion, Bryan Adams, Shania Twain, Justin Bieber, and Drake, among others.

his down-to-earth personality drew less popular attention from outside of jazz circles. Unlike Gould, Peterson did not have a regular radio or television program and thus less opportunity for exposure to non-jazz audiences. Moreover, as I have pointed out, Peterson has routinely been left out of Canadian histories, an absence that is reflected in popular and scholarly literature. In order to mitigate the differences in scope and nature of published literature on both figures, I have incorporated primary sources that have, until now, been unaccounted for in published work about Peterson. In assembling my analysis, I have also chosen complementary points of comparison that highlight the musical and cultural contributions of both artists.

Gould has attracted considerable attention from the academy and popular media. To date, the books published about him range from trade publications to dissertations and academic research adding up to a significant amount of material. Two journals dedicated to Gould have existed - *The Glenn Gould Society Bulletin* (published from 1982 to 1992 in the Netherlands) and *GlennGould*, the journal of the Glenn Gould Foundation (published from 1995 to 2005 in Canada). Even over thirty years after his death, interest in Gould's oeuvre and performances has not faded. More books seem to be released about Gould every year, with topics ranging from his love life, to the saga of his search for the perfect piano, to various aspects of his career as a performer and as cultural commentator.

This body of literature has focused on all aspects of Gould's creative output, although most of it has been biographical: fewer titles have examined Gould's writings and philosophy.[52] Of the biographies, those by Geoffrey Payzant (1978) and Otto Friedrich (1989) stand out. Payzant's was the only monograph about Gould published during his lifetime, and it lays out

[52] For biographies of Gould see: Geoffrey Payzant, *Glenn Gould Music & Mind* (Toronto: Van Nostrand Reinhold Ltd, 1978); Otto Friedrich, *Glenn Gould: A Life and Variations* (New York: Random House, 1989); Mark Kingwell, *Glenn Gould* (Toronto: Penguin Canada, 2008); Vladimir Konieczny, *Glenn Gould: A Musical Force* (Toronto: Dundurn Press, 2009); Georges Leroux, *Partita for Glenn Gould: An Inquiry Into the Nature of Genius,* trans. Donald Winkler (Montréal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2010).

some major landmarks in Gould's life as well as the aesthetic and philosophical ideas that illuminate his musical interpretations. Friedrich's biography, commissioned by the Gould Estate, is based on previously unavailable materials as well as extensive interviews with individuals who knew Gould personally. Kevin Bazzana's Ph.D dissertation was one of the first scholarly examinations of Gould's performance style and is still the most comprehensive. Published as a book in 1997, it departed from other biographical volumes by primarily focusing on Gould's performance style.[53] Bazzana also published a monograph in 2003, still considered to be the definitive volume on Gould's life and work, that addressed the topic of Gould's image in the context of Canadian culture.[54] For a Gould researcher, the accessibility of his published writings is invaluable. Tim Page's edited volume, *The Glenn Gould Reader,* and John P.L. Roberts' *The Art of Glenn Gould* have made a great deal of Gould's published work available.[55] Collections of interviews with people who knew and worked with Gould, such as those edited by Rhona Bergman and Colin Eatock, offer a range of personal perspectives.[56]

In addition to the published word, Gould has been extensively represented on television and in film. Probably the best-known film about Gould that launched him into modern popular mythology is François Girard's *Thirty-Two Short Films About Glenn Gould* (1993), a biopic with Canadian actor Colm Feore in the role of Gould. Over the past forty years, French filmmaker

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[53] Kevin Bazzana, *Glenn Gould: A Study in Performance Practice,* Ph.D. dissertation, Berkeley: University of California, Berkeley, 1996. The dissertation was published as a book entitled *Glenn Gould: The Performer in the Work* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997).

[54] Kevin Bazzana, *Wondrous Strange: The Life and Art of Glenn Gould* (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart Ltd. 2003).

[55] See: Glenn Gould, *The Glenn Gould Reader*, ed. Tim Page, (New York: Knopf, 1984) and John P.L Roberts, *The Art of Glenn Gould* (Toronto: Malcolm Lester Books, 1999). For additional commentary from another journalist on the topic of his personal interactions with Gould, see Jonathan Cott, *Conversations with Glenn Gould* (Boston: Little, Brown, and Company, 1994).

[56] For collections of interviews on the topic of Gould see: Rhona Bergman, *The Idea of Gould,* (Philadelphia: Lev Publishing, 1999) and Colin Eatock, *Remembering Glenn Gould: Twenty Interviews with People Who Knew Him* (Newcastle: Penumbra Press, 2012).

Bruno Monsaingeon has made several documentary films capturing performances and Gould's process of recording. The first two were *Glenn Gould: The Alchemist* (1974) and *Glenn Gould Plays Bach* (1979-1981). In addition to these, Monsaingeon revisited Gould as a subject in three additional film projects, released after Gould's death.[57] In addition to the plethora of films and documentaries, a 2010 television documentary produced by American Masters, *The Genius Within: The Inner Life of Glenn Gould*, offered a twenty-first century perspective and was widely broadcast on the PBS network in November of that year.

Since his death, Gould has also inspired conferences, symposia, and other celebratory events around the world. A recent two-day festival at the University of Toronto marked Gould's 80th birthday demonstrating that, even well after his death, he continues to inspire a younger generation of creative artists, scholars, and musicians. The Toronto-based Glenn Gould Foundation, established in 1983 by John P.L. Roberts, is still active. The Foundation supports Gould research and encourages events that keep him in the public eye (and in their ears). As a result, events such as Gould's 80th birthday celebration and symposium in 2012 and the undisputed crown jewel of the foundations activities - the administration of the Glenn Gould Prize (incidentally, conferred to Oscar Peterson in 2007) - ensure a sustained level of interest in Gould and his work that is rarely observed for classical performers, dead or living. The organization also promotes Gould's work by releasing previously unheard recordings and re-releasing his recordings through Sony Music.

As an African Canadian jazz musician, Peterson's career path and reception contrasted from Gould's in that he has not been as widely recognized by the mainstream. Although Peterson

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[57] *The Glenn Gould Cycle* (1985-1988) and *Fragments d'un Portrait* (1988) are listed on Monsaingeon's website, but are, as far as I know, not commercially available. See also *Hereafter*, DVD, dir. Bruno Monsaingeon (Paris: Idéale Audience International, 2006).

is well-known among Canadians, he has not been adopted into the international popular consciousness in the same way as Gould. There are several possibilities for Peterson's exclusion. The smaller scale of the Canadian jazz community and its lack of connection to the origins of jazz in the United States have made it difficult for its members to break onto the international scene, particularly because they have done so in the shadow of their U.S. counterparts. As the second chapter of this dissertation shows, Peterson's nationality (and his openness to discussing his national pride) deprived him of the legitimacy innately enjoyed by U.S.-born jazz musicians, causing him to be frequently overlooked in histories of jazz.

As previously noted, Peterson has routinely been excluded from cross-genre studies of Canadian culture, evidence that Canadians have been slow to accept the cultural contributions of African Canadians as representative of the country at large. This subtle exclusion makes it more likely that a writer or researcher will reach for a white classical musician (such as Glenn Gould) in a discussion of what person (and music) epitomizes the Canadian experience. On a more practical note, Peterson's more recent death in December 2007 has resulted in a shorter period of time for the formation of a society of appreciation or an official foundation.

Peterson's memoir and a handful of biographies, all penned by jazz critics, document his life story. Richard Palmer's well-intentioned biography from 1984 contains several factual errors and only documents Peterson's career until the early 1980s.[58] Gene Lees' biography was published over twenty-five years ago and is still the definitive study of Peterson.[59] The most recent biography by Jack Batten is aimed at young readers, providing a family-friendly account of Peterson's life story.[60] As far as I am aware, a 1999 doctoral dissertation by Markus Buchmann on

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[58] Richard Palmer, *Oscar Peterson* (Tunbridge Wells: Hippocrene Books, 1984).

[59] Gene Lees, *Oscar Peterson: The Will to Swing* (Toronto: Lester & Orpen Dennys Ltd., 1988).

[60] Jack Batten, *Oscar Peterson: The Man and his Jazz* (Toronto: Tundra Books, 2012).

Peterson's improvisational style is the only scholarly study of Peterson's work that has been published.[61] His study provides thorough analyses of several famous Peterson improvisations. Peterson has also been the subject of a radio and television documentary both of which were broadcast on the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation.[62]

Any review of literature about Oscar Peterson should also include publications about the many jazz musicians whom he played with. One reason for the relative lack of attention focused solely on Peterson has to do with the nature of jazz as a musical genre. As a community practice, in contrast to the solitary activities of a concert pianist, jazz performance relies heavily on group interaction rather than the activities of the soloist him- or herself. James Hershorn's recent book about jazz impresario and Peterson's longtime manager Norman Granz, makes valuable contributions to Peterson scholarship.[63] So do writings about the musicians involved with Jazz at the Philharmonic. In addition, a number of reflections by jazz critics and fellow jazz musicians can be found in volumes of reviews and interviews by jazz critics such as John Gennari, Gene Lees, Benny Green, Albert Murray, and Dan Morgenstern, among others.[64]

The points of connection between the two artists argue in favor of expanding established frameworks for analyzing the relationship between nationality and music beyond the careers of certain individuals. By undertaking a cross-genre, interracial study of Gould and Peterson, my

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[61] Markus Buchmann, *Personalstil in der Jazzimprovisation - Studien zu Oscar Peterson* (Kassel: Gustav Bosse Verlag, 1999).

[62] The television documentary was broadcast on CBC television and PBS: *Oscar Peterson: Music in the Key of Oscar*, DVD, dir. Sylvia Sweeney (Toronto: View, Inc., 2004). The radio documentary is, as far as I know, not available commercially. Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, in association with Vocal Vision Productions and Sylvia Sweeney, "In the Key of Oscar," 1992, Library and Archives Canada, Accession Number 2009-00172-9, Item Number ISN 418016, radio documentary (audio).

[63] James Hershorn, *Norman Granz: The Man Who Used Jazz for Justice* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2013).

[64] For more, see John Gennari, *Blowin' Hot and Cool: Jazz and its Critics* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006); Gene Lees, *Friends Along the Way: A Journey through Jazz* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003); Benny Green, Dominic Green, ed., *Such Sweet Thunder: Benny Green on Jazz* (London : Scribner, 2001); Albert Murray, *Stomping the Blues* (New York: Da Capo Press, 2000); Dan Morgenstern, Sheldon Meyer, eds. *Living with Jazz* (New York: Pantheon Books, 2004).

dissertation introduces an inclusionary paradigm for understanding Canada's musical history. In this study, the exceptional features that have characterized Gould's career are presented as points of contact with Peterson's arguing for an expanded understanding of Peterson's significance as a Canadian jazz artist and for a renewed perspective of both Gould's and Peterson's careers.

Glenn Gould Meets Oscar Peterson

Many in the Canadian popular press have commented on the resonance between Gould and Peterson, linking them because of their skills on the same instrument, their common nationality, and their roughly parallel career trajectories. This dissertation is perhaps the first to examine this connection closely. The challenge in comparing the two artists is possibly one reason why commentary on the topic has been limited. Such statements as "the Canadian pianist who has been compared with Glenn Gould in technical ability and musical achievement," have been casually slipped into articles about Peterson.[65] Jazz critic and Peterson biographer Jack Batten for instance, pointed out the connection, but took issue with Gould's tendency to overshadow Peterson: "The Canadian pianist who is best known to non-Canadians is not Glenn Gould, he's Oscar Peterson."[66] Another journalist pushed back on the comparison between the two by speculating about an imaginary "switch" of careers. Referring to Peterson's classical training, he described Peterson as the more musically versatile of the two:

> He is probably the best-known Canadian pianist this side of Glenn Gould. In fact, prior to Gould's death, I relished the secret fantasy of the two musicians switching places. It has always been my conviction that Peterson, a classically trained

[65] Donna McElligott, "Mississauga's back home to jazz great Oscar Peterson," Series D1, 5, "Press Clippings - 1980-1983," Folder 8, Oscar Peterson fonds, Library and Archives Canada.

[66] Jack Batten, "The Earnest Brilliance of Oscar Peterson - A Minority Opinion on the World's Most Successful Canadian," August 1973, Series D1, 4, "Press Clippings - 1970-1979," Folder 8, Oscar Peterson fonds, Library and Archives Canada.

> musician who studied with Paul de Marky, would have made an easier adjustment.[67]

One of Peterson's biographers, the Canadian jazz critic Gene Lees made the most enigmatic comment on the similarity between the two, writing:

> Canada has produced two prodigious pianists, one in classical music, one in jazz. Both built world reputations without leaving home except for concerts and recording. Both live in Toronto. They are, of course, Glenn Gould and Oscar Peterson. They have never met. Isn't that odd? Outsiders.[68]

Lees never did elaborate on what he meant in using the term "outsider," nor why he lumped Gould and Peterson into that category. Yet in this passing comment, he raises an over-arching and integral issue of my dissertation.

In some ways, Gould and Peterson were far from outsiders: both were, from the perspective of popular acceptance, mainstream to their respective musical genres. Moreover, by the measure of popular and career success, neither could be considered marginalized. At the same time, both were polarizing. Lees' observation cuts to the core paradox of Gould's and Peterson's respective careers, raising the point that their successes did not go uncontested. Gould's approach to recording, fundamental to his general musical philosophy that guided his career decisions and creative choices, was provocative and controversial. Peterson similarly raised debate among jazz musicians and fans about crucial issues within the jazz community: authenticity, the value of tradition, and the importance of change. Indeed, Gould and Peterson both engendered wildly divergent opinions on many topics, revealing fault lines at crucially appointed moments in history on key issues for their respective musical communities.

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[67] John Lekich. "Jazz and the Free Exchange of Ideas" *Georgia Straight,* March 1 1991, Series D1, 9, "Press Clippings - 1990-1991," Folder 8, Oscar Peterson fonds, Library and Archives Canada.

[68] Gene Lees, "The Best Damn Jazz Piano in the Whole Wide World" *Maclean's* 88 No. 7 (July 1975)**,** Series D1, 4, "Press Clippings - 1970-1979," Folder 8, Oscar Peterson fonds, Library and Archives Canada.

Naturally, because of contemporaneous careers and a common city of residence, Gould and Peterson had several close encounters. Peterson, although raised in Montréal, moved to Toronto in the 1950s, where Gould spent his entire life. Both Gould and Peterson performed at the famous venues of Carnegie Hall and Massey Hall. Both performed at the Music Festival for the Stratford Shakespearean Festival, an annual festival in the town of Stratford, Ontario where Gould was heavily involved with musical programming from 1961 to 1964.[69] During this time, Gould regularly performed and lectured for the musical festival. The Oscar Peterson Trio also performed at the event in 1956 as a last-minute substitute for Art Tatum who canceled his concert due to illness. The performance was recorded live and released in 1956, becoming one of the Trio's most critically-acclaimed albums, *The Oscar Peterson Trio at the Stratford Shakespearean Festival*. That year, Gould performed a concert in Stratford to a sold-out audience, playing a diverse program that consisted of Sweelinck, Krenek, Berg, the premiere of Gould's own String Quartet, and Schoenberg's *Ode to Napoleon* performed with the soprano Bethany Beardslee. Gould's concert took place on July 9 and the Oscar Peterson Trio performed on two nights: the 8th and 10th of August. As far as I know, Gould and Peterson did not meet at that venue.

Although Gould and Peterson admired one another, their careers took place in separate cultural circles. Some of the most enticing clues to what might have become personal meetings between Gould and Peterson are contained within the Glenn Gould fonds at Library and Archives Canada. In *Wondrous Strange,* Kevin Bazzana notes that the idea to bring Gould and Peterson together repeatedly came up. In the late 1950s, a CBC producer proposed a program in which Gould and Peterson would join forces, each pianist playing solo and later sharing some

[69] Gould also performed at the festival several times, in 1953, 1955, 1956, and from 1961 to 1963. Kevin Bazzana, Glen [sic] Gould and the Stratford Festival an enduring legacy, http://stratfordfestivalreviews.com/2012/08/03/glen-gould-and-the-stratford-festival-an-enduring-legacy/, last accessed January 26 2014.

time in conversation. They went as far as to schedule a date for taping - April 26, 1960 - but for reasons that remain unclear, the show never materialized. A letter from Gould to Harold Barkley of *The Toronto Daily Star* on February 14, 1970 indicates another missed opportunity. Barkley had invited them to be interviewed jointly for a special issue of the paper. Gould apologized in the letter, writing:

> Needless to say, it would be a great pleasure to meet with Mr. Peterson at any time because, even though I'm very much out of my depth in relation to the jazz field, I have the highest regard for his remarkable ability but I'm afraid that, in view of the various rain-checks that I've been granted by your colleagues on the other papers locally, I'll have to beg off any interviews or photo-sessions at this time.[70]

At the very least, this exchange confirms that Gould admired Peterson though they had not met by 1970. No further correspondence on this topic is contained within the Gould or the Peterson fonds.

Twelve years after the first attempt by the *Toronto Daily Star,* the idea of joining Peterson and Gould for a personal meeting arose again. Broadcaster and journalist John Fraser, had previously corresponded with Gould about the possibility of a radio program as a fourth addendum to his *Solitude Trilogy*, and the topic being suggested was political isolation in China.[71] Fraser wrote to Gould again in May 1982 through the production team at CBC Light Entertainment, proposing a television program documenting a meeting of the two musicians. The program had a working title: "A Little Special, Glenn Gould Meets Oscar Peterson." The Program Consultant Judith Kargas described the idea in the letter:

> Two pianos, two giants and an earthquake on the small screen: An intimate setting allowing the brilliance of both persons and personalities (sans children

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[70] Letter from Glenn Gould to Harold Barkley, Item 31:42:11, Microfilm Reel 25, Glenn Gould fonds, Library and Archives Canada.

[71] Even though the project never happened, Gould and Fraser had agreed on a name for the radio program: "The Last Puritans."

> participation). Our host, John Fraser sharing some insightful glimpses into and with our guests.[72]

According to the letter, Peterson indicated preliminary interest in the idea and was due to respond to the request, but much like the previous attempts at introducing the two in person, it never materialized. Gould passed away from a stroke only six months after receiving Fraser's project proposal. In his 1997 Jazz Oral History Project interview with John McDonough, Peterson revealed that he and Gould knew one another and had spoken on several occasions especially in the planning for the 1982 television special.[73] Peterson did not elaborate about their relationship beyond that.

That Gould and Peterson never directly collaborated is hardly significant in and of itself. But the many different attempts to bring them together indicates a recognition of their shared iconic status and a general interest in joining their divergent creative lives. Far from providing a concrete one-to-one comparison between the two, this dissertation instead draws broad strokes of connection and suggests that despite their differences, Gould and Peterson dealt with similar challenges in their careers. As is often stated, rather than providing answers to many of the questions we might have on the topic of the relationship to Gould and Peterson, I instead explore inquiries that I hope, open up the study of performance and its evolution throughout the twentieth-century.

Dana Gooley states as the premise of his study *The Virtuoso Liszt* that virtuosity is, at its core, about boundaries - defining them, contesting them, and demonstrating that it is possible to

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[72] Letter from Glenn Gould to Harold Barkley, Item 36:24:1, Microfilm Reel 31, Glenn Gould fonds, Library and Archives Canada.

[73] Interview with John McDonough, Smithsonian Oral Jazz History Project, Part 10, Smithsonian National Museum of American History Archives Center.

go beyond.[74] Employing Gooley's metaphor, I embark on a study of two virtuosos who, in different cultural contexts, carried on in the spirit of a nineteenth-century virtuosity: their careers were defined by setting boundaries and defying them. Again borrowing from Gooley, I contend that performance, although a major facet of the virtuoso experience, is by no means the only realm in which the virtuoso tested the boundaries. Thus in the first part of my dissertation I focus on issues pertaining directly to performance and reception while in the second, I examine Gould's and Peterson's creative work in the realm of composition: Gould's experimental radio documentary entitled *Solitude Trilogy* and Peterson's multi-movement jazz suite composed for jazz trio, *Canadiana Suite.* In an interlude chapter, I examine the virtuoso as musical collaborator through an examination of the work of Canadian filmmaker Norman McLaren. His experimental animated film shorts provided opportunities for collaboration on the part of both musicians; with Peterson in 1949 and with Gould in 1969.

Summary of Chapters

In the first part of this dissertation I show how Gould and Peterson's performances sparked furor through their contestation of musical boundaries. In the first chapter, "Technological Virtuosity and Glenn Gould's *Goldberg Variations*, 1954 to 1959," I examine Gould's radical approach to technology and the recording studio and argue that his musical philosophies emerged from his recording practices. Exploring the twenty-one outtakes to his 1955 rendition of "Aria" on the LP *The Goldberg Variations,* I take a closer look at Gould's statements about technology after his retirement from the concert hall, showing that they originated from his early experiences with the recording apparatus. No longer content to be an agent of

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[74] Dana Gooley, *The Virtuoso Liszt* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 1.

reproduction as a performer, he proposed, through his statements and his actions, a radical reconfiguration of the role of the performer as creative producer.

In the second chapter, "Oscar's Paradox: Oscar Peterson in the Mainstream and on the Margins, 1950 to 1965," I explore the reception of Peterson's performance aesthetic through a comprehensive examination of reviews of both recording and live concerts compiled from jazz periodicals, trade magazines, and newspapers primarily from North America and Europe. I focus on a range of opinions about Peterson's performance aesthetic, but especially address charges that his style of performance was becoming increasingly outdated especially from the 1960s onward. Peterson's adherence to a particular style of virtuosic jazz pushed back against the prevailing idea among jazz musicians and trendsetters that jazz should look forward rather than back. I examine features and characteristics of Peterson's playing that caught the attention of reviewers and argue that the debate over Peterson's value within the jazz community is indicative of a broader uncertainty with respect to virtuosity. The value of virtuosity in the jazz world, moreover, changed over the 1950s to the 1960s as reflected in this collection of reviews.

The third chapter, "Performance as Narrative in Two Norman McLaren Animated Shorts," serves as an interlude to the two parts of my dissertation. In it, I focus on the creative work of a third party, Canadian filmmaker Norman McLaren. Analyzing his short animated films "Begone Dull Care" (1949, with original music by the Oscar Peterson Trio) and "Spheres" (1969, with music recorded by Gould), I argue that Peterson and Gould provided more than just a soundtrack to McLaren's films, but that their performances were crucial to the film's narrative structure.

The second part of my dissertation takes the reader outside the realm of performance, opening a different perspective on expressive outlets for the solo virtuoso. In the years leading up

to Canada's Centennial in 1967, Gould and Peterson both turned to images of Canadian landscape, composing works that reflected national identity through the lens of personal geographic experience. Gould was deeply influenced by a culture of listening and in *Solitude Trilogy*, a trio of radio documentaries broadcast in 1967, 1973, and 1977 on CBC radio, he incorporated unconventional approaches to sound and narrative. Only three years before the premiere of Gould's radio work, Peterson released *Canadiana Suite,* his first extended work, written for the Oscar Peterson Trio. I examine these compositions as musical commentary that captured a Canadian sensibility through the representation of landscape and sound. In contrast to expectations of the performer as interpreter, Gould and Peterson both embraced the role of composer, turning to landscape as thematic inspiration.

In my fourth chapter, "Sound, Silence, Solitude; Glenn Gould's *Solitude Trilogy*," I explore Gould's trilogy of radio programs as growing out of a culture of listening. As I show in the first chapter, Gould frequently discussed the impact of radio and sound technology and its influence on his work as a performer, listener, and composer. Incorporating analysis of the radio programs themselves, as well as scripts and other documents from the Gould fonds, I argue that Gould was part of a cultural impulse in Canada to explore sound in a variety of ways, incorporating spatial interpretations of Canadian locales. By creating these radio documentaries and others, Gould pushed the limits of the performing musician into the realm of composition and sound exploration.

The final chapter, entitled "The Iron Road in The Garden: Oscar Peterson's *Canadiana Suite* (1964)," examines Peterson's multi-movement suite for jazz trio at the intersection of his many identities: as a jazz musician, black Canadian, and the son of a railway porter. Analyzing the work's hybrid style and primary source documents from the Peterson fonds at the Library and

Archives Canada, I argue that the musical work reflects Peterson's multiple musical influences, such as his classical training on the piano and Duke Ellington's extended jazz suites of the 1930s and 40s. The multi-movement jazz form and diversity of themes, I argue, captures temporal-spatial motion in the representation of a train journey from Canada's east to west coast, enacting the regular railroad trip that Peterson's father took as a railway porter on the Canadian Pacific Railway in the 1930s and 40s.

By studying these icons of twentieth-century performance side-by-side, my dissertation illuminates the significance of the performer in the context of Canada's cultural life in the second half of the twentieth-century. Further, drawing connections between two musicians, despite their superficial differences, yields a new understanding of how Gould and Peterson exploded expectations in their respective musical communities and forged innovative paths of musical expression that reflected aspects of their personal and national identities.

Chapter 1

Take Twenty-One:
Technological Virtuosity and Glenn Gould's *Goldberg Variations,* 1954 to 1959

1955 was a momentous year for Glenn Gould. On January 2 he made his United States debut at the Phillips Gallery in Washington D.C., his first concert outside his native Canada where he was already well-known. Nine days later, he performed the same program at a Town Hall recital debut in New York City.[1] Gould earned enthusiastic praise from critics and audiences, but the main windfall came as a result of his New York concert success: an exclusive three-year record contract with Columbia Masterworks.[2] Less than six months later, Gould returned to New York where he recorded J.S. Bach's *Goldberg Variations*. Its release in January 1956 made him a household name and evoked a rapturous response, heralding what Evan Eisenberg later called "The Age of Gould."[3] It set new records for classical album sales, paving the way for Gould's 1957 European Tour that further established his international reputation.[4]

If critical reception of Gould's D.C. and New York recitals was warm, reviews of his first *Goldberg Variations* album suggest that the recording lit a fire under his critics and listening

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[1] Gould performed the same program for both recitals that included J.S. Bach's G major Partita, Beethoven's Op. 109 Sonata, Berg's Sonata, Gibbons's "Earl of Salisbury" Pavan and Galliard, Sweelinck's "Fitzwilliam" Fantasia, and Webern's *Variations*.

[2] His contract with Columbia Masterworks was the beginning of his lifelong affiliation with the record company that eventually became CBS records, and then part of the Sony Music conglomerate.

[3] Evan Eisenberg, "The Goldberg Variations Made New," *Slate.com,* published August 27 2007, http://www.slate.com/articles/arts/music_box/2007/08/the_goldberg_variations_made_new.html, last accessed October 1 2013.

[4] In 1981, he recorded the *Goldberg Variations* again on an album released posthumously in October 1982, lending even further significance to the earlier release. Some have described the two versions as musical bookends to his storied career. Journalist Tim Page poetically referred to them as "alpha and omega, first and last," offering a melodramatic flourish to Gould's biography. Tim Page, Liner Notes, *Glenn Gould - A State of Wonder*, Glenn Gould (piano), Sony Classical S3K 87703, 2002, CD, 5.

audience.[5] Elucidating the cultural impact of Gould's interpretation, Canadian composer John Beckwith later credited the album as doing "more to popularize this masterpiece than any other performances of it before or since."[6] Gould's rendition gained favor for his radically new imagining of the rarely-performed work, known among music aficionados to be, in the words of Gladys Shenner from the Canadian publication *MacLean's Magazine,* one that "takes most artists a lifetime to master."[7] American music critic Irving Kolodin similarly stated in his laudatory review that a pianist's competence cannot be faked in a performance of the variations: "Either a pianist can play them with insight or he can't."[8] A writer for the *New York Herald Tribune* expressed surprise that Gould chose to record the variation set on his first album. The review compared it to "introducing a rookie pitcher to baseball by starting him in the first game of a World Series," adding that Gould "passe[d] the test brilliantly."[9] Critical reaction took special note of Gould's virtuosity and the "intellectual" qualities of his interpretation.[10] *New York Times* music critic Harold C. Schonberg wrote:

> Gould senses the romanticism of the music, and its piercing harmonies, and he plays it as music, not as a museum piece. There are some unconventional ideas,

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[5] Gould's choice of repertoire alone was enough to capture public attention. At the time, the album was one of only a few recordings of the *Goldberg Variations* and one of even fewer recorded on a modern piano rather than a two-manual harpsichord, the instrument for which the work was originally composed. This small group of *Goldberg* recordings performed on a modern piano before Gould's version include the 1927 piano roll by Rudolf Serkin, a 1942 recording by Claudio Arrau and Rosalyn Tureck's 1947 recording. Today, the *Goldberg Variations* are frequently performed and recorded on the modern piano.

[6] John Beckwith, *Music Papers: Articles and Talks by a Canadian Composer 1961-1994* (Ottawa, ON: The Golden Dog Press, 1997), 178.

[7] Gladys Shenner, "The Genius who Doesn't Want to Play," *MacLean's Magazine,* April 28 1956, 98.

[8] Irving Kolodin, "Glenn Gould Phenomenon," *The Dallas Morning Herald,* March 1 1956, 27.

[9] "Pianistic Debut: Bach by Gould," *New York Herald Tribune,* February 5 1956, E15.

[10] In his review of the album Cyrus Durgin of *The Boston Globe,* for instance, referred to Gould's "digital competence" in "Music News...Records," *The Boston Globe,* February 5, 1956, C50. Albert Goldberg of the *L.A. Times* described Gould's "astonishing facility and insight" on the album in "The Sounding Board," *L.A. Times,* March 18, 1956, E9. A writer for *The Springfield Sunday Republican* commented on Gould's "formidable technique and a deep understanding of the music of Bach" in "Second Thoughts in Music," *The Springfield Sunday Republican,* January 22 1956, 10B.

> but those manage to be convincing in the emotional framework that Gould conceives them.[11]

Schonberg also commented on Gould's "unusual playing," perhaps in reference to his non-legato articulation of lightning-fast passages without neglecting the integrity of the polyphonic texture, qualities that became trademarks of Gould's performance aesthetic.

The release of the 1955 *Goldberg Variations* was accompanied by an aggressive marketing strategy that capitalized on Gould's youth and good looks.[12] The iconic album cover featured portraits of Gould arranged in a thirty-photo composite, encouraging an aura of celebrity fandom usually associated with popular musicians and movie stars of the same time period (Figure 1.1).[13] As Graham Carr put it, "the LP encouraged consumer desire by focussing all eyes on Gould and reifying the technology of recorded sound."[14] When Tim Page described Gould's playing as having "the same sort of tough/tender dichotomy exemplified by such cultural icons as Marlon Brando and James Dean," the analogy acknowledged the level of recognition Gould achieved in a short time while it also described the porous boundary that existed between Gould's public image and his approach to musical interpretation.[15]

Despite the excitement and attention Gould evoked (or perhaps in response to it), he was famously averse to audiences and public performance. 1964 marked a decisive break in his career when he permanently retired from the concert stage only to dedicate himself fully to a career in

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[11] Harold C. Schonberg, "Records: Complete Ravel Piano Music," *New York Times*, January 29 1956, 111.

[12] In this interview Gould commented on the "crazy publicity" surrounding the record on the part of Columbia Records. Glenn Gould Interview with Eric MacLean, radio broadcast, April 25 1956, AIN 560425-2, Canadian Broadcasting Corporation [CBC] Radio Archive.

[13] Closely examining photographic representations of Gould during the 1950s, Carr argues that Gould's image signaled a shift in classical music marketing and moreover, played a crucial role in building up his fame and celebrity. Graham Carr, "Visualizing 'The Sound of Genius': Glenn Gould and the culture of celebrity in the 1950s," *Journal of Canadian Studies* 40 No. 3 (Fall 2006): 14-16.

[14] Carr, "Visualizing," 10.

[15] Tim Page, Liner Notes, *Glenn Gould - A State of Wonder*, 7.



Figure 1.1: Original album cover for the 1955 Goldberg Variations *LP.*

the recording studio. As a result of this major shift in Gould's musical priorities, his recordings from the 1950s have been considered in isolation from his post-1964 recordings, particularly with regards to his experimental use of recording technology. Kevin Bazzana's thought-provoking study of Gould's performance practices states this point most clearly in his argument that "the intellectual and stylistic features that most characterize him came into focus and matured after his retirement from public performance."[16] Discussions of Gould's philosophies have focused on his use of the magnetic tape splice, a technological intervention that he discussed at length mainly after 1964. Tim Hecker described Gould's editing practices as "seemingly cavalier," suggesting

[16] Kevin Bazzana, *The Performer in the Work* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1997), 257.

that he applied tape splices to tidy up technical faults in his performances.[17] The tape splice became a central point of contention among musicians and audiences who believed that technological manipulation of a sound recording was ultimately dishonest, fueled by the assumption that aggressive editing was a substitute for a clean and accurate musical performance.[18] Although on his 1955 album Gould did not employ such recording techniques as the complex and sophisticated placement of multiple microphones and extensive tape splicing, the documents explored here show that Gould was nevertheless engaged with many of the ideas that define and underlie his later musical philosophies.

In this chapter I argue that Gould's early work in the recording studio, exemplified in the 1955 recording and other performances of the *Goldberg Variations*, was already influenced by a distinctively Gouldian approach to music and sound reproduction. I focus on an early period of Gould's career, ranging from 1955 to 1959, and assert that he was already using the recording studio as a site of musical experimentation. I treat recordings as archival objects together with Gould's publications, interviews, and materials from the Glenn Gould fonds at Library and Archives Canada. By analyzing outtakes from the 1955 album's recording sessions, I examine

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[17] Tim Hecker, "Glenn Gould, the Vanishing Performer and the Ambivalence of the Studio," *Leonardo Music Journal* 18, (2008), 81. Paul Myers, Vice President of Artists & Repertoire for CBS Masterworks and Gould's producer from the mid-1960s, corroborates that Gould's takes were almost always "note-perfect" and that he regarded the editing splice, rather than a corrective tool, as something that could "enhance musical ideas." Paul Myers interview with Rhona Bergman, Bergman, *The Idea of Gould* (Philadelphia: Lev Publishing, 1999), 46.

[18] Gould was, of course, partially responsible for the heavy attention on the magnetic tape splice which became the focus of his discussions on the topic of music and technology. Gould frequently defended his position on its role in response to other musicians who argued that it was unethical to splice a musical performance. His strongest statement on the topic is found in the August 1975 *High Fidelity* article, "The Grass is Always Greener on the Outtakes: An Experiment in Listening," which documents a listening experiment he conducted with several listeners. They were surveyed after listening to a series of musical excerpts about how many splices they heard on the tape. The findings were strongly in Gould's favor; no one could hear all of the splices and most of his subjects were grossly inaccurate in identifying them (either estimating too many or too few splices). Article reprinted in Glenn Gould, *The Glenn Gould Reader,* ed. Tim Page (New York, NY: Alfred A. Knopf), 357-368.

Gould's early creative process in the studio.[19] The outtakes, currently held (in digitized form and on 8mm reels) at Battery Studios in Manhattan have never been released and have rarely been heard.[20] Thanks to the help of Sony sound engineer Matt Cavaluzzo and classical archivist Anthony Fountain, I listened to the recordings on-site, albeit with limited access and no possibility of obtaining copies. Restricted to hearing outtakes only from the "Aria," the evidence I present in this chapter is based on discussions that took place among Matt, Anthony, and myself on July 24 2013, as well as my notes from the listening session.

Gould performed and recorded the *Goldberg Variations* frequently over this four-year period and he played an important role in establishing the composition as a modern keyboard work.[21] In addition to his 1955 studio recording, three live recordings of Gould's early performances are commercially available: a 1954 CBC radio broadcast, a recording from the 1958 recital at the Vancouver Festival, and a recording of his performance at the Salzburg Festival in 1959. Comparing the live recordings to the studio recordings and outtakes, Gould's studio process and interpretations provide new insights into his ideas about musical performance and sound recording, redefining and even clarifying his musical philosophy.

This chapter presents preliminary analysis of these recordings that, with additional resources, could expand into a project about Gould's creative process in the studio, an area that

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[19] Select outtakes from "Aria," Variation 1, Variation 2, Variation 3, Variation 4, and Variation 30 (Quodlibet) are contained on the Bonus Disc of the double reissue of the 1955 and 1981 *Goldberg Variations* albums by Sony Classical. *Glenn Gould - A State of Wonder*, Glenn Gould (piano), Sony Classical S3K 87703, 2002.

[20] Sony maintains an extensive archive of its classical recordings at this location, the purpose of which is to preserve the recordings that have been transferred from their original format. On this date I listened to high-resolution, 24-bit/96 kHz digital transfers rather than the original tapes because of the fragile state of the originals.

[21] Due to the popularity of the 1955 album, the work became a fan favorite on Gould's concert programs and he frequently performed it (or excerpts of it) alongside other works.

has been largely neglected, particularly with respect to classical music recordings.[22] By observing what occurred behind the curtain, I offer new insight into a particular moment in the evolution of Gould's performance practices and his creative approach to the *Goldberg Variations*. Gould was deeply engaged with technology and its creative freedoms from its earliest stages of his career, laying the groundwork for his later, more famous philosophical positions. Taken in the context of his ideas on recording and technology that mostly came to light after 1964, his early musical activities demonstrate that Gould reevaluated the role of the performer as a new entity, redefining the relationship of performer, listener, and composer, and stretching the capacity of the recording apparatus beyond its role as a playback tool.

Glenn Gould and Technological Virtuosity

Gould took an intellectual approach to performance which he articulated through appearances on television, radio, and print where he frequently discussed musical topics. Many of his ideas about technology and the role and responsibilities of the performer were controversial. In this way he stood out among his fellow classical concert pianists, few of whom have written as extensively as Gould on such topics as performance and the role of the musician.[23] Gould's statements reveal that he envisioned himself as a new kind of musician - a recording artist rather

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[22] Outtakes and studio recordings have increasingly been taken up in jazz studies, for instance, Gabriel Solis' examination of the outtakes from Thelonious Monk's recordings at the Five Spot in 1958 in "'A Unique Chunk of Jazz Reality': Authorship, Musical Work Concepts, and Thelonious Monk's Live Recordings from the Five Spot, 1958" *Ethnomusicology* 48, No. 3 (2004), 315-347. See also the Oxford University Press series "Oxford Studies in Recorded Jazz."

[23] Wanda Landowska is another example. Her writings, although perhaps not provocative in the same sense as Gould was, nevertheless demonstrate a deep engagement with musical topics and the historical context of the musical works discussed. Her writings have been compiled by D. Restout in *Landowska on Music* (New York: Stein and Day, 1964). Alfred Brendel has similarly published essays on his career and other musical topics both in German and in English. For essays on musical topics, see Brendel, *Musical thoughts & afterthoughts* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1976). For more personal reflections, see Brendel, *Me of All People: Alfred Brendel in Conversation with Martin Meyer*, Richard Stokes, trans., (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2002). Pianist and musicologist Charles Rosen has, in addition to his many formidable Beethoven recordings, contributed to musicological scholarship on Classical style, Sonata Form, Romanticism in music, and American composer Elliott Carter.

than merely a concert performer. Edward Said commented that this shift was crucial to Gould's artistic and historical significance, taking virtuosity beyond the mechanical and towards a concept of the "virtuoso as intellectual." Gould transformed virtuosity, Said argued, by "draw[ing] people in by provocation."[24]

Gould challenged a core value of musical performance in the Western art tradition by shifting away from technical ability as the cornerstone of virtuosic performance and in turn, effecting consequences for the role of the virtuoso performer in a technological age. Traditionally defined within the practice of Western music, scholars such as Theodor Gracyk and Thomas Carson Mark define virtuosity as consisting of two interlocking and complementary aspects: on one hand, the display of manual skill and dexterity and on the other, an expression of the performer's understanding of the musical work.[25] Stan Godlovitch, in his study of musical performance, describes these two sides of virtuosity as musicianship and musicality, where the former "takes in technique, the mastery over physical hurdles imposed by any instrument" and the latter "encompasses interpretive sensitivity; in particular, respecting the integrity of, yet adding novelty to, the traditional repertoire without destroying its links with a seamless interpretive tradition."[26]

Despite a general agreement that virtuosity consists of two complementary elements, assessments of performance have historically been more heavily weighted towards displays of technique, placing value especially on dexterity and physical skill.[27] Musicianship and musicality

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[24] Edward Said, *On Late Style* (New York: Vintage Books, 2007), 117.

[25] See, for instance, Thomas Carson Mark, "On Works of Virtuosity" *The Journal of Philosophy* 77 No. 1 (January 1980), 28-45; Mark, "Philosophy of Piano Playing: Reflections on the Concept of Performance," *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 41 No. 3 (March 1981), 299-324; and Theodor Gracyk, "Performances and Recordings," *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 55 (1997), 139-150.

[26] Stan Godlovitch, *Musical Performance*, (New York: Routledge, 1998), 77.

[27] Godlovitch, *Musical Performance,* 53.

are interconnected, but physical skill has nevertheless taken hierarchical precedence over innovative approaches to interpretation. Gould's public statements and ensuing discussions, by contrast, suggest that conceptual thinking played a more important role to him than manual skill. Gould's deliberate attention to interpretation rather than execution indicated a transference of emphasis from action to Bourdieu's practice-based perspective of "knowledge-in-action."

If taken to the extreme, innovation and creativity can be considered negative attributes in Western musical performance. When Godlovitch suggested that the Western music establishment is akin to a guild tradition, he offered one possible explanation for the community's general resistance to certain types of technological intervention. A guild community is "highly protective of its norms and goals, [tending] to react conservatively to any suggestions for change."[28] Proposals to innovate, moreover, whether pertaining to instrument design, repertoire, evaluation procedures, pedagogical methods, or basic technique, are frequently rejected.[29] From the perspective of a post-digital age it is hard to believe that Gould faced such resistance to the application of technology to his recordings. But he was on the cusp of new approaches to recording technology, among a musical vanguard that included such musicians and composers as John Cage, Leopold Stokowski, and Pierre Schaeffer, all of whom experienced criticism for using the recording studio as a transformative musical tool. For listeners who remained invested in traditional concepts of performance, Gould's openness to technology as a crucial part of his musical interpretations challenged them by exploding the strictures of a skills-based Western music tradition.

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[28] Godlovitch, *Musical Performance*, 4.

[29] Godlovitch, *Musical Performance,* 61.

Gould's "intellectual" virtuosity was, most importantly for the purposes of this study, inextricably connected to his thoughts on the role of technology in musical performance. His advocacy for technology among musicians and listeners, including his prediction of technology's transformative role in the future of music-making, became an important part of his image as a cerebral musician. Turning to Gould's publications and statements about technology and music from the early 1960s, I now examine the sources of his philosophy and how they emerged through his various public statements and comments on the topic. Many of his early statements have less to do with technology per se; instead, they focus on Gould's desire to leave the concert stage. As his later statements about technology reveal, his philosophies emerged and matured from the views that guided his withdrawal from live concert performance.

On Records and Recording

In the late 1950s, Gould balanced a concert career with studio work, the whole time processing the ideas and materials that eventually developed into a doctrine about technology and the musician. The core texts for his ideas are found in the 1965 radio program *Dialogues on the the Prospects of Recording* (broadcast on January 10, 1965) and the accompanying article "The Prospects of Recording" based on those discussions, published in *High Fidelity* in April 1966.[30] Together, the radio program and article have been widely acknowledged as his magnum opus on the topic of music and technology. Although *Dialogues* and "Prospects" are foundational to understanding Gould's technological approach, it is important to understand them as only part of

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[30] Glenn Gould, *Dialogues on the Prospects of Recording*, radio broadcast, January 10 1965, AIN 650110-1, CBC Radio Archive. This 1965 radio program was hosted and narrated by Gould, exploring the subject through interviews with Schuyler Chapin, assistant director of the Lincoln Centre for the Performing Arts; John Hammond and Paul Myers, producers at Columbia Records; Marshall McLuhan, director of the Institute for Culture and Technology and professor at St. Michael's College, University of Toronto; Dinah Menuhin, wife of violinist Yehudi Menuhin; Robert Offergeld, music editor of Hi-Fi Stereo Review; Leon Fleisher, American concert pianist; Ludwig Diehn, Norfolk, VA businessman whose hobby is writing symphonies.

his statement on the topic. Gould also discussed his complex opinions on music and technology frequently and publicly in the years leading up to and immediately following the 1965 radio program, revealing added depth to the central issues of his cause.

Gould expressed his thoughts on music and technology through various outlets where he argued vehemently in favor of what he viewed as technology's positive impact on music-making. A television interview with British television presenter Humphrey Burton in March 1966 played an important role in Gould's broader discourse on music and technology, in which Gould expounded on points he had previously mentioned only briefly. While not strictly on the topic of music and technology, the interview is a valuable record of the active and heated debate between Gould and his detractors. A year later, in April 1967, Gould's radio series *The Art of Glenn Gould* again provided an opportunity for him to present his opinions about recording technology in an episode entitled "On Records and Recording." *Glenn Gould: Concert Dropout* is a scripted conversation with John McClure, the Director of the Columbia Masterworks Division focusing on the issues that surrounded his 1964 retirement.[31]

Often cited as the impetus for Gould's attraction to recording technology, his resistance to the concert hall and audiences betrayed the earliest hints of Gould's technophilia.[32] Immediately following the swell of publicity that accompanied the release of the *Goldberg Variations*, the twenty-two-year-old Gould confessed in a interview, "I don't enjoy the business of being a concert performer."[33] Not long after that statement, in a 1956 interview with Eric MacLean of CBC

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[31] The interview was released along with his recording of Liszt's transcription of Beethoven's Fifth Symphony. Glenn Gould, *Concert Dropout in Conversation with John McClure*, Columbia Masterworks BS 15, 1968, LP.

[32] Gould's now infamous essay published in the February 1962 issue of *Musical America*, "Let's Ban Applause," is one example of the absurd lengths to which he went to express his distaste for live performance and the experience of performing in front of an audience. Suffice to say, his call for the abolition of applause in the concert hall never came to pass.

[33] Kevin Bazzana, *Wondrous Strange* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 2003), 181.

Radio, Gould famously stated that he intended to retire from the concert stage by the age of twenty-six.[34] Two years before his retirement, Gould conceded that he had become "inured" to performing in public, ". . .but I don't really enjoy it. I don't like the 'one-chance' aspect of it."[35] Sound recording technology, of course, provided ample opportunity for a second chance or even more. Indeed, Gould's embrace of sound technology can be directly connected to his distaste for, as he articulated it, the "non-take-twoness" of concertizing and the ill effects it had on his performances.[36] His efforts towards redefining the audience's relationship to the artist and the composer became central to his philosophy of sound technology - a point on which I will later elaborate. In subsequent interviews, Gould explicitly declared that the next step after his retirement from live performance would be full dedication to the recording studio.

The notion that the recording studio could serve as a locus of musical creativity grew out of Gould's repulsion for the concert stage while it also reflected his musical aspiration towards composition. His failure to be recognized as a composer was perhaps his biggest career disappointment aside from never completely retiring from his career as a professional musician.[37] From early on, he expressed his compositional ambition, stating in a 1956 *MacLean's* magazine profile that "The piano is a convenient way to make enough money so I can afford to compose. . . in ten or fifteen years I want to be known primarily as a composer, not a pianist."[38] Indeed, at the

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[34] When he gave this interview, Gould was only 23 years old. Glenn Gould Interview with Eric MacLean, radio broadcast, April 25 1956, AIN 560425-2, CBC Radio Archive.

[35] Bernard Asbell, "The Artist Speaks for Himself: Gould in Conversation with Bernard Asbell," *Horizon Magazine* 4, No. 3 (January 1962). Reprinted in *The Art of Glenn Gould,* ed. Roberts, 186.

[36] *Glenn Gould: Concert Dropout in Conversation with John McClure*, Columbia Masterworks BS 15 (1968). Transcript reprinted as "Glenn Gould: Concert Dropout in Conversation with John McClure," *GlennGould* (Fall 2001), 49-50.

[37] Andrew Kazdin's memoir reveals that Gould privately expressed a desire to announce his retirement from new recording responsibilities by the age of 50. Andrew Kazdin, *Glenn Gould at Work: Creative Lying* (New York: E.P. Dutton, 1989), 156.

[38] Shenner, "The Genius Who Doesn't Want to Play," 98.

time it seemed possible that Gould's dream of becoming a composer might materialize - he was especially active as a composer in the early 1950s having composed several solo keyboard and chamber works, but his compositional efforts petered out in the 1960s.[39] Several years later, Gould connected his desires to be known as a creator to his fondness for recording: "Recording is a wonderful joy to me because it's the closest thing to re-creation that we have."[40] Paul Myers, Gould's longtime producer at Columbia Masterworks, substantiated Gould's claim when he said that "Glenn described himself as a composer who expressed himself through the keyboard. It was an instrument with which he could put down his musical ideas."[41] Yet despite his most ardent attempts, Gould was never praised for his musical compositions in the same way that he was for his performances. His impulse towards the act of creation rather than reproduction was the linchpin of his musical ambitions, providing motivation for his argument that the recording studio was more than just a place for sound and musical reproduction, but could be his creative home.

When Gould recorded the *Goldberg Variations* he was young, but already had ample experience working with the technologies of sound reproduction. He performed live on CBC radio for the first time at the age of seventeen, a moment he remembered as a distinct starting point to his career as a recorded musician.[42] Gould's reflections on his earliest encounters with the microphone suggest that he saw tremendous potential for artistic growth within the realm of

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[39] He was particularly active as a composer in the early 1950s when he composed a Sonata for Bassoon and Piano, 5 Short Piano Pieces, 2 Pieces for Organ, and a String Trio in 1950; 2 Pieces for piano in 1951-1952; and a String Quartet (1953-1955). His infamous vocal quartet entitled, "So You Want to Write a Fugue?" was composed from 1958 to its premiere in 1963. It was published by Schirmer in 1964.

[40] "At Home with Glenn Gould: Gould in Conversation with Vincent Tovell," *Project Sixty*, CBC Radio Program originally broadcast November 17 1959. Original broadcast year quoted in Roberts as being 1960, but records at the CBC Radio Archives show a slightly earlier date. Transcript published in *The Art of Glenn Gould,* ed. Roberts, 80.

[41] Interview with Paul Myers by Rhona Bergman in Bergman, *The Idea of Gould,* 45.

[42] Glenn Gould, *The Art of Glenn Gould, "*On Records and Recording," radio broadcast, November 13 1966, AIN 661113-6, CBC Radio Archive.

technology and sound reproduction, even at the earliest stages of his career. His initial encounter with the microphone held such significance for him that he commented several times on its formative impact. In a 1959 interview with broadcaster Vincent Tovell of the CBC, Gould stated his intentions to become a *recording artist* rather than a concert pianist, and he came out as a advocate of technology as a tool for the performing musician. Fondly recalling his experiences performing for live CBC radio broadcasts, Gould offered his perspective on the effects of his repeated early exposure to sound recording:

> I got so used to working with the microphone that the microphone instead of becoming the enemy (as it does for many people) became a friend. I really think that this is not so common because I know that most people fear and detest the microphone and it's most unfortunate because when you get to feel at ease with it it becomes the most relaxed and intimate medium there is.[43]

In this interview, Gould provided a hint of some of the ideas that eventually developed into his strong advocacy for a healthy relationship between musicians and technology.

In 1966, Gould echoed this sentiment in his own radio program, articulating its longterm impact on his career. He opened the radio show "On Records and Recording" with recollections of this technological encounter and the implications it had on technology's role in his life as a performer:

> In January 1950 I took part for the first time in a CBC Broadcast, and made a discovery that influenced in a rather profound way my development as a musician. I discovered that in the privacy, the solitude, and if all Freudians will stand clear, the womblike security of the studio, it was possible to make music in a more direct, more personal manner than any concert hall would ever permit. I fell in love with broadcasting that day and I have not since been able to think of the potential of music or for that matter my own potential as a musician without some reference to the limitless possibilities of the broadcasting and recording medium.

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[43] "At Home with Glenn Gould: Gould in Conversation with Vincent Tovell," *Project Sixty*, radio broadcast, November 17 1959. Original broadcast year quoted in Roberts as being 1960, but records at the CBC Radio Archives show the slightly earlier date. Transcript published in *The Art of Glenn Gould,* ed. Roberts, 80.

> For me, the microphone has never been that hostile clinical, inspiration-sapping analyst some critics fearing it complain about. That day in 1950 it became and has remained, a friend. In fact, most of the ideas that occur to me as a performer relate in some measure to the microphone.[44]

This episode of Gould's radio program served as a platform for a confessional of sorts, during which he revealed the process behind several albums and the influence of technology on his studio methods. Notably, he cited this early moment as a creative awakening, and once again, highlighted the links between technology and his artistic outlook.

In 1974, Gould wrote another statement about that moment with a microphone. In an essay titled "Music and Technology" published in *Piano Quarterly*, he recalled the event in detail - that it was a Sunday morning broadcast, that the radio studio was "living-room-sized," and his program consisted of a Mozart and a Hindemith sonata. Gould also provided insight into the experience within the context of the sonic experiments of his youth:

> 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.[45]

Gould took home a physical memento of that radio broadcast that came to symbolize the significance of that moment:

> 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

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[44] Glenn Gould, *The Art of Glenn Gould, "*On Records and Recording," radio broadcast, November 13 1966, AIN 661113-6, CBC Radio Archive.

[45] Glenn Gould, "Music and Technology," *Piano Quarterly* (Winter 1974-1975). Reprinted in Gould, *The Glenn Gould Reader*, ed. Page, 354.

> effect that technology represented a compromised, dehumanizing intrusion into art was nonsense, when my love affair with the microphone began.[46]

Gould's CBC radio broadcast was a catalyst for his broader interest in sound. The microphone and its physical position within an enclosed space changed the sound of his performance - sound reproduction, in that moment, became more to him than just a novelty.

Implying that he regarded the recording studio as a site for artistic creation in contrast to the repetition of the concert stage, Gould's early interest in sound technology carried through to his experiences in the Columbia Masterworks recording studio. Before discussing the specifics of his experience there, I address two major themes that emerge in Gould's philosophies of music and technology - repetition and fidelity.

Repetition and Fidelity

Two fundamental issues arose from Gould's statements on music and technology: the themes of repetition and fidelity. Together they form important complementary aspects of Gould's technological approach to performance. A close examination of these key elements in his body of thought clarifies why many of Gould's listeners responded with such negativity to his ideas. It also elucidates why many of his predictions about music, technology, and the concert hall never came to pass. By broadening the scope of Gould's discussions about music and technology to address repetition and fidelity, this discussion also demonstrates how these issues cut to the core of matters relating to musical performance. Gould's philosophies critique traditional notions of the musical work and the responsibilities of the performer providing evidence for why Gould's ideas remain relevant to musicians and listeners today.

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[46] Gould, "Music and Technology," reprinted in Gould, *The Glenn Gould Reader,* 354.

The effect of sound recording on the repeatability of the musical performance might seem at first to be an unremarkable observation, yet this essential trait is crucial to understanding Gould's approach to sound recording. Recording was appealing because it allowed for multiple takes, introducing new creative possibilities to the performer. Gould went against prevailing attitudes about the quality of repetition, articulated here by pianist and musicologist Charles Rosen, who wrote that "A record of classical music is supposed to be a reproduction. Like all reproductions it is a substitute for something else, and as a substitute it is thought to be inferior to the real thing, the live performance."[47] For Gould, the capacity for playback offered much more than the simple ability to reproduce music in the likeness of a live performance. In complete opposition to Rosen's statement and forty years earlier, Gould firmly declared that recording was an autonomous medium from live performance and "can profit one only if treated as such."[48]

Recalling the importance of his conceptual understanding of the musical work, Gould departed from the attitude held by many of his contemporaries when he approached sound recording and the studio as a creative tool. He commented in interviews that he used the tape recorder as a tool for practice, marveling at the limitations that musicians must have experienced before its invention.[49] The capacity for playback forced Gould to engage with his musical performances as a listener as well as a performer. He engaged with his recordings and from his observations, adjusted subsequent performances. Repeatability gave the performer material

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[47] Charles Rosen, *Piano Notes* (New York: The Free Press, 2002), 160.

[48] Gould, *The Art of Glenn Gould, "*On Records and Recording," radio broadcast, November 13 1966, AIN 661113-6, CBC Radio Archive.

[49] Bernard Asbell, "The Artist Speaks for Himself: Gould in Conversation with Bernard Asbell," in *The Art of Glenn Gould,* ed. Roberts, 189-190. His experiments with the microphone as a teenager, as previously mentioned, fall into the same category of his use of the recording apparatus as a creative tool. In a conversation with a friend, Gould once said, "The greatest of all teachers is the tape recorder. I would be lost without it." quoted from an interview with Joseph Stephens, M.D., in Peter Ostwald, *Glenn Gould: The Ecstasy and Tragedy of a Genius* (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 1997), 89.

options as he explained in 1959: "...the playback aspect of recording is a very satisfying thing. Because you can listen to many different variants of the same thing and find the closest thing to the idea, never the ideal, but the closest to it."[50] To Gould, this process had no negative outcomes - only possibilities: "...if something lovely does happen, there is a sense of permanence, and if it doesn't happen, one has a second chance to achieve an ideal."[51] Repetition was key to combining different structural and expressive elements in the same take without the fear of falling short of his aspirations, allowing him access to an unprecedented range of interpretive possibilities.

Yet despite his love for the repetition enabled by sound technology, Gould widely commented that repetition was only selectively appropriate. He openly commented on the risks of repeatability especially in the context of live concert performance: "It seems strange to me that the notion of performance as a repetitive act has gone so long unchallenged. I can think of no excuse for performance unless it involves re-thinking and re-structuring a work. . . The only justification for performance is to present a view that is unique.[52] While Gould saw possibility in the ability for the tape recorder to repeat a performance, repetition was also potentially perilous and his reservations fueled his opposition to live performance. The implication for a recording artist was that he or she should record a work only if the performance offered a new perspective or vision, something impossible to do on a concert tour where an artist performs the same interpretation night after night. Gould adhered to this idea in his own oeuvre, rarely recording the same work more than once, except in the case of the *Goldberg Variations,* the Haydn E-flat

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[50] "At Home with Glenn Gould: Gould in Conversation with Vincent Tovell," in *The Art of Glenn Gould,* ed. Roberts, 82.

[51] Asbell in *The Art of Glenn Gould*, 187.

[52] Gould, *The Art of Glenn Gould, "*On Records and Recording," radio broadcast, November 13 1966, AIN 661113-6, CBC Radio Archive.

major Sonata No. 59, and Mozart's Sonata K. 330. In all three cases, he devised different interpretations that varied in tempo, emotional tenor, and interpretive conviction.

Gould's thoughts on repetition extend to the general ubiquity - the mechanical and relentless repetition - of music in contemporary life. In *Dialogues* and "Prospects," he addressed the subject of Muzak, the intentionally non-intrusive, pre-curated program of music frequently piped into public places such as elevators, shopping malls, and grocery stores. Gould's argument began with an Adornian attitude towards mass media and listening, but rather than critique the widespread presence of background music as devaluing the musical experience, Gould's take was decidedly positive.[53] Its ubiquity was key to its importance as a transformative force in modern life:

> Recordings . . . insinuate themselves into our judgments and into our lives. They're capable giving the people who make them - the engineers, the artists who perform on them, and more recently the composers who write with them in mind, an awesome power with which to influence the lives of those who listen to them. and this is a power which was simply not available to any early generation of musicians. It's a power that is uniquely responsive to the electronic technology of our day.[54]

Music's new pervasiveness, Gould argued, familiarized listeners to musical repertoire, stripping it of its historical significance. The ability for repetition, as Gould observed, allowed listeners to become familiar especially with a post-Renaissance musical repertoire, for instance, on a wholly unprecedented level. In Gould's mind, it signaled an important shift in the responsibilities of the performer: to break from the din of the background and capture listener attention with

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[53] Adorno infamously regarded music's widespread accessibility (especially popular music) as devaluing the "true power of music," undermining music's special status by habituating the listener to the musical experience and reinforcing its separation from the concert hall experience. See Theodor Adorno, "A Social Critique of Radio Music," *Kenyon Review* (1945), reprinted in *Mass Communication and American Social Thought: Key Texts: 1919-1968*, John Durham Peters and Peter Simonson, eds, (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc, 2004), 210-214.

[54] Gould, *Dialogues on the Prospects of Recording*, radio broadcast, January 10 1965, AIN 650110-1, CBC Radio Archive.

exceptional performances.[55] The performer's responsibility to the listener extended even further, to issues that have long been associated with musical virtuosity and the performer - of fidelity and *werktreue.*

Before getting to the issues surrounding fidelity in Gould's realm of thought, another relationship of significance comes into play: Gould's links to Marshall McLuhan's and his perspectives on technology. Gould has been referred to by Paul Théberge as "a quintessential 'McLuhanesque' figure, living as though technology was an 'extension' of himself," and his ideas have understandably been discussed in connection with McLuhan's.[56] Indeed, both were pillars of intellectual life in Toronto during the 1960s and their proximity and common interests led to a mutual admiration. While correspondence between the two held at Library and Archives Canada provide limited information about their private discussions, their public interactions reveal fruitful evidence of their mutual philosophical concerns.[57] McLuhan was one of Gould's featured guests on *Dialogues on the Prospects of Recording* and Gould often cited him in his own work. McLuhan regarded Gould as a musician who revolutionized the relationship between artist and audience, famously inscribing the following statement in his publication *Counterblast* (1969): "Bless Glenn Gould for throwing the concert audience into the junkyard."[58]

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[55] "The Prospects of Recording," *High Fidelity* 16, No. 4 (April 1966). Reprinted in Gould, *The Glenn Gould Reader*, 351-352.

[56] Paul Théberge, "Counterpoint: Glenn Gould and Marshall McLuhan," *Canadian Journal of Political and Social Theory* 10 No. 1-2 (1986), 110.

[57] Evidence from both Gould's and McLuhan's papers at Library and Archives Canada indicate that they were in touch casually by letter throughout the 1960s, often sharing information about upcoming publications. McLuhan invited Gould to contribute to his University of Toronto Magazine *Horizons* in April 1965. According to Eric McLuhan, Marshall McLuhan's son, Gould was an occasional visitor to their house as they did not live far from one another. Gould and McLuhan were photographed together, featured among a group including fellow Canadians Sir Ernest MacMillan, actress Kate Reid, and the painter A.Y. Jackson for the *Toronto Telegram* issue for Canada's Centennial, suggesting their cultural and intellectual significance to Canadian culture and Canadians. The original photograph from the *Toronto Telegram* Photo Collection, York University Archives and Special Collections, Neg. No. 10-0252 and reprinted in *GlennGould* 10, No. 1 (Spring 2004), 44.

[58] Marshall McLuhan, *Counterblast* (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1969), 45.

McLuhan's idea that technology serves as an extension of the human sensory experience bears particular relevance to Gould's philosophies, particularly his thoughts on sound recording and fidelity. In McLuhan's *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man* (published the same year that Gould retired from the concert hall) he introduced the ideas that became central to his groundbreaking theories.[59] McLuhan explained the concept succinctly in a 1969 *Playboy* interview:

> . . . all media, from the phonetic alphabet to the computer, are extensions of man that cause deep and lasting changes in him and transform his environment. Such an extension is an intensification, an amplification of an organ, sense or function, and whenever it takes place, the central nervous system appears to institute a self-protective numbing of the affected area, insulating and anesthetizing it from conscious awareness of what's happening to it.[60]

McLuhan's notion that media serves as an extension of the human sensory experience explains the affinity between his ideas and Gould's, a relationship best illustrated by exploring Gould's relationship to various media such as the keyboard and the recording studio.

Gould's career-long search for a perfect piano has been well-documented, but little has been said about the parallels between his perspective on pianos and his attitude towards technology. In his search for the perfect musical instrument, Gould was far less concerned about the way his piano sounded than he was with his sensory response to the instrument.[61] Bazzana described the nuance and detail of Gould's preferences for his musical instrument:

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[59] McLuhan, for instance, wrote "... the personal and social consequences of any medium-- that is, of any extension of ourselves - result from the new scale that is introduced into our affairs by each extension of ourselves, or by any new technology." in McLuhan, *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man,* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1994), 7.

[60] Eric Norden, "The Playboy Interview: Marshall McLuhan - Candid Conversation," *Playboy Magazine* (March 1969), 54.

[61] Katie Hafner has documented many of the details surrounding Gould's search for the perfect piano, the many people involved in that quest, and the challenges he faced in doing so in *Romance on Three Legs: Glenn Gould's Obsessive Quest for the Perfect Piano* (New York: Bloomsbury USA, 2008). For most of his professional career, Gould played a Steinway piano, model CD 318. He also played a Chickering piano in the earlier part of his career and after an incident with CD 318, chose to play a Yamaha piano that suited his preferences.

> He sought. . . a hair-trigger action, and perfect control of articulation and tonal nuance, especially at the quieter end of the dynamic spectrum. He wanted no aftertouch and immediate damping; in other words, he wanted the depression of the key to stop once that hammer had been thrown, and he wanted a note to stop sounding completely the instant he let his finger off the key. And given his finger-oriented technique, he wanted a light, tight action that required minimal effort to push the key down into its bed, even if it meant sacrificing some degree of dynamic power. In short, he cared more about how the instrument felt under his hands than how it sounded.[62]

Gould's piano tuner Verne Edquist, and Steinway technicians made considerable adjustments to Gould's piano, all of them to suit Gould's specific tactile preferences.[63] But despite the many adjustments, Gould was often displeased with the piano as an instrument, regarding it as an obstacle to musical interpretation.[64] His desire for an exceptionally light touch was merely a microcosm of Gould's ideal world in which, according to Edquist, ". . .the piano would just play itself for him."[65]

Like Gould's viewpoint on an ideal piano, his attitude towards technology similarly reflected his outlook that the medium served as an extension of his musical processes existing solely to achieve his artistic vision. An obsessive concern with his own sensory relationship with the piano outweighed that for the instrument's sound. Gould, in other words, was nonplussed at the loss of sound fidelity to the listener. In 1959, for instance, when asked an interviewer about his thoughts on the then-new "high fidelity" technologies that defined the latest advancements in sound-recording quality, he responded:

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[62] Bazzana, *Wondrous Strange*, 197-198.

[63] Gould went so far as to physically alter his piano, at one point creating a "harpsi-piano," an instrument that Gould described as "a neurotic piano that thinks it's a harpsichord." Gould had prepared the piano with tacks pushed into the felt of each hammer in an effort to adapt the instrument to sound more percussive, like a harpsichord. Although he only played the harpsi-piano once in a public performance (a 1962 televised performance of *The Art of Fugue*), his experiment provides further evidence of the lengths he went to achieve a perfect musical apparatus.

[64] Bazzana, *Wondrous Strange,* 198; As Katie Hafner wrote, "projection was far less crucial than clarity. . ." Hafner, *Romance on Three Legs,* 91.

[65] Quoted in Hafner, *Romance,* 136.

> Well, I think the term is sometimes misapplied. . . . I still have a lot of faded recordings of Schnabel and Weingartner playing Beethoven and so on. In my teens this was the way recorded music sounded and you didn't demand anything else. I am still able to adjust myself immediately to listening to those recordings, not even necessarily on the 33 rpm re-pressings, either, but on the old 78s, with the greatest of pleasure and without any feeling of anything being lost. I have never become conscious of real fidelity in sound.[66]

Although sound quality was of less importance to Gould, recording technology was the ultimate means by which he could extend his conceptual understanding of the musical work, playing out Bazzana's point that Gould's musical analytic emerged in a "privileging of structure over sonority."[67]

Gould was also concerned with traditional concepts of fidelity, particularly the notion of *werktreue*, long associated with the Romantic virtuoso and the notion of the virtuoso's ideal relationship to the musical work. The changing soundscape of recorded sound and infiltration of mass sound media irrevocably changed the relationship of performers and listeners to the musical work, nevertheless Gould was among the first to challenge it. In an interview several years before his retirement, Gould commented that *werktreue w*as antiquated and no longer relevant to musicians in the twentieth-century:

> . . . sometimes I wonder why we fuss so much about fidelity to a tradition of the composer's generation, and not the performers' - for instance, trying to play Beethoven as Beethoven is supposed to have played it. Schnabel attempted this. Much as I admire Schnabel, I think this was a lot of nonsense because he didn't take into consideration the difference in instruments. He followed the pedaling that some scholars say that Beethoven intended, but without realizing that these pedalings mean something totally different on a contemporary instrument. There are many times when I am quite sure Mozart would not approve of what I do to his music.
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> The performer has to have faith that he is doing, even blindly, the right thing, that he may be finding interpretive possibilities not wholly realized even by the

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[66] Dennis Braithwaite, "I'm a Child of Nature: Gould in Conversation with Dennis Braithwaite," *Toronto Daily Star,* March 28 1959. Reprinted in *The Art of Glenn Gould*, ed. Roberts, 42-43.

[67] Bazzana, *Glenn Gould: Performer in the Work*, 253.

> composer. This is quite possible. There are examples today of contemporary composers - I'd rather not name them - who are the world's worst interpreters of their own music. I am sure this is because inside themselves they hear so much richness in their music that they don't realize they are not projecting it. They don't realize what a performer must to do enliven something.[68]

But if he rejected the principles behind *werktreue,* then who and what was the performer responsible to? Gould's conviction that the performer should have the last word on the artistic direction of a performance called into question the endeavor of locating the "true" musical work. Fifty years after Gould's discussed his controversial ideas, this issue remains relevant not only to musicians and composers, but more widely to include filmmakers, visual artists, and creators of multimedia art.

Scholars continue to grapple with the functional and ontological differences between live and mediated artistic works, debating the impact of mediation on artistic works, agents of reception, and creative agents. Media scholar Jonathan Sterne, for instance, describes the realm of sound reproduction as frequently governed by the assumption that face-to-face communication is the primary bodily experience, having an authentic quality that mediated sound should aspire to.[69] Film scholar James Lastra sought to destabilize that notion, calling for a theory of artistic representation that does not assess the reproduction as being of lesser artistic value than the "original."[70] Similarly, Philip Auslander has brought attention to the tenuousness of the categories of "original" and "reproduced" and that "...the very concept of live performance presupposes that of reproduction, that the live can exist only *within* an economy of

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[68] Asbell in *The Art of Glenn Gould,* ed. Roberts, 194.

[69] Jonathan Sterne, *The Audible Past* (Durham, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2003), 20-21.

[70] James Lastra, "Reading, Writing, and Representing Sound" in *Sound Theory, Sound Practice*, ed. Rick Altman, (New York: Routledge, 1992), 86.

reproduction."[71] Stated many years earlier, Gould's ideas align with those of the above-mentioned scholars, prescient of Lastra's call for a renewed theory of sound reproduction. As we have seen, Gould regarded the recorded performance as independent of live performance, adhering to the idea that the live musical work was inherently different than a recorded performance.

Gould never referred directly to Walter Benjamin or his influential 1935 essay, but his descriptions of the live performance acknowledge that "liveness" made performance fundamentally different than recorded sound. Nevertheless, their difference did not naturally facilitate a hierarchical relationship. Rather than taking Benjamin's perspective that a loss of aura necessarily meant a loss of artistic value, Gould turned the issue on its head, doing away with value judgements of the reproduced work, but acknowledging differences in the aesthetic experience of the live performance versus the experience of listening to a recording. Gould noted that the interaction between the performer and the audience could, in some cases, be described as an "electric communication." It follows then, that if a recording aims to reproduce that experience, it will inevitably come up short. Making his point with the example of a live recording by Sviatoslav Richter as an example, Gould described the difference in the aesthetic goals of Gould's recordings and that of "live" concert recordings, which he described as follows:

> And what you get really is a sort of halo, a very saintly halo, put around the framing of the page which announced this concert and made [it] available for the people who want to sit back and say, "That was Richter on November the 16th, 1964, you know." But you do not get a recording, because a recording by its definition is something that aims at a certain kind of perfectionism, I think - perfectionism of sound, it aims at expressing a certain series of ideals about what sound is in relation to an instrument and the role that a microphone has to play, and this you cannot get . . . , recording a concert.[72]

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[71] Philip Auslander, "Against Ontology: Making Distinctions between the Live and the Mediatized," *Performance Research* 2, No. 3 (1997), 55. Emphasis in original.

[72] Glenn Gould, "Immortality and Recordings," in *The Art of Glenn Gould*, ed. Roberts, 202.

Rather than make a value judgement about live recordings, Gould argued that aiming for the re-creation of a live concert experience would be to miss the creative opportunities offered by sound technology: control of the highest degree, the possibility of perfection and in turn, an exceptional interpretation that takes the musical work beyond previous interpretations. Fidelity, according to Gould, should relate to the explicit desires of the performer rather than document live performance.

These two concepts - repetition and fidelity - form the backbone of Gould's approach to sound recording. Although they emerge with particular force in interviews and statements dating after Gould's concert retirement, they also had roots in statements from well before that time. As I show in the following analysis of his 1955 recording of the *Goldberg Variations,* Gould's advocacy for technology as a medium that facilitates artistic emerges in his approach to the recording studio, particularly his use of repeated takes.

Gould's Studio Processes

Gould's thoughts about technology mainly came to light after his 1964 retirement, and he never directly addressed his studio working methods in the 1950s. His recollections however, provide evidence that his creative process was malleable; how it unfolded depended heavily on the musical work, the studio setting, and Gould's relationship with those present at the recording session. The slow evolution of his studio methods from the 1960s onwards, moreover, reflect changes in sound technology and differences in Gould's access to personnel and equipment that came with his increased fame and reputation. In comparison, we gather that the 1955 recording sessions were more streamlined than in later years. Notwithstanding the technological developments and the subsequent changes in Gould's approach to the studio, the principles

behind his studio work remained consistent; to use the playback capacity of the recording studio to shape his interpretations.[73]

Gould's longtime producer at Columbia Records, Andrew Kazdin published recollections of their work from 1966 onwards that offer an insightful glimpse into Gould's working relationships within the recording studio. In addition to his many candid thoughts on their personal and professional interactions, Kazdin reduced Gould's recording process to three basic steps:

1. Record a complete take of the movement (or, in the case of longer works, a large section of the piece).
2. Listen to it carefully note any fingers slips and/or musical balances that were not perfect.
3. Go back to the piano and record small inserts that would fix the errors.[74]

As Kazdin explained, complications could occur at every step, but the post-recording process was the most labor intensive and time-consuming. Gould was deeply involved in post-production and took great pains to listen repeatedly to the numerous takes (often at home) after which point he contacted Kazdin to undertake the physical editing of the tape reels.[75] In the studio, Gould attended to meticulous details; anything intended for splicing had to match in tempo and dynamic levels.[76] Unsurprisingly, Kazdin noted differences in Gould's approach to the music of various composers:

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[73] French filmmaker Bruno Monsaingeon's film documentation of the recording of the 1981 Goldberg Variations album documents Gould in his mature style, not only of performance practice, but also of creative process in the studio. *The Goldberg Variations - Glenn Gould Plays Bach*, DVD, directed by Bruno Monsaingeon (New York: Sony Classical, 2012).

[74] Kazdin, *Glenn Gould at Work: Creative Lying*, 20.

[75] According to Kazdin, it was very unusual for a pianist to take such interest in the editing process. Most musicians left post-production decisions to their producers.

[76] His efforts towards this end included playing several measures before the intended splice even if the splice began at the beginning of a movement or phrase, so the recording could capture the leftover room resonance after the release of the previous phrase. Kazdin, 26-27.

> with Bach works, the basic take would be recorded very quickly . . Mozart sonatas and Beethoven slow movements apparently possessed an elusive quality that sometimes led to copious run-throughs surmounted by the ever-present threat that none of them would qualify at all.[77]

Commentary from Paul Myers, another producer at Columbia Masterworks, describes even greater variation in the day to day workflow. He offered his perspective on Gould's studio process in an interview with Rhona Bergman:

> When I worked with Glenn, in the 60's, his working methods were very erratic. Sometimes he would play for a quarter of an hour, then announce that he was not getting anywhere. . .On another day, he would record almost a complete album in a three hour session. This did not mean one take of each Prelude or Fugue. He might play up to twenty takes of each (nearly always note-perfect), then select parts of each to be used in the final make-up of the record. . .
>
> I understand that in later years. he worked much more slowly, with more time for playbacks, sometimes only achieving two minutes of music in a three hour session. In the early '60s, my experience was very different; it was either all or nothing.[78]

The comments by Kazdin and Myers confirm the point that to Gould, the recording studio's appeal was the extreme control he could exercise as a creative recording artist.

Gould's reflections on his studio methods offer deeper insight into the principles underlying his creative studio work. His conversation with John McClure in 1965 illuminates Gould's motivation behind the variability of his studio activities. On the subject of Gould's method of laying down tracks McClure commented on Gould's unusual approach to the recording:

> McClure: I noticed you have a very unorthodox method of working, of recording. Now, most artists when they come into the studio have an absolute fixed idea of what they want to do. They've taken a piece and played it in concert in front of various audiences and honed it down to a certain style that they feel is right for that piece. They come in, and they do it. Now, I've seen session where you've come in with music that you obviously know completely, and play it in what seems

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[77] Kazdin, *Glenn Gould at Work: Creative Lying,* 20.

[78] Interview with Paul Myers by Rhona Bergman in Bergman, *The Idea of Gould*, 52.

> to me five different styles, and five different tempi, each of them seemingly legitimate. And then subsequently, you go in and you choose from among those you've laid down. Now, that's very unorthodox.
>
> Gould: I have in many cases come to the studio without the least notion of how I was going to approach the work that we were to play that day. I've come in perhaps with five or six (as it then seemed to me) equally valid ideas, and if we were lucky, and if time permitted, and if the producer had the patience, we would try all five or six of those possible interpretations. And perhaps none of them worked, in which case I'd come back in a couple of weeks and try a seventh. If two or three did work, we [would] then repair to an editing cubicle within a week or so and listen to them - and really the week, at least, is necessary for some kind of perspective. The judgements that you make a week later are never those that you think you're going to make on the spot, on the spur of the moment. It never turns out that way. The things that seem best and most inspired and most spontaneous at the moment are very seldom that: they're usually contrived, they're usually affected, they're usually filled with all kinds of musical gadgetry that one doesn't really want in a recording.[79]

This exchange captures the sentiment behind Gould's appreciation the archival function of sound recording while it also reveals that sound recording opened wide the potential for many interpretive options. Gould was, in turn, influenced by a full realization of these options - in multiple takes of the same work, in curatorial choices of takes, and in splicing different interpretations. Herein lies the heart of Gould's approach to the recording process, a principle that, as we will see, governed the earliest examples of his studio work.

In the 30th Street Studio

Although Gould rarely reflected on the details of his past recordings, in a 1977 radio broadcast he referred to a recording that John P.L. Roberts speculates is probably his 1955 *Goldberg Variations* album:

> Not too long ago I turned on the radio and encountered one of my own, very early recordings of a Bach work - a recording made in the middle fifties, which I hadn't heard for many years. I kind of liked it, but I was amazed to notice how

[79] "Glenn Gould: Concert Dropout in Conversation with John McClure," 57.

> necessary I seemed to think it was, at that time, to underline all structural details, whether they needed it or not. In particular every chord change of consequence was clipped and contoured, every cadence turned into an immaculately groomed terrace.[80]

Gould could have been more accommodating of his younger self. As a musician making his commercial debut, Gould's interpretation demonstrated a nuanced and expressive understanding of the musical details of the work. Moreover, he might have reflected on the extent to which his studio practices helped to shape the extensively disciplined performance he heard on the album. The trajectory of his many "Aria" outtakes provide some sense of how Gould, at that early point in his career, achieved all of the details he felt were necessary to the final record by using the technologies available to him in the recording studio.

Gould recorded the *Goldberg Variations* at the Columbia Records 30th Street Studio in Manhattan, a converted Presbyterian church built circa 1875.[81] The vacant building was revered for its formidable acoustical properties and its architectural dimensions: its 100 foot ceilings made the room resonant without being excessively reverberate. By replacing the stained glass windows with concrete bricks, the space was soundproofed from the street and the subway.[82] A 1953 *New York Times* article, suggesting that the converted studio had already become well-known only four years into its use, mentioned the "heavily upholstered seats and voluptuous drapery...that gives recording depth and 'human' dimension."[83] The studio has been credited for the distinctive warmth of many famous albums across musical genre, from Miles Davis' *Kind of Blue* and Dave

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[80] "The Evolution of Bach Performance," CBC Radio Broadcast from 26 August 1977, trasncribed in Roberts, *The Art of Glenn Gould*, 103.

[81] The church was located on 30th Street east of Third Avenue.

[82] For more information about the unique status of Columbia's 30th Street Studios in the recording industry and among audiophiles, see "30 Years on 30th Street" in David Simon, *Studio Stories: How the Great New York Records were Made* (New York, NY: Backbeat Books, 2004), 22-45.

[83] Meyer Burger, "About New York," *The New York Times,* 22 April 1953, 31.

Brubeck's *Time Out* to the original cast recording of Leonard Bernstein's *West Side Story.*[84] Gould recorded both *Goldberg Variations* albums there and the 1981 album was the last to be recorded in the building before it was sold and razed by property developers.

As previously mentioned, the recording process for the 1955 *Goldberg* album required less equipment, time, and post-production resources than his later recordings.[85] Studio notes taken by Howard Scott, Gould's producer at Columbia for the album, contain information about the dates of recording and the order of takes, as well as notes on the quality of the performances and whether they should be included on the final album.[86] Fred Plaut served as recording engineer. All of the takes were recorded from June 10 to 16 in 1955.[87] For the most part, Gould recorded the movements in the order of the musical work, though he often recorded several takes of the same movement before moving on to the next one. The result was that any given audio reel contained several variations in order, but repetitions of the same variation could be recorded many times before the next in the series.

There are a few exceptions to this pattern as indicated in Scott's studio notes. Occasionally, Gould recorded one version of a variation, moved onto the next, and then returned to the previous movement to record another version. Gould, even in the nascence of his

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[84] David Simon, author of *Studio Stories,* suggests that the success of *Kind of Blue* and *Time Out,* both released in 1959, is more than just coincidence, but in fact had to do with the acoustics of the recording space and the expertise of the personnel from Columbia Record who ran it. Simon, *Studio stories: How the Great New York Records Were Made* (New York: Backbeat Books, 2004), 25.

[85] Kazdin's memoir describes the complex coordination of equipment set up and more extensive post-production resources required in the Toronto studio. Kazdin, 36-39.

[86] One of the first developers of the LP format at CBS laboratories at Columbia Records, Howard Scott also produced albums for many artists including the New York Philharmonic, Isaac Stern, among many of the major orchestras in the United States. He passed away in 2012. Ben Sisario, "Howard H. Scott, a Developer of the LP, Dies at 92," *The New York Times,* 6 October 2012, http://www.nytimes.com/2012/10/07/arts/music/howard-h-scott-a-developer-of-the-lp-dies-at-92.html?_r=0, last accessed September 3 2013.

[87] Howard Scott's studio notes indicate that they recorded all of the takes for the album on the 10th, 14th, 15th, and 16th of June, 1955.

recording career, recorded inserts - sections of music that could be spliced into other takes - during the recording session. He recorded the inserts for Variation 26, for instance, after he recorded the full takes of the variation, possibly after he had listened to the complete take and could therefore take note of the tempo, dynamics and expressive detail.

In light of the attention Gould placed on the editing splice in his later discussions about recording technology, the "Aria" outtakes present evidence that the 1955 album was an exception; it contains considerably fewer splices than many of his later recordings. Despite the presence of partial takes, there are clues that Gould used them sparingly or even not at all and both "Aria" movements included on the final album were recorded as complete takes on 16 June 1955.[88] Scott's studio notes indicate that Gould recorded inserts for Variations 22, 24, and 26, so it is possible that Gould spliced excerpts into other movements. Since I did not have access to the outtakes for all of the movements, I cannot verify the number of splices or edits applied to the inner variations.

Sound recording appealed to Gould not simply because he could splice his performances in post-production, but rather, because of degree of control he wielded in the recording studio and the post-recording process. Although the process of recording the *Goldberg Variations* was more circumscribed than that of some of his post-retirement albums, it echoes Gould's philosophy of the artist's responsibility to the interpretation of musical works that he articulated later in his career. Gould emphasized the magnetic tape splice in discussions on music and technology, but in this case, he achieved what he envisioned of the musical performance without its aid. He described the ideal situation in recording a musical work: to be able to "live with" a test tape of his interpretation for a few weeks or months before settling on a final interpretation. In addition

[88] Thanks to Matt Cavaluzzo for making this observation based on the consistency of similarities between certain external sounds on the outtakes and the takes included on the final album.

to the 1955 *Goldberg Variations,* revelations about the working process behind his 1964 recording of Bach's *Two-* and *Three-Part Inventions,* for instance, demonstrates that this was the case in some of Gould's later recordings. Contrary to charges that the act of recording is dishonest because it allows for multiple retakes until a satisfactory interpretation results, Gould offered an alternative explanation for the benefits of recording from the perspective of the artist.

As Gould recalled, all of the inventions on the *Two-* and *Three-Part Inventions* album consisted of the first studio take from a March 1964 recording session: an impressive statistic, but, as Gould explained, not the whole story. He had, in fact, recorded all of the inventions twice before the 1964 session - in 1955 and again 1963 - but found nothing appropriate for the album he had in mind. The extended process of settling on an interpretation - one that took almost nine years - required time to reflect on his previous interpretations. To be true to his identity as a recording artist, Gould felt that he needed time to consider not only the execution of his recorded performances, but their identity as individuals and as a set - before settling on an interpretation that he deemed satisfactory.

On the same radio program, Gould described the many takes required to acquire a suitable emotional tone for the "Aria" movement of the 1955 *Goldberg Variations* album. In order to achieve a version that possessed the appropriately "neutral" character that Gould desired, he recorded twenty-one takes. Scott's studio notes from the June 1955 recording session verify Gould's recollections, but provide more revealing details about the week-long recording session. Including false starts and performances of partial movements, the number of "Aria" takes total twenty-one, but they were not played in succession or even on the same day. In line with his observations about the ideal conditions for the recording artist, the process of recording the "Aria" was extended, occurring over an entire week of recording. Gould put a set of six versions

of the "Aria" on tape before recording the subsequent variations in order. After recording several versions of every variation, sometimes sections of music indicated as "ins" ("inserts") in Scott's notes, Gould recorded eight additional takes of the "Aria", marked in the studio notes as "Remake."[89] Howard Scott took down a remark, "Good End" in his notes alongside the third of the "Remakes." Indeed, the final "Aria" movement on the album is the third take from the second set of Gould's takes. After recording the second set of "Aria" takes, Gould recorded several variations again -- a few takes of Variation 30, several versions of Variation 7, additional takes of Variation 23, Variation 1, Variation 28, then several takes of Variation 1 again - before returning to the "Aria" one final time. After recording the movement again several times, Gould's concluded his recording session with the take that he saw fit to include as the opening movement on the final record.

"Aria": The Journey to Take Twenty-One

Ever willing to provide insight about his decisions in the studio, Gould was forthright about the copious number of "Aria" outtakes:

> It's quite possible that had I played the thirty variations differently, take one of the theme or indeed any earlier take of it would have done as well. Because what we're dealing with here is the attempt to make a part fit the whole. To make a first page that will fit the other fifty pages. If you give a concert and play a long work, not only must you resign yourself to the notion that no take two can come to the rescue, you must also be prepared to face the consequences of what you do from first note to last.[90]

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[89] Anytime Gould recorded a variation again after the initial takes, Scott indicated the subsequent series with the term "Remake."

[90] Gould, *The Art of Glenn Gould, "*On Records and Recording," radio broadcast, November 13 1966, AIN 661113-6, CBC Radio Archive.

Gould's concept of the relationship of the parts to the whole was the basis for his approach to the *Goldberg Variations* album.[91] Further, he used technology as a means to achieve an agreement between the two. Rather than mull over a given tape for months as he sometimes did with his later albums, Gould completed the entire process of altering and adapting the performances for the album during a one-week recording period. Despite the lack of splicing in the 1955 recordings of the "Aria," these outtakes indicate that Gould took great care to sculpt his interpretation into a performance that he felt was true to his artistic vision. The many subtle and obvious differences in the various takes of the "Aria" movement demonstrate how Gould came to his final take.

The greatest interpretive variation exists between the first and final takes, but Gould's studio methods become more strongly apparent in assessing the trajectory of musical details across several takes. The musical features noticeably change in increments from take to take as Gould progresses towards the final movement, as in his choice of tempo, for example. Each one has its unique moments - finger slips, slight differences in the articulation of a grace note, or the unusual sounding resonance of a particular key on the piano - but as a set, the accumulation of variations indicate the Gould shaped his performance based on his simple practice of recording, playing back, reflecting, and recording again. As these differences in interpretation over the twenty-one takes show, Gould's interpretive decisions were deliberate, contributing to his vision for the entire set of variations. Tracing this path across many takes provides insight into these changes and their contributions to the final recording, a carefully crafted interpretation enabled by Gould's use of the studio.

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[91] The cycle of recording, playback, and revision was a precursor to that of Gould's later recordings as described by Andrew Kazdin in which Gould recorded a given work, lived with the test tapes for a length of time and then made decisions about the album edits.

Tempo (often a topic of contention in discussions of Gould's recordings) plays a crucial role in this version of the *Goldberg Variations*, bearing heavily on the interpretation of the movement. Upon listening to the album, the difference between the tempi of the first and final takes is 20 seconds - the first is slower at 2 minutes, 17 seconds while the final is 1 minute, 53 seconds in length. Notably, the first take opens at a considerably slower tempo resulting in a somber mood that carries throughout the movement. Most importantly, it results in a heaviness, particularly of the ornaments in the left hand, which, as a result of the more weighty downbeat are also articulated at a slower tempo.[92] Gould, moreover, decelerates from the phrasing of the closing cadence of the A section (at m. 16) into the beginning of the B section (Figure 1.2).

After the first take, Gould's tempo becomes faster in each subsequent performance. By Take 8, Gould finds a pulse that he more or less maintains until the final take, resulting in a

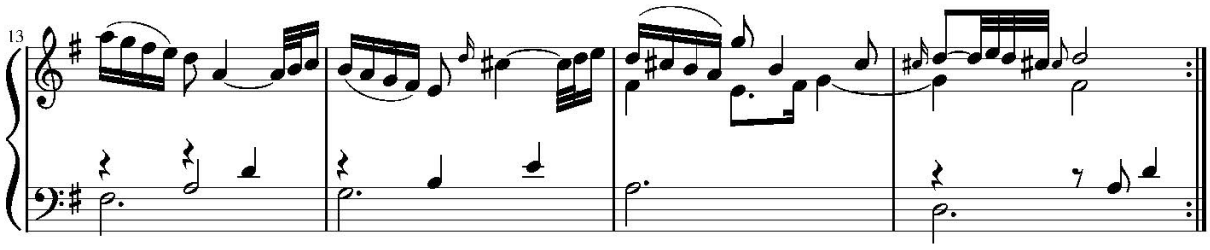


Figure 1.2: mm. 13-16 of the "Aria" movement

lighter sound. When Gould stated that his approach to the "Aria" was influenced by the desire to "make a part fit the whole," the execution of the principle relied on the interconnectedness of his tempo for the "Aria" and the overall mood of the other variations. The brighter sound of the final take, a result of a consistently brisk tempo throughout the movement, still allows for phrase contouring at cadential moments in m. 8 and m. 16 for instance, yet also builds a link between

[92] Gould's heavier articulation is especially pronounced in the bass part at m. 18 and upper mordents in the left hand at m. 19 and m. 20.

the emotional tone of the "Aria" and subsequent movements, setting the stage for the lighter tempi of Variations 1, 2, and 5. This pronounced contrast in tempo gains significance in considering the "Da Capo Aria" on the album. The slower tempo of Gould's rendition of the final movement can be partly attributed to a general deceleration of his performance throughout. The gradual slackening of the pulse becomes apparent at the conclusion of the A section and from mm. 25 until the end of the movement, when Gould's deliberately draws attention to the finality of the movement's concluding phrases by holding the tempo back.

As the general tempo of Gould's performance increased from take to take, he also adapted his execution of smaller musical details such as ornaments and rhythmic articulation. In response to the faster tempi of the later takes, for instance, Gould adapted his articulation of ornaments, in some cases performing them at a quicker, steady tempo, and at other times slowly accelerating into the next note in order to shape a particularly pronounced phrase arch. One example comes from the opening of the work: the right hand trill on the second beat of m. 3. In the album version of the opening "Aria," Gould plays the trill evenly with a slight acceleration. As a result of this small-scale interpretive decision, Gould builds momentum and tension, propelling the melodic line into the A at the beginning of m. 4 that is released in the slight deceleration in the descent to D (Figure 1.3). Earlier takes of this moment show that Gould tried different variations of this short excerpt before coming to the final interpretation. Gould experimented with a steadily sustained trill, both at a slower (Take 1 and Take 2) and a faster tempo (Take 7, Take 15, and Take 19). Although Gould recorded several takes with the accelerated ornament as in the final take, he only combined the characteristic brisk tempo with the surge of energy into the trill that carries through to the A to D descent in the final recording on the album.



Figure 1.3: mm. 1-3 of the "Aria" movement.

Despite its simple harmonic structure, the final six-measure phrase (from mm. 27 to 32) of the "Aria" plays a key role in the movement and an important role in Gould's version of the variations (Figure 1.4). This section serves as an extended iteration of dominant to tonic cadential motion; the three measures from mm. 28 to 30 are a sequential treatment of the movement from D major to G major to the subdominant, C major, before making the final motion from dominant to tonic. As a result of the straightforward functional harmony, there is plenty of potential for the performer to take liberties with interpretation. Although Gould interprets features of the "Aria," such as certain ornaments and appoggiaturas, in much the same way in each performance (for instance, in every take, Gould hesitates between A and G in the



Figure 1.4: mm. 27-32 of the "Aria" movement

grace note in the right hand at m. 18), he went into the recording session with an open mind about its overall interpretation. Subsequently each take represents a different interpretive direction especially with respect to the broader perspective as opposed to the smaller-scale details.

Tremendous differences exist between Gould's interpretation of this phrase in the opening and the Da Capo "Aria" on the 1955 album. He applied a particularly liberal hand to this section with regards to dynamics, tempo, and other expressive details and as the outtakes reveal, the final results for this phrase took time to develop; Gould's final choices for the album were conscious and deliberate. The final phrase of Gould's opening "Aria" provides closure yet simultaneously launches the energy and emotional tenor of the rest of the variations. The final "Aria," however, functions as a summation of the previous thirty variations. It recapitulates, in an unadorned state, the bassline and harmonic progression that have been the basis of the variation set, yet it also offers a conclusion to the extended work. Again, the importance of making the "part fit the whole," in Gould's words, becomes important in assessing the function of this final phrase in relation to the entire set.

Gould's numerous takes of this particular section of the "Aria" demonstrate a range of possible interpretive options. Taking stock of the album versions in the context of their position within the variation set, however, reveals that Gould's attention was especially attuned to their roles within the collection and their function as the opening and closing movements of the entire work, respectively. In Gould's opinion, an ideal performance consisted of several different features. As previously mentioned, Gould worked towards an interpretation in which the inner voices were clearly articulated, emphasizing the polyphonic relationship of the inner and outer voices. In addition, he incorporated musical features such as variable dynamics, speed, voicing,

and articulation that together provide the characteristic "terracing" of the phrase that Gould himself described of the performance.

Gould's earlier takes suggest that he at first, dedicated less attention to the inner voices of the final six measures. In the first take, for instance, Gould's performance fails to articulate the difference between the inner and outer voices, and instead of being projected as in the final take, they sound muddled. In Take 2, the inner voices are quieter in volume and therefore less prominent than they are in the final take. Gould tried different expressive options in his performance by Take 8 in which the inner voices are more prominently and clearly articulated especially compared to the outer voices. Subsequently, Gould varied the intensity of volume and tempo alongside differences in the articulation of the inner voices, shaping an interpretation that maintains a seamless confluence between the phrase's polyphonic characteristics and his trademark articulative emphases within an carefully structured phrase.

The greatest variation among the outtakes besides the previously mentioned differences in inner voice emphasis, however, occurs in Gould's dynamic shaping. Gould's approach is a result of conscious efforts towards building a well-structured phrase beginning at m. 27 that emphasizes, through gradations in dynamics and slight tempo changes, the harmonic progression and the melodic line. Exploring the effects of increased dynamic variation in Take 9, Gould creates a dramatic swell towards the upper range of the right hand's melodic line beginning in the third beat of m. 28 and again at the transition between m. 29 and 30. Along with a slight acceleration, this dramatic gesture directs the listener to the beginning of each sequential cell and in doing so creates an ebb and flow to the otherwise predictable harmonic and melodic events. Take 10 attempts the same shaping of the line, but also incorporates a more obvious pulling back of the tempo in the final measure to signal the finality of the last G-D-G motion in the left hand.

Some of Gould's subsequent takes feature a more brisk and evenly articulated performance of this six-measure section (Takes 12, 14, and 15), but he soon after returns to the endeavor of playing with the pulse of the phrase throughout this section. In Take 19, Gould takes on the faster tempo as he did in previous takes and exaggerates some of the phrasing strategies of Take 9. In the latter take, Gould accelerates in measure 27, setting a more energetic feel to close the movement. He is also more exuberant with the emphasis of the inner voices in this take, particularly the movement from F-sharp to G and D to G in mm. 28 to 29. Noticeably, Gould does not slow down in the final measure of the movement as he does in the final take, but rather maintains the elevated tempo to the very end albeit alongside a slight decrease in volume.

It was also crucially important to Gould that the the final performances of "Aria" on his 1955 album connected with interpretations he had selected for the other variations. The first version of the "Aria" on the album was the last take that Gould recorded during the 1955 recording session, corroborating his approach to the studio workflow. After recording takes of all of the variations, Gould was able to reflect on the range of character and the subtle musical features of each variation and the collection as a set before making decisions about his final interpretation of the "Aria." In turn, the "Aria," both in its initial and final versions on the album are impeccably constructed to complement each other and the variation set as a whole.

Despite of a lack of complex microphone placement or ample use of editing splices, the trajectory of Gould's interpretation of "Aria" from the 1955 *Goldberg Variations* album is testament to a nevertheless radically different use of the recording studio. As Gould later explicated in his career, the studio and its requisite technologies suited his artistic sensibilities because it allowed the luxury not only of playback, but also of time to reflect on his previous interpretations. As a result, studio technologies enabled him to apply whatever his interpretive concept of the musical

work and to adapt different combinations of previous performances in the final take. Later in his career, this process frequently utilized technology such as direct application of the magnetic editing splice, to achieve the ideal interpretation. As the "Aria" recordings show, Gould made limited use of the editing splice in the 1955 recording. These outtakes demonstrate Gould employed studio technologies to facilitate a similar process, but through the recording studio's capacity for archiving and playing back, allowing him to adapt his performances in order to achieve his ideal interpretation. The evolution of Gould's performances over the course of these outtakes sheds light on his earliest use of the studio, showing that even at the outset of his recording career, he cultivated the seeds of his more advanced studio methods.

Liveness and Mediation

Alongside the 1955 album and its outtakes, Gould's live recordings offer a valuable record of his contrasting outlook on live interpretation and his creative studio work. Most importantly, these live recordings shed light on what Gould achieved with his studio methods that he could not in live performance on the concert stage. Gould routinely included the *Goldberg Variations* (or selections from the work) on his recital programs throughout his concert career and three recordings of these performances are commercially available: a live CBC Radio performance in 1954, a performance at the 1958 Vancouver Festival, and a 1959 performance at the Salzburg Festival.[93] Yet these live recordings are more than a record of several alternative interpretations

[93] The 1954 live radio broadcast on CBC radio (from June 21 1954) of Gould's performance of the *Goldberg Variations* is available on *Glenn Gould: J.S. Bach,* Glenn Gould (piano), CBC Records PSCD 2007, 1995, CD. A live recording from the Vancouver Festival (July 23 1958) is contained in the five-disc set entitled *Glenn Gould in Concert 1951-1960,* Glenn Gould (piano), West Hill Radio Archives WHR-6038, 2011, CD. The 1959 live recording from the Salzburg Festival (August 25 1959) is available on *Glenn Gould Live in Salzburg & Moscow,* Glenn Gould (piano), Sony Classical SMK 52 685, 1993, CD. Another live recording of excerpts from the *Goldberg Variations* is available on an album of Gould's performance at the Moscow Conservatory on May 12 1957: *Concert de Moscou,* Glenn Gould (piano), Chant du Monde LDC278 799, 1988, CD. This recording includes performances of (in order) Var. 3, Var. 18, Var. 9, Var. 24, Var. 10, and Var 32 (Quodlibet).

than the two that listeners have become accustomed to, but altogether, they offer a spectrum of Gould's interpretive decisions and a limited look into his approach to live interpretation in these early years of his performance career.

The sheer diversity of interpretations across three live recordings confirms that Gould held to his assertion that every performance and recording should offer something new by way of "re-thinking or re-structuring" the work.[94] And although he articulated this point publicly and decisively in 1966, his approach to performance in the late 1950s provides confirmation that it was an opinion he held even in his earliest creative activities. Gould's live performances are not as carefully measured, the voices nowhere near as perfectly balanced as in the studio album. The inevitable imperfections of the performances reveal that unique features of the performance, while revelatory of the performance's "liveness," was likely perceived by Gould as a blemish on his artistic goal of the "perfect" performance. Using examples from the 1954, 1958, and 1959 recordings, this brief encounter with Gould's live performances illuminate the discrepancies between his on-stage creative process and his approach in the recording studio.

Gould's live CBC radio broadcast from 1954 is evidence that in this case, he attempted a strategy for performance that allowed for a cohesive interpretation of the variation set based on a slower tempo and heavier articulation across the two "Aria" movements and throughout some of the variations.[95] In contrast to the lightness and measured exuberance of the opening "Aria" of the studio album and its more sedate counterpart in the Da Capo Aria, the live broadcast of 1954 opens at a slower tempo, resulting in a somber expressive atmosphere. The opening

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[94] Gould, *The Art of Glenn Gould, "*On Records and Recording," radio broadcast, November 13 1966, AIN 661113-6, CBC Radio Archive.

[95] The recording quality of the CBC live radio broadcast is noticeably poor. Foreign sounds (some possibly from the reverberation of the piano itself), and echoes are frequently heard throughout the recording and it is unclear whether the sounds are from the studio or if they were acquired during the radio transmission or audio transfer process.

movement proceeds (on average) at a metronome marking of approximately 37 and the Da Capo Aria is similarly slow, signaling a reprise of the passacaglia and also a return to the emotional tenor of the opening movement.[96] Moreover, the Da Capo Aria drags, sometimes slowing down despite its already plodding tempo. For instance, Gould's decision to loosen the tempo even further at the end of m. 7 into a new phrase at m. 8, rather than providing a sense of conclusion to the end of the phrase, instead lumbers towards the end resulting in a less-than polished phrase.

Interpretive decisions recur throughout the 1954 performance that maintain an overall sense of heaviness, affecting the polyphonic lines. Even in the movements that Gould plays at a brisk tempo (for example, Var. 5, Var. 8, Var. 10-11, Var. 14, Var. 17, Var. 18-20, Var. 26, Var. 28-29), his fingers, compared to the studio recording, seem to push deeper and harder into the keyboard. And yet, elements of a recognizable Gould performance still peek through. Gould's interpretation of Var. 6, for instance, maintains a contemplative feel and while taken at a more sedate tempo, still exhibits the dynamic terracing typical of Gould's studio recordings in the harmonic sequence leading to the closing cadence (mm. 25-32). Although his performance of Var. 30 (Quodlibet) is much slower than the performance on his 1955 album, the clarity of the inner voices at mm. 13-14, for example, are evidence of Gould's attempt to balance several interpretive and voicing considerations at once.

Gould's slower tempo and careful approach become hallmark features of his 1954 interpretation, establishing a character for the opening and closing movements and setting the tempo and tone for the unfolding of the inner movements. (For example, Gould performs the first variation at a faster tempo than the opening "Aria," but without the exuberance he achieved in his studio version of the same movement.) Following from this central interpretive decision, the

[96] The opening "Aria" is 2 minutes, 43 seconds long, whereas the closing "Aria" is 4 minutes, 33 seconds long. The final movement, however, includes a repeat of the A section.

feather-light trigger action that Gould described as the prime characteristic of his ideal musical instrument, is not present. What we typically expect from a Gould performance - precision, clarity, and above all, a clean interaction of polyphonic lines - is not a foremost feature of this recording. While this recording is not Gould's cleanest, it provides evidence of an attempt to present an alternative interpretation.

In Gould's recordings from 1958 and 1959, live performance is an obstacle to what he desired in a unified interpretation in which the parts fit the whole. Without the benefit of multiple takes, Gould overlooked certain musical details prominent in his studio interpretation. Of the three live recordings, his performance at the 1958 Vancouver Festival is most like the 1955 studio album, but close comparison of the two also reveals major differences. In the 1958 version, Gould performs the opening "Aria" at the same approximate tempo and with a similar energy as he does on the 1955 studio album. The live recording retains the atmosphere of the studio version yet Gould's phrasing in the former is not nearly as deliberate as in the latter. In the 1958 interpretation moreover, Gould retains the subtle contrast between the opening "Aria" and its reprise at the conclusion of the variation set down to the Da Capo Aria's extended ritardando from mm. 25-32 (Figure 4*).* In the studio version, Gould draws out the length of the beat, savoring the passage of the moment until the last beat of the final measure. Yet his live performance, perhaps because of the excitement of the moment, downplays the ritardando. Rather than drastically pull back the tempo in the final measures of the Da Capo Aria, Gould slightly decreases the tempo while he also tones down the emphasis of the independent polyphonic lines. As a result, this final extended phrase is a serene, almost docile conclusion to the variation set. Absent of the assertive bass line sequence as in the studio recording, the live recording features a balanced sounding of three voices that slowly fades out in the movement's

final moments. The final movement still contrasts with the opening movement in this live recording, complementing the initial interpretive approach of the variation set and its role as a reprise and conclusion to the performance is reinforced by a contemplative atmosphere achieved by a subtle change in voice balance rather than a dramatic difference in tempo.

Gould's 1959 live performance of the B section of the Da Capo Aria offers yet another variation on Gould's previous interpretations. While taken at a slightly slower tempo than the 1955 album, Gould aims to conclude the Da Capo Aria with a similar contrast from a brisk and forward propelled A section. In contrast to the 1955 and 1958 versions, Gould reduces the tempo from the beginning of the B section in preparation for the final cadence. The tempo change, over 16 measures, is incredibly subtle and most evident upon multiple hearings, attesting to Gould's argument that repetition can be a musician's and - in this case - a listener's, best friend. Alongside the deceleration of this section the bass is uneven, subdued throughout most of mm. 17-22. The bassline is more prominent again in certain sections, for instance in the final two beats of m. 26, even to the point of protruding out of the polyphony altogether as in the second half of the first beat of m. 27. Gould never loses control of the polyphonic lines, but the uneven presence of the bass in contrast to the well-shaped lines of Gould's studio recording, are noticeably freer, signaling that the "live" quality of this real-time event.

Taken alongside Gould's 1955 studio recording, this examination of his live recordings supports the claim that his studio albums were a more deliberate artistic creation and more in line with his philosophical outlook on technology and musical performance. The creative control Gould wielded in the recording studio through repeated takes, reflection, post-performance creative decisions, and editing splices, allowed Gould to access a performance that was as faithful to his ideal vision as possible, making him more confident presenting his studio performances to

his audiences. This comparison has further implications for Gould's statements on the role of the performer and his ideal level of involvement in the creation of an artistic work mediated by sound technology.

Gould's live performances highlight the creative challenges that he faced on the concert stage. From Gould's perspective, his 1955 studio album was a more carefully rendered artistic work. These live performances demonstrate that, in real time, he was only able to focus on one or two broad features of the variation set rather than every detail of each movement. Gould's preference for the high degree of artistic control offered by the recording studio emerged from his experiences on stage and in the studio in the 1950s for this very reason. Examining these recordings in comparison to his Gould's 1955 studio recording corroborates his statement that musical performance should offer something new to the listener. Although Gould likely disapproved of these live recordings, they reveal a glimpse into the possible interpretations that Gould might have released had he remained a live concert pianist as well as a recording artist.

Networks of Performance and Networks of Technology

Gould was explicit in his prerogatives when he turned away from the concert stage and towards sound recording technology. Employing the studio as a tool in the music-making process, he aimed to transform the relationship among agents of musical creation and agents of reception in the performance network and in turn effect a shift in contemporary ideas about the nature of the ontological work and the role of musical agents in relation to sound. Because it challenged concepts and ideas that were (and continue to be) critical to the practice of Western art music, Gould's musical philosophy was met with resistance. From his reflections on the role of the listener to his disparaging comments about the role of applause in the concert hall and his

prediction that the concert hall would soon be abolished, Gould's advocacy for the recording studio proposed a complete dismantling of long-held understandings of the network of performance by the Western music establishment. To some, it constituted an outright attack on the concept of the musical work.

Gould was radical not only in that he envisioned new purposes for studio recording, but because he called for a dramatic reconfiguration of the role of the performer and his relationship to the listener and the composer. In Gould's philosophy, the studio became a place of creation rather than of reproduction whereas the recording apparatus had previously been regarded primarily as a archival tool or a device for replication and reproduction. In this older frame of thought, sound recordings were not considered to be of use to the musician after the recording process had taken place, but their value was assessed by the listener as an artistic and economic commodity. Gould was captivated by performance as a realm of creative endeavor. His outtakes reflect an active use of studio recordings as part of his creative process. In using recordings as documentation of his past performances, Gould became an attentive listener, adjusting his future performances and recordings. In doing so, Gould's use of recording technology set the groundwork for his later technologically innovative approaches.[97]

Gould's early use of the recording studio and his later technological approaches share a common premise that can be understood as an encounter between two networks: a network of performance and a network of technology. Both scholarship on performance and sound reproduction technology have been visualized as networks incorporating agents, objects, and in the case of sound technology, machines. Gould's vision of musical interpretation and the

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[97] See, for instance, Gould's later use of quadrophonic microphone placement in which he actively engaged with the spatial dimensions of the studio, altering the placement of several microphones to create an entirely new acoustic experience. These recordings have been available since their 2013 release on the album *Acoustic Orchestrations: Works By Scriabin & Sibelius,* Glenn Gould (piano), Sony Music B008L8OFJU, 2013, CD.

recording apparatus reconfigured these networks, destabilizing both as they were understood in the 1950s and proposing a change not only the nature of the musical work, but also usurping the power of the composer in the flow of information, redirecting it to the performer and the listener.

In "What the Recording Process Means to Me," published posthumously, Gould described his concept of performance as a process, referring to the role of music as communication from one agent to another. He envisioned this exchange as a network and the relationships within the network as a site of change:

> And that brings us back to 'process,' because, despite all the self-conscious silliness with which that concept has been associated from time to time, it nevertheless implicitly conveys a very important idea. It conveys the idea that the performance, while it may have initiated the chain of events, undergoes a profound metamorphosis as a result of its exposure to that chain, to that network, and the result is a performance transformed, a performance transcended, a performance sent out into the world, if you like, charged with a very special mission. In my opinion, that mission is to enable the listener to realize the benefits of that invisible network, that climate of anonymity which the network provides.[98]

Gould's idea of the "network" in this quotation is nebulous, referring to both a network enabled by technological mediation as well as the relationship between the listener and the performer. As Gould reflected at the end of his career, he regarded the recording process as transformational, imbuing his performances with something more than what they were on their own. As Paul Théberge put it, Gould's understanding of the relationship between performance and technology can be summarized as follows:

> All that was necessary was that the performer realize that the recording was not just a mechanical reproduction of a performance but rather, the performance and the recording were integral parts of a single creative process.[99]

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[98] Glenn Gould, "What the Recording Process Means to Me," *High Fidelity* (January 1983), 57.

[99] Théberge, "Counterpoint", 117.

This reasoning explains the impulse behind his studio methods to harness the many possibilities offered by recording technology and although articulated at the end of his career, also applies to his earliest studio approaches.

While traditional concepts of performance, for instance the one described by Stan Godlovitch, describes a network of relationships among several agents including the composer, the performer, and the listener, Gould's understanding of the connection among the three was more liberal with less distinction among the three categories. Godlovitch's system consists of four main elements: sound, agents, works, listeners that are joined in "a complex network of relations linking together musicians, musical activities, works, listeners, and performance communities."[100] This network describes the the intended directional flow of information in which the composer is the holder of truth about the musical work and his opinions and thoughts about the interpretation are the gold standard by which the audience should judge the authenticity of the performance. The composer composes the musical work, a sacralized musical object that is conveyed by the performer. Within this idealized model, information flows directly from the composer to the listener with as little disruption to the composer and his intentions as possible (Figure 1.5). Gould's outlook dismisses this model, questioning fidelity to the tradition of the composer's generation and placing full artistic responsibility on the performer: "The performer has to have faith that he is doing, even blindly, the right thing, that he may be finding interpretive possibilities not wholly realized even by the composer."[101]

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[100] Stan Godlovitch, *Musical Performance* (London: Routledge, 1998), 1.

[101] Asbell, in *The Art of Glenn Gould,* ed. Roberts, 194.

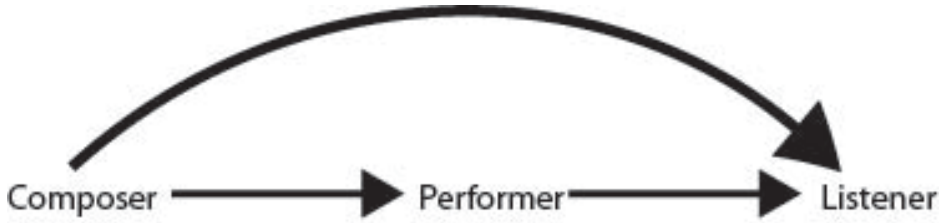


Figure 1.5: Visualization of Stan Godlovitch's Network of Performance

Gould's perspective is not only significant with respect to a network of performance, but also calls into question the relationship among the agents of music-making and their relationship to technology. Jonathan Sterne has visualized this series of connections as a network of an audio source, technological mediator, and listener. Sterne uses the image of a network to depict "assemblages" of cultural, social, and physical activity, including, but not limited to the relationship between humans and technological apparatus associated with sound reproduction (Figure 1.6).[102]



Figure 1.6: Visualization of Jonathan Sterne's Network of Technology

Crucial to Sterne's network is the concept of a "vanishing" mediator, an ideal that governs the realm of sound reproduction technology, particularly around the notion of sound fidelity. Similar to the notion that the ideal role for a performer is one in which he is not detectable, sound

[102] Sterne refers to the work of Bruno Latour, Jody Berland, J. MacGregor Wise, and Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari. Jonathan Sterne, *The Audible Past* (Durham: University of North Carolina Press, 2003), 8.

reproduction technology is said to be desirable when the relationship between the copy and the original are as close as possible. A technology's fidelity to the original sound, as Sterne describes, is successful if it "render[s] the relation as transparent, as if it were not there."[103] This congruence of issues -- the indetectability of the performer and of technology - is a strange intersection in the context of Gould's thoughts about the recording artist's role in relationship to sound technology. Although he never articulated it as such, the reason behind Gould's controversy was partly due to his blatant rejection of both tenets of authenticity. He neither adhered to the theoretical role of the composer as the sole agent of truth with respect to the musical work, nor did he accept the widespread belief (at the time) that a sound recording should faithfully represent a moment of live musical performance.

Within these networks, the listener plays a role as a receiver of sound, but not one who directly participates in sound creation. On this point, Gould had bold ideas, arguing throughout his career that the listener should be an active participant in this network of sound technology. Gould's ideas about listener engagement reflected the dramatic impact that technology in the experience of listening to music, not just to the endeavor of making music. In this context, Gould imagined the listening experience as a participatory one. In *Concert Dropout*, Gould described what he thought should ideally be available in the future to all listeners: a listening "kit" that could empower the listener to make interpretive decisions and welcome her into the music-making experience. Gould's imaginary kit consisted of several possible recorded performances, providing the listener with the option to select excerpts and takes to include in their ideal recording. In this scenario they would also have the flexibility to alter the combination of performances based on mood or personal preference. "Let them assemble their own performance," Gould declared,

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[103] Sterne, *The Audible Past*, 218.

"Give them all the component parts, all the component splices, rendered at different tempi with different dynamic inflections, and let them put something together that they really enjoy - make them participant to that degree. I'd very much like to do that.[104]

Listeners were at the center of this new relationship with the musical performance facilitated by recording technology. Gould elaborated on the new responsibility of the listener in this realm of musical experience, stating that ". . . listeners will have the power to make interpretative decisions, decisions that conductors would normally make. . ."[105] With these ideas, Gould revealed hints of his desire to bring the listener into "the recreative process. . . and perhaps, indirectly, into the creative process."[106]

The concept of creation became the centerpiece of Gould's musical philosophy, as it did with his approach to the recording studio. In a short posthumous piece published in *High Fidelity*, Gould summarized some of the key thoughts that guided his approach to recording technology. Addressing issues that had emerged in his previous writings, Gould also expanded on his idea of the "creative listener" and her new role in the everyday listening experience vis a vis sound technology:

> What I'm describing, I think, is not, in the conventional sense, either an active or a passive listener . . .What I'm trying to describe is, for want of a better word, a creative listener - a listener whose reactions, because of the solitude in which they're bred, are shot full of unique insights. These are insights which will not necessarily come to an end with the final product is dispatched from the pressing plant, but rather that, from that point on, it will have the consequences which we can't begin to measure, ramifications which we can't possibly attempt to quantify, and that, eventually, like a benign boomerang, the ideas which feed on those consequences, the ideas which, out there in the world of the creative listener,

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[104] "Glenn Gould: Concert Dropout in Conversation with John McClure," 59.

[105] "Festival Interview with Humphrey Burton," Disc 5, *Glenn Gould on Television: The Complete CBC Broadcasts 1954-1977* (Canadian Broadcasting Corporation; Sony Classical, 2011).

[106] "Glenn Gould: Concert Dropout in Conversation with John McClure," 59.

> begin to take on life of their own, may very well return to nourish and inspire us.[107]

Many have described Gould's opinions as prescient of a recent culture of music sampling in current popular music.[108] But it is just as important to acknowledge that Gould was discussing the role of technology within the realm of art music, among a community that today, remains resistant to many of these revolutionary ideas on the subject of technology and its role in the everyday listening experience.

Gould's philosophies were unfettered by the dominance of the work concept and the concept of *werktreue* that arguable still have a stronghold on the study and performance of Western art music today. They played out in his studio activities throughout his career, but also had deeper implications, destabilizing the relationship among composer, performer, and listener. Gould's engagement with issues pertaining to contemporary musical performance and sound reproduction technology forced him to negotiate issues that were central to both discussions. Of utmost importance in both debates was the question of authenticity, the ambiguous and troublesome term that, in reference to the performance of Western art music, implies a certain role of the performer that retains the "true voice" of the composer himself, or what Richard Taruskin has referred to as "consulting the oracle."[109] Gould's ideas also proposed a reconfiguration of the concept of *werktreue,* yet another bastion of Western art music reception that in the context of sound reproduction, makes "locating" the musical work a fraught task. As a demonstration of just how enduring those issues have continued to be in discussions of performance practice, the early music movement and debates around suitable and appropriate

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[107] Gould, "What the Recording Process Means to Me," 57.

[108] Gould rarely wrote favorably about anything to do with popular music (except for in the case of British pop star Petula Clark) and certainly never described what he saw as its future.

[109] Richard Taruskin, *Text and Act* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), 53.

performance practices are far from consensus and spur heated debate long after Gould's death. Although attitudes prevailed that the performer's interpretation of a musical work should involve as little intervention as possible, it has only been recently that audiences of Western art music have become open to the pluralistic possibilities of musical interpretation: not only for such composers as Cage and Babbitt, but also for such historical heavyweights as Bach, Beethoven, and Brahms.

Conclusions

Gould's 1955 recording sessions show that he aspired, above all, to extend the capacity of the performer into the realm of musical creation. Rejecting the assumption that the composer held supreme understanding of the musical work, he harnessed his desire to be a composer, leaving the concert hall to pursue his creative prerogatives by utilizing and adapting technology to his own creative ends. The impulse behind both creative processes - performance and listening - played a crucially important role as he undertook recording of the *Goldberg Variations* in 1955.

The outtakes from his 1955 studio sessions provide evidence alongside his live recordings from the 1955 to 1959, that the ideas that matured and came to define the public image of his later years evolved from his studio activities in the late 1950s. Later in his career, Gould pushed his role as performer even further, becoming more active in this process by engaging with the magnetic tape itself, guided by his close listening of previously recorded interpretations. Gould's groundbreaking ideas about the role and responsibilities of the listener and the performer had far-reaching implications for the encounter between the values encapsulated within traditional networks of performance and technology, enduring today as one of his most significant musical and philosophical contributions.

Chapter 2

Oscar's Paradox:
Oscar Peterson in the Mainstream and at the Margins, 1950 -1969

In the context of his tremendous popular success, Oscar Peterson's career is a conundrum within mainstream narratives of jazz history. Peterson was best-recognized for his leadership role in the Oscar Peterson Trio from 1952, although he was also known as house pianist and a mainstay with Jazz at the Philharmonic [JATP], an exceptional jazz troupe produced by jazz impresario Norman Granz.[1] Peterson built an international fan base through tours with JATP. Later, he toured with the Oscar Peterson Trio until he experienced a stroke in 1993, which slowed his previously busy schedule. After a short period of rehabilitation, Peterson returned to the recording studio and the concert stage, performing into his eighties and remaining active until his death in December 2007. Even in his later years, he continued to draw considerable audiences and enthusiasm to his festival and club appearances. Peterson remained popular among international jazz audiences until the end; though his health waned, his fame never did.

Peterson's conflicted public reception could not have been predicted from the reaction to his auspicious Carnegie Hall debut in September 1949 with JATP. The concert marked a turning point in his career, the historical counterpart to Glenn Gould's United States debut in January 1955. From that moment, Peterson's name became synonymous with jazz piano virtuosity. But as his career progressed, Peterson experienced backlash from listeners and critics. In particular, critics took aim at his virtuosity, criticizing what they perceived as his tendency to rely too heavily

[1] The Oscar Peterson Trio saw several personnel changes during the 1950s and 60s. Ray Brown (bass) was an original member of the trio until his retirement in 1965 as a result of the trio's rigorous touring schedule. He was replaced by Sam Jones. The trio began with Irving Ashby on guitar in 1951 and then guitarist Barney Kessel in 1952. Peterson performed and recorded with the best-known iteration of the trio, with Herb Ellis on guitar and Ray Brown on bass, from 1953 to 1958. Due to personal and health problems, Ellis left the trio and was replaced with a drummer. The trio welcomed Gene Gammage to the trio for two months in 1958. Drummer Ed Thigpen replaced Gammage in 1959 and stayed with the trio until 1965.

on musical clichés, flashy technical runs, and his overuse of the blues scale, all at the cost of musical invention and innovation.

In this chapter, I examine select discussions among jazz critics about Peterson during a period of his career in which many voices within the community rose to a fever pitch in debates over his musical merits and faults. From 1950 to the mid-1960s, Peterson repeatedly became the subject of controversy in the press. These debates emerged in newspaper and magazine articles, reviews, and letters to the editor in a variety of publications primarily in North America (but also from other parts of the world). By highlighting selected articles and exchanges I reveal that despite Peterson's status as respected virtuoso within the jazz community, his popular appeal was a detriment. I examine the ebb and flow of Peterson reception through an extensive collection of published material alongside biographical insights from interviews, Peterson's memoir, and various secondary sources, arguing that discussions about his performance aesthetic and his role as a jazz tastemaker contributes new perspectives on the complex tangle of social and economic factors at play within the jazz community during this time. The increasing availability of digitized journals, magazines, and newspapers has opened up new possibilities for more comprehensive musical reception research. As I will show, the realm of critical reception has a great deal to offer in terms of elucidating the web of concerns surrounding Peterson that reflected on his Canadian reputation and international reception.

In contrast to Gould who pushed back against what he perceived to be limitations on his creativity, Peterson instead provided an alternative model for boundary-pushing. Although Peterson has never been regarded as a provocateur in the same way as Gould was, his adherence to certain ideas about performance style thwarted musical expectation, becoming a topic of controversy during his career. By critically examining the conflict among musicians and critics

about Peterson's membership within the jazz community in the United States and his status as an "authentic" jazz musician, virtuosity becomes a window onto crucial issues such as musical values, social membership, and cultural meaning of performance within the jazz community.

There are drawbacks to relying on reviews and criticism to gauge reception of any artist, but this is particularly true of jazz reception. Foremost among these concerns is the lack of diversity among jazz critics in the 1950s and 60s, who were primarily middle-class white males. Black critic Amiri Baraka voiced his misgivings on this point, launching ammunition against the dominance of the white establishment on the jazz community in a 1964 article:

> Most jazz critics were (and are) not only white middle-class Americans, but middlebrows as well. The irony here is that because the majority of jazz critics are white middlebrows, most jazz criticism tends to enforce white middlebrow standards of excellence as some criterion for performance of a music that in its most profound manifestations is completely antithetical to such standards; in fact, quite often is in direct reaction against them.[2]

Peterson's relationship with jazz critics was also known to be mercurial. Although he was friends with some of them, such as his two biographers, Gene Lees and Richard Palmer, his reaction to others was hostile, perhaps because he was often the target of their critiques.[3] In a 1965 interview with Leonard Feather, Peterson stated,

> The critics deserve to have the tables turned on them. Who criticizes them? They are doing something in which they involve the public, who are supposedly unknowing, right? And they have to provide the guiding light. But I'd like to see some real literary genius, one who also knows about music, reviewing some of the stuff these gutsy writers, taking them apart the way they take apart Erroll Garner or Dizzy. . .[4]

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[2] Imamu Amiri Baraka, "Jazz Criticism and Ideology" in *Liberation* 8 no. 12 (February 1964), 29.

[3] Gene Lees was a Canadian-born jazz critic and the editor of Down Beat from 1959-1961. Richard Palmer was a regular critic for the British publication *Jazz Journal* until his death in August 2014.

[4] Leonard Feather, "Jazz Beat - Peterson: No Oscar For the Critics," *New York Post*, May 9 1965, "Oscar Peterson 1945-1968" Folder, Oscar Peterson Clippings Collection, Institute of Jazz Studies.

Yet criticism and jazz-centered publications, though both much-maligned, have played an important part in the dialogue of the jazz community, providing a point of communication for critics, composers, audiences members, musicians and their producers. And while taking one opinion as representative of an entire group is to deny a heterogeneity of opinions, the critic at his best provoked debate, interacted with musicians and other critics, and commented on issues relevant to the music-making community.

Peterson's nationality and personal background provide the biographical groundwork for understanding the role that public identity played in his commercial image. I uncover Peterson's own comments on the significance of remaining in Canada throughout his career as well as critical response to these statements. In doing so, I highlight an aspect of Peterson's subjectivity that shaped public perception of his contribution to jazz history and his paradoxical reception as both a mainstream popular success and as an outsider to the jazz community in the United States.

By considering Peterson as an outsider among U.S. jazz artists, I argue that other topics of debate within the jazz community are set into relief - issues that might not otherwise become topics of interest with respect to the works and careers of U.S.-born jazz musicians. Peterson's status as a Canadian ensured a particular type of scrutiny and he was questioned at the outset for his membership among jazz musicians. Technical displays of virtuosity became a feature of Peterson's playing that was criticized from early in his career. As I demonstrate, that issue became entangled with longstanding anxieties within the jazz community about musical categories as well as the racial and class identities associated with jazz musicians. Peterson's reception, while notable because of his singular status as a Canadian musician, also provides an alternative perspective on

wide-ranging contemporary controversies among jazz musicians and critics, demonstrating how race, class, and musical genre interacted in complex and unexpected ways.

In and Of Canada

At the time of his 1949 U.S. premiere, Peterson had already established himself firmly within Montréal's close-knit jazz community. The city, and Canada at large, played a significant role in his musical and social formation. As a teenager, Peterson built his reputation as a pianist, having secured a regular spot in 1945 playing on local radio in a regular 15-minute "sustainer." The short, unsponsored radio program featured Peterson playing a series of solo piano tunes.[5] Later in the 1940s, Johnny Holmes recruited Peterson to join his big band, a Saturday night fixture at one of Montréal's jazz clubs, the Alberta Lounge. Listeners were already familiar with his name, performance style, and even his trademark tunes from his radio spot. And as the only non-white member of the otherwise all-white band, Peterson became the star member of the band, attracting attention from critics and listeners. Peterson slowly garnered notice in jazz circles outside of Canada and through word of mouth, caught the attention of various members of JATP.[6] Although Norman Granz had heard about Peterson, it wasn't 1949 that he heard him first hand in Montréal. As the story famously goes, Granz overheard Peterson on a live radio broadcast in his taxi to the airport and demanded that the driver take him to the venue. He met

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[5] In the Smithsonian Jazz Oral History Project interview, Peterson described this short radio spot as a regular 15-minute unsponsored program. The format was simple: Peterson played a series of tunes on solo piano the titles of which were announced by a radio announcer. *Down Beat* coverage in 1950 reported that Peterson won a Ken Soble amateur contest capturing the attention of CKAC radio in Montréal where he broadcast his regular radio spot. Henry F. Whiston, "'Watch Peterson, Say Canadians,' *Down Beat,* March 10 1950, 3. An article in a Canadian magazine reports the name of the radio program: "Fifteen Minutes of Piano Rambling." Paul H. Zemke, "Hot Piano", *Maclean's Magazine,* October 15 1945, 39.

[6] A handful of isolated reviews from journals outside of Canada, including *Down Beat* and *Metronome*, confirm that Peterson's international popularity exploded especially in 1946-1947.

the young starstruck musician that night and invited him to join JATP for a concert at Carnegie Hall later that year.

Oscar Peterson is by far the most successful and famous jazz musician to have ever come from Canada and subsequently, he almost single-handedly transformed Canada's international image as a country that could produce a world-class jazz musician.[7] Subsequently, he has had a significant impact on Canada's cultural history. One of the first international critics to report on Peterson's entrance into the United States famously wrote, "For a country reputedly as unhip as Canada in the creation of musicians, a miracle has occurred. His name is Oscar Peterson."[8] A record reviewer wrote, in 1955:

> During the last five years, Canada has grown from a relatively unknown source of record talent to one of the biggest hot-beds of names outside of the United States. . . . Oscar Peterson, that near-300-pound master of the cool piano and Maynard Ferguson lead the pack. . .Oscar Peterson has developed into just about the most-recorded musician in the current jazz field.[9]

In 1962, British jazz critic Les Tomkins also took note of Peterson's potential disruption to the reputation of jazz as a primarily American musical genre when he wrote, "Those who regard jazz playing as being something peculiarly American turn a blind eye on Oscar Peterson."[10] As these writers hinted, Peterson put Canada on the map where it had previously been an unknown entity.

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[7] In the final decade of the 1990s, the international success of pianist and vocalist Diana Krall is perhaps the one example of a Canadian jazz musician who rivals the fame and popularity that Peterson achieved in the 1950s and 60s. The increasingly global nature of the jazz community and the rise of global popular music in the later twentieth-century, however, affected a shift in the nature of the jazz community, and the relationship between the musicians and their audiences.

[8] "Oscar Peterson," Series D1, 13, "Press Clippings - 194?-196?," Folder 8, Oscar Peterson fonds, Library and Archives Canada.

[9] Henry F. Whiston, "Jazz -- from Canada," *Record Whirl* (October 1955), 22.

[10] "Oscar Peterson speaking frankly in an interview with Les Tomkins," *Crescendo Magazine*, July 1962, Series D1,2, "Press Clippings - 1960-1965," Folder 8, Oscar Peterson fonds, Library and Archives Canada.

That Peterson has made his mark on Canadian cultural history is readily apparent in his treatment by Canadian jazz historians as well. John Gilmore and Mark Miller, both journalists and jazz critics, have been instrumental in documenting Canada's jazz history, much of which took place in Montréal, Peterson's hometown. In their books about Canada's jazz history, both Gilmore and Miller have taken different approaches to Peterson because of his singular status within Canada's jazz community. Gilmore is uneasy with placing Peterson up front and center in his history of the Montréal jazz scene, devoting limited space to his career. Gilmore writes:

> I have felt a responsibility to bring to public attention musicians whose lives and contributions have hitherto gone largely unrecognized. . . The careers of Bley, Ferguson, and Peterson have already been widely written about and . . . [my] concern in this book has been to place these musicians in the broader context of Montreal's jazz community.[11]

Miller, in contrast, places great importance on Peterson's career in the Canadian context. He opens his history of Canadian jazz with mention of Peterson's tremendously successful career for the reason that he "established a Canadian presence in jazz that this most-American-of-music had not seen before."[12] Miller's description of Peterson's dramatic New York debut foreshadows the book's conclusion which provides a detailed account of Peterson's early career in Canada as a precursor to his professional journey to Carnegie Hall. According to Miller, Peterson cast a long shadow of influence over the achievements of other Montréal jazz musicians during the 1940s.[13]

Peterson's experiences in the Montréal jazz community are central to his Canadian identity, particularly because of its role in his musical development. Peterson's memoir provides a vivid personal account of his early musical life, largely shaped by such factors as the immigrant population of St. Henri, a community within Montréal where he was raised. The first section of

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[11] John Gilmore, *Swinging in Paradise* (Montréal: Vehicule Press, 1989), 15.

[12] Mark Miller, *Such Melodious Racket* (Toronto: The Mercury Press, 1997), 14.

[13] Miller, *Melodious,* 242.

Peterson's memoir comments on his encounters with pianist Steep Wade and band leader Johnny Holmes, the importance of his relationship with his father Daniel Peterson, and his West Indian background.[14] The importance of personal relationships within Montréal's jazz community seems to be a widespread sentiment and not unique to Peterson. Gilmore described the close links between the city's jazz community and the social fabric of the city itself:

> In Montreal, the making of jazz has been profoundly influenced by political, social, and economic factors, many of them unique to the city and to the predominantly francophone province of Quebec in which it is situated.[15]

This inextricable link explains why Peterson had such a strong emotional bond to his birthplace and his subsequent choice to live in Canada throughout his career.

But such a decision necessitated a certain distance from the urban United States, which, as Miller points out, also had an impact on his musical outlook. Miller offers interesting perspective on how geography, particularly proximity to the U.S., played a role in Peterson's musical perspective:

> From his [Peterson's] base in Montreal, he was close enough to New York to be aware almost immediately of the latest developments but remained at some remove from the pressures to conform to any one of them.[16]

Miller's argument suggests a conscious decision on Peterson's part to take a unique path of musical interpretation; his national identity was more than a personal life choice, but had bearing on his musical perspective as well.

Moreover, nationality had a great deal to do with how he was perceived both in Canada and the United States. Richard Palmer, one of Peterson's biographers, observed that

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[14] Oscar Peterson, *A Jazz Odyssey* (New York: Continuum, 2002). On his encounters with Steep Wade (60-62); about his relationship with bandleader Johnny Holmes (38-40); on his father, Daniel Peterson (14-19).

[15] Gilmore, *Swinging,* 13.

[16] Miller, *Melodious,* 250.

> Oscar Peterson's nationality is crucial to any assessment of his career . . . it explains why Oscar's formative years as a musician went unremarked, so that when he finally appeared in the United States, he burst upon the American jazz scene with the impact of a new planet.[17]

Canadian journalists were keen to inquire about Peterson's relationship to his homeland, perhaps in response to anxieties that yet another Canadian might leave for greater opportunities abroad. From a 1950 article in the *Vancouver Sun*, one reporter wrote that:

> Oscar Peterson...reported firmly today that 'no amount of money' will ever coax him to move permanently to the United States. 'For one thing, Canada is home to me and that's important. Money isn't everything.'[18]

Less than a decade later, a Canadian journalist from the *Toronto Daily Star* inquired about why Peterson held back from moving his family to the U.S. He responded:

> Mainly because of the children. I don't like their school system down there. And I'm Canadian so I would hate to break my ties with this country. I suppose racial discrimination might have come into it way down deep, but in my job it wouldn't have affected me too much . . . Toronto is becoming a real centre of jazz.[19]

And later that year, prominent Canadian jazz critic Helen McNamara singled out Peterson's choice to remain in Canada:

> Oscar Peterson finds one drawback in world-wide fame as a jazz pianist. . . he can't spend enough time at home. . . Unlike some other Canadians who have won fame abroad, however, Oscar Peterson is still a Canadian, and he intends to go on living in Canada. . . His reputation overseas probably is rivaled among Canadian musicians only by classical pianist Glenn Gould and soprano Lois Marshall. But Peterson still feels at home nowhere except in Canada. He prefers the Canadian outlook. Above all, he prefers the Canadian education system -- and this is particularly important to him because the Petersons have five school-age children.[20]

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[17] Richard Palmer, *Oscar Peterson* (Tunbridge Wells: Hippocrene Books, 1984), 15.

[18] Clyde Gilmour, "Jazz artist won't move to the United States," *The Vancouver Sun,* November 4 1950, Series D1 "Press Clippings - 1988-1989," Box 8, Oscar Peterson fonds, Library and Archives Canada.

[19] Morris Duff, "Oscar is Now a Suburbanite," *Toronto Daily Star,* January 31 1959, "Oscar Peterson 1945-1968" Folder, Oscar Peterson Clippings Collection, Institute of Jazz Studies.

[20] Helen McNamara, "London? Tokio? He Prefers Scarboro," *The Telegram,* March 21 1959, 34.

In another Canadian publication, Peterson made a similar statement: "The world is so small it doesn't matter where you live today. This is where I like living. It's that simple."[21] Peterson's domestic life and his family loyalty surfaces strongly in these early statements and as such also became an important part of his public persona.

Invitations to move to the U.S., especially during Peterson's JATP years, were ever-present, but he rejected every offer and suggestion to leave Canada. Norman Granz, Peterson's manager and producer of JATP, suggested as much from Peterson's earliest associations with the group. In the early 1950s, Granz suggested that Peterson move to California to make international travel easier on him and his family. But as Peterson reiterated in a 1997 Smithsonian Jazz Oral History Project interview, he had firm reasons for not moving:

> I didn't want to. I love Canada. I grew up there and I'm used to the habits and the people. And I think I want to stay here. I don't know if I could get used to one season all year. In other ways I was more comfortable here.[22]

Peterson's experience in Canada - personal connections notwithstanding - was conflicted. In a country proud of its "multicultural" identity, racism was still an inescapable part of life for black Canadians throughout the twentieth century (and arguably, even today).[23] The systemic racism inflicted by Canada's governing bodies reflected a quiet acceptance among white Canadians of neophobic attitudes that played out in Canada's jazz community just as it did in the everyday lives of minority Canadians. Peterson faced challenges shaped by the social

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[21] Gerald Levitch, "The legendary Oscar Peterson creates his music in a secluded Mississauga home," *EXperience Trillium*, 29, Volume 2, Folder 16, Oscar Peterson fonds, Library and Archives Canada.

[22] Interview with John McDonough, Smithsonian Oral Jazz History Project, Part 7, Smithsonian National Museum of American History Archives Center.

[23] See, for instance, the recent debates in Toronto over police practice of "carding" and the recent decision that it violates the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. For some discussion on the topic see "Toronto police face new restrictions on carding," *CBC News*, http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/toronto/toronto-police-face-new-restrictions-on-carding-1.2621491 Accessed September 6 2014.

behavior of his fellow Canadians growing up as a double minority in Montréal because he was both anglophone as well as African Canadian.

Racism in Canada comes up as playing a formative role in Peterson's life in his memoir, biographies, and documentaries about his career. Although Peterson recalled his shock at the deep systemic racism he faced on tour in the American south in 1950, discriminatory interactions were also part of living in Canada.[24] Peterson referred to the relationship between white and black Canadians in Québec during his childhood as "polite segregation."[25] This tacet discrimination, as Peterson described it, placed many limitations on black men and women in his childhood community. Of the black men from the community of St. Henri only some, such as his father, had regular work with the Canadian Pacific Railway. In Peterson's words, ". . . if you were black, and in Montreal, if you were lucky to have a job, then you were working for the railway."[26]

The railway offered opportunities for black men during this period, but they were limited, most often yielding jobs as railway porters. The working conditions were poor, often segregating black employees in overnight accommodations, requiring long hours for low pay, and offering few opportunities for promotion - that is, until a serious labour union movement fought for it.[27] The community's discontent slowly simmered. As Peterson put it:

> Somehow, Negroes in Canada seemed in general to live peaceably (though not agreeably) with this stealthy form of oppression. They spoke quietly of being

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[24] Peterson, *A Jazz Odyssey*, 108-109. Lees' biography also contains accounts of Peterson's experiences in the southern United States in his early years on tour with JATP. Lees, *The Will to Swing*, 103-104.

[25] Sid Adilman, "Quiet Color Bar Canada's Peril: Oscar Peterson," *The Telegram*, June 12 1963, 40, Series D1,2 "Press Clippings - 1960-1965," Box 8, Oscar Peterson fonds, Library and Archives Canada.

[26] *Oscar Peterson: Music in the Key of Oscar*, DVD, directed by Sylvia Sweeney (Toronto: View, Inc., 2004).

[27] A memoir by Canadian railway porter Stanley Grizzle, *My Name's Not George* (Toronto: Umbrella Press, 1997), documents many of the challenges that African Canadian porters faced. Peterson's memoir also contains recollections of his father's experience on his weekly trip to Vancouver, British Columbia, and back to Montréal.

> refused this job and that job, but never resorted to any visible uprising or resistance to such economic segregation.[28]

The segregation that Peterson described was also reflected in the segregation of black and white jazz bands in Montréal in the early 1940s. Peterson described Montréal's two black night clubs, Rockhead's Paradise and Cafe St. Michel, as permeable social spaces, albeit selectively so. Black musicians were limited to employment at these two clubs while white musicians could seek employment at any of them, including the black clubs.[29] Peterson wrote,

> I know of no other establishment [other than Rockhead's and Cafe St. Michel] that regularly employed blacks in its bands. Moreover, when black players in the orchestras in those two clubs fell ill, they would often be replaced by white players. It was as if black musicians lived under an unwritten law: take what you're given, accept what happens, and don't ask any questions.[30]

Compared to the social tensions that often arose in response to interracial performance in the United States, there were more opportunities in Canada for black musicians in white jazz bands. Yet Peterson sometimes experienced directly-targeted discrimination, especially from certain audience members and clients. In a heavily reported incident during his tenure with the Holmes band, Peterson became the subject of scrutiny from the management of the Ritz-Carlton in Montréal.[31] The Imperial Order Daughters of the Empire booked the Holmes band for a social event at the hotel which caused controversy with the the hotel manager who forbade the band to play if Peterson played with them. When Holmes threatened to take the manager's

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[28] Peterson, *A Jazz Odyssey*, 37.

[29] Peterson, *A Jazz Odyssey,* 37. These two clubs were located the southeast corner of St. Antoine and Mountain Streets in Montréal. Unlike their African Canadian colleagues, white musicians were not limited to any particular clubs and could traverse the race divide both as audience members and as performers.

[30] Peterson, *A Jazz Odyssey,* 37-38.

[31] Peterson played with the Johnny Holmes Band from 1942 to 1947 and their relationship is an important aspect of the narrative of his life in his biographies and memoir. Lees, *The Will to Swing,* 45.

statement to the press, eventually gaining the attention of the grand regent of the Imperial Order in support, the manager relented.[32]

Peterson was not alone among Canadian jazz musicians in his experience of discrimination. Black musicians, although offered higher pay than if they played in all-black bands, reported feeling as if they were also under the watchful eye of their white employers.[33] Miller cited Alf Coward, a black jazz pianist from Sydney, Nova Scotia (on Canada's east coast), who played with a white jazz band in the 1940s. He had a similar experience as Peterson's in the Johnny Holmes Band. Coward recalled,

> Every time I went out with Emilio Pace -- to Glace Bay or New Waterford [in Nova Scotia] -- I was watched very carefully. I guess if I had moved the wrong way, there'd have been a punch or something. I *suspect* that's what would have happened. There were certain people in the audience who were watching me very carefully, because I was the only black.[34]

Peterson's experiences of discrimination in Canada, while less violent than his experiences in the United States were nevertheless damaging. As Peterson put it, "The kind of prejudice that I experienced at home here in Canada was certainly not as violent as I saw it in the United States. But that didn't make me feel any better as a human being."[35] But no matter how deeply these experiences were woven in the narrative of his life Peterson remained loyal to Canada. Part of the reason, as he stated it, was that he felt he had it better than his colleagues in the United States:

> I had better thoughts about Canada than I did about the United States. This is my country. I've always been comfortable here, I've always loved it.[36]

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[32] Gene Lees, *The Will to Swing* (Toronto: Lester & Orpen Dennys, 1988), 51-52.

[33] Miller, *Melodious,* 251-252.

[34] Miller, *Melodious,* 252.

[35] Lees, *A Will to Swing,* 59.

[36] *Oscar Peterson: Music in the Key of Oscar.*

His attachment to Canada is captured in his *Canadiana Suite,* where musical portrayals of Canada's sweeping landscape and lively urban settings are juxtaposed against a metaphorical journey on the trans-continental railway, a symbol of the challenges his father faced as a railway porter.[37] For Peterson, racial identity and nationality were deeply connected, and together played an important role in his self-perception, public image, and relationship with fellow musicians and audiences.

As someone who refused to leave Canada and take up U.S. citizenship, Peterson lacked the personal qualities that would allow him to claim insider membership to the U.S. jazz community. And although musicians and critics never outrightly denigrated Peterson because of his nationality they often mentioned it, sometimes in passing. German writer and journalist Ernest Bornemann, for instance, called Peterson "a total blank" in an article that likened Peterson's lack of substance to that of British jazz musicians:

> What's wrong with Peterson, then, is exactly what's wrong with British Jazz: here we have a group of superb technicians with nothing to say. All the great names can play in almost any style. But practically no one has anything original to say, or, if he has, he lacks the courage to say it. It's the bane of our era.[38]

Although Bornemann equally directs his criticism towards jazz of the "new era" he also implicitly suggests British musicians and Peterson have proven themselves outsiders to jazz because they have have "nothing to say." Years after this review, Amiri Baraka published his sentiments that the blues aesthetic and by extension the black aesthetic, arose from a "common psychological development. . . based on experiencing common material conditions."[39] Baraka's

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[37] This work is the subject of the fourth chapter of this dissertation.

[38] Ernest Borneman, "Oscar Peterson -- A Total Blank," Series D1, 12 "Press Clippings - 194?-196?," Box 8, Oscar Peterson fonds, Library and Archives Canada.

[39] Imamu Amiri Baraka, *Digging: the Afro-American Soul of America's Classical Music* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2009), 19.

argument, that the particularities of identity and experience associated with playing jazz are essential to assessing the material nature of a jazz performance, underlies Bornemann's argument and as we will see, emerges in other aspects of criticism against Peterson.

Peterson's nationality laid the groundwork for his perception as different, leading Lees to refer to him as an "outsider" to jazz circles.[40] Subsequently, aspects of his aesthetic, his training, and his professional decisions were judged through the lens of his "otherness," and often regarded in terms of black and white; they either contributed to a sense of his belonging or they alienated him from the jazz community. In the next section, I analyze the deeper levels of Peterson's mixed reception and the many personal and musical factors implicated in these discussions including race, genre designation, virtuosity, and Peterson's classical training. Issues surrounding nationality will emerge again in the conclusion to this discussion through a collection of concert reviews from two of Canada's foremost national newspapers, *The Globe and Mail* and *The Toronto Daily Star.* Revealing that in addition to being perceived as an outsider by critics in the United States, these reviews show that Peterson was surprisingly, lambasted by his Canadian critics as well.

Peterson's Mixed Reception

In a 1965 essay about Peterson published in *Jazz* magazine, John Mehegan attempted, as many critics did in the early 1960s, to unravel the possible reasons behind the intense criticism asserted against Peterson. Summarizing the vehement opposition to Peterson articulated by many musicians and critics:

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[40] Gene Lees, "The Best Damn Jazz Piano in the Whole Wide World," *Maclean's* 88 No. 7 (July 1975), 78, Series D1, 4 "Press Clippings - 1970-1979," Box 8, Oscar Peterson fonds, Library and Archives Canada.

> He [Peterson] plays 'white' tunes, he employs 'white' technique and he refuses to get into his proper 'hostile' bag which is the fashionable thing to do. To the dissenting elements among the younger musicians, Oscar is an NAACP cat trying to make it in a SNIC, Muslim world.[41]

This vivid analogy raises the issues of race, persona, religion, and ideology as playing a role in Peterson's marginalized status. While I will address these issues in turn, the notion of trendiness stands out in this quotation, suggesting that Peterson simply did not, in terms of both his image and his musical aesthetic, align with prevailing trends in 1950s and 60s jazz.

Foremost, Peterson's public image stood in opposition to the racial stereotypes implicit in the expectation of jazz musicians. Perhaps one of Peterson's staunchest advocates, British jazz pianist and critic Leonard Feather remarked on what he saw as the factors at play in Peterson's image as a family man. Writing in the 1960s, Feather's take on it was as follows:

> Peterson's own victimization by a system that tends to bypass the skill and subtlety of an artist with technique and finesse in favor of a lesser jazzman with glamor. The requirements for glamor in jazz too often include eccentricity, limited technical scope supposedly compensated by 'soul,' a personal background of social problems and a tendency to show up for the Wednesday matinee at midnight on Thursday . . .
>
> By the standards of the glamor-struck glossarists, Oscar's mistakes have been numerous. He is not self-taught, not a nut, a wino or a narco, was not born in poverty or the South and turns up for the 8:30 show at 8:15. He is normal as heterosexuality, as gentlemanly as John Daly. He worked hard and systematically in developing himself professionally; he is a contented husband with five of the best-raised children in Toronto. Jazzwise, an unglamorous cat in a most unglamorously northern town.[42]

According to Feather, because Peterson's image as family-oriented he was regarded as too hard-working and too "clean" to be considered "serious." Jean P. LeBlanc argued a similar point in his

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[41] John Mehegan, "Oscar Peterson: The Last Romantic," *Jazz* (June 1965), 7.

[42] Leonard Feather, "Gentleman Cat," *Nugget,* 44, "No Date" Folder, Oscar Peterson Clippings Collection, Institute of Jazz Studies. Also quoted in Gene Lees, *The Will to Swing,* 176 and 284.

1962 *Esquire* article in which he pointed out the narrow set of characteristics expected of the most-respected of jazz performers:

> To qualify among the cognoscenti as a jazzman of consequence you need (a) an active rejection of the public's interest, or preferably no public interest at all, (b) a police record, preferably for violation of the narcotics laws, (c) an utter lack of concern for beauty of sound, (d) a death certificate and/or (e) a capacity for solemnity and the conviction that jazz is a deadly serious business.[43]

LeBlanc suggested that to be considered among the jazz vanguard, a musician must embody racially-stereotyped modes of conduct. Peterson's status as outsider to the jazz community is multiply-determined, according to Feather. Trendiness, what Feather refers to as "glamor," is high in the hierarchy, but consists of several smaller-scale factors that tied into the racial stereotypes associated with the life of a professional jazz musician.

In addition to Peterson's divergence from behavioral expectations, a perceived disparity between his widespread popularity and his jazz legitimacy also inflicted critical judgements against him. In a 1968 *Jazz Journal* article Richard Palmer commented on that issue, asking why a jazz artist with so many supporters should be denigrated for being a popular artist as well:

> A major artist for nearly twenty years, he has hundreds of records to his credit, his personal appearances are invariably sell-outs, and he has repeatedly topped jazz polls on both sides of the Atlantic . . . Men as varied as Louis Armstrong, Lionel Hampton, Sonny Stitt and Ben Webster speak glowingly of his qualities as an accompanist. . . despite such accolades Peterson is still dismissed by some critics as a shallow, cocktail player who barely achieves jazz status at all.[44]

Palmer questions the tension that existed among the value of jazz readers polls, the opinions of other musicians, and the viewpoint of critics. Not surprisingly, disagreements emerge among (and likely within) the three groups, but the polarized nature of these opinions - people either loved him or hated him - is particularly notable. This range of wildly divergent opinions became the

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[43] Le Blanc, Jean P. "Jazz: The Happy Sound is Dying," *Esquire* (April 1962), 73. Series A1, 4 "Correspondence - 1945-1966," Folder 1, Oscar Peterson fonds, Library and Archives Canada.

[44] Richard Palmer, "Oscar Peterson," *Jazz Journal* 17 No. 3 (May 1968), 4.

trademark of Peterson's public image in the late 1950s and 60s. A program from a joint concert between the Oscar Peterson Trio and Ella Fitzgerald in 1961 illustrated that very point:

> Oscar Peterson is someone who arouses strong feelings. If a Gallop Poll were held tomorrow on the subject of his piano playing, one aspect of the result could be foretold with certainty - the "Don't Knows" would be next to non-existent. Either you like him a lot or you hate him. . . [45]

Noting the disparity between Peterson's widespread popular appeal and his perceived legitimacy within jazz circles the writer speculates on the cause behind the conflict:

> . . .how much of this kind of comment, I wonder, is due to any real examination of Peterson's piano playing, and how much is really a reaction to the almost unprecedented publicity he has received? If you tend to dismiss his playing, is it worth wondering whether you are really doing justice to a pianist who has consistently headed piano polls throughout the world for years.[46]

Indeed, popular appeal was a double-edged sword - a musician with widespread popularity was regarded as less appealing to certain jazz fans. Peterson was not the only artist who straddled the "popular" and "jazz" divide. Ella Fitzgerald, Nat King Cole, and Frank Sinatra, for instance, also dealt with the backlash from jazz listeners for their record-selling success, their stylistic and repertoire choices. But perhaps because these artists situated themselves firmly within the popular music market music, they faced less critique than Peterson did. In his study of Bud Powell, Guthrie P. Ramsey addresses the role that genre and style categories play in the jazz community. He writes,

> ...a good deal of cultural work is achieved by the act of stylistic labeling: it provides a social contract between music and audiences, one that conditions the listeners' expectations on many levels, particularly in the area of meaning.[47]

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[45] Souvenir Program from "An Evening with Ella Fitzgerald and the Lou Levy Quartet & The Oscar Peterson Trio with Ray Brown and Ed Thigpen," March 1961, "Oscar Peterson Clippings - 1945-1968" Folder, Oscar Peterson Clippings Collection, Institute of Jazz Studies.

[46] Souvenir Program from "An Evening with Ella Fitzgerald and the Lou Levy Quartet & The Oscar Peterson Trio with Ray Brown and Ed Thigpen," Institute of Jazz Studies.

[47] Guthrie P. Ramsey, Jr., *The Amazing Bud Powell: Black Genius, Jazz History, and the Challenge of Bebop* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2013), 8.

Peterson inadvertently implied through his marketing decisions that buying his records made a personal statement, not just one of musical preference.

Perhaps unintentionally, Peterson fueled critical rhetoric by positioning himself between the markets for popular and jazz records early in his career. Peterson and Granz directed Peterson's early albums to a mixed market, taking cues from trends in popular music while also devoting time on the live circuit to JATP and playing smaller jazz venues with the Trio. A 1952 *Down Beat* article published on the heels of the release of an early vocal album entitled *Romance*, conveyed comments from Peterson's management through statements from him and Granz:

> Granz has said to Peterson that 'you can be either a collectors' item or a buyers' interest. Or something in between.' Oscar wants that 'in between' music. He says: 'We'll try, in recordings, to satisfy both camps with a jazz side and a standard vocal side. I won't, however, let vocals overshadow my playing.'[48]

Going in a different direction than his previous work with the Trio, *Romance* plugged into a more popular sensibility than a jazz one. Although Peterson had few vocal albums, several of his recordings from the early 1950s captured a similar feel, tapping into the trend for "mood" music.[49] His albums *Nostalgic Memories* (1950), *Pastel Moods* (1952), *In a Romantic Mood* (1955) and *Soft Sands* (1956), contain primarily ballads and slow-tempo numbers. *In a Romantic Mood* and *Soft Sands* features Peterson on solo piano accompanied by string orchestra, intended to appeal to a broad audience. 1952 was also a busy year in which Peterson released several "songbook" albums and a set of albums with Fred Astaire on vocals, both collections featuring short song tunes and limited improvisation, also suiting a more diverse audience.

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[48] Ted Hallock, "'I'm Not Copying Nat,' Claims Peterson in Bop-to-Pop Move," *Down Beat*, May 7 1952, no page number, "Oscar Peterson Clippings - 1945-1968" Folder, Oscar Peterson Clippings Collection, Institute of Jazz Studies.

[49] Thanks to Dana Gooley for bringing this point to my attention.

Although *Romance* featured Peterson on piano and vocals with his Trio colleagues Herb Ellis (guitar) and Ray Brown (bass), the album consists of all ballads. Peterson's voice possesses a crooning quality reminiscent of Nat King Cole. It seems that at this point in his career, however, that Peterson, while claiming "in between" status, was also uncomfortable with it. The same *Down Beat* article opened with Peterson's statement that he "does *not* want to imitate Nat Cole...."[50]

Peterson's affiliation with JATP during this time implied that he had not completely turned his back on the jazz world. He continued to perform with JATP throughout the 1950s, releasing albums such as the "Jam Sessions" series in 1953 and recordings of small ensemble sessions with Stan Getz and Dizzy Gillespie (1953), and Roy Eldridge (1954), among others. These albums focused on Peterson's small ensemble work and improvisation and were, as a result, more oriented towards the jazz listener than his vocal and mood albums. Later in the 1950s, Peterson slowly backed away from a singing career and quietly repositioned himself in the jazz crowd, but it took awhile to shake the mantle of the popular artist.

The incompatibility of popular appeal and jazz authority had as much to do with the perceived incongruity of musical styles as it did with differences in the social influence on cultural tastes. Art historian Russell Lynes was the author of *Tastemakers* and known as "an arbiter of taste" as the editor of *Harper's* magazine during the height of Peterson's fame in the 1950s and

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[50] Ted Hallock, "'I'm Not Copying Nat,'" *Down Beat,* May 7 1952. Despite distancing himself from Cole, Peterson made a point of acknowledging him for his influence on Peterson's choice to pursue the jazz trio format, something he commented on throughout his career. From the article:

> Oscar admits that
> 1) "Nat is the end on piano. You won't find another pianists as swinging in creation. And I like Nat's, and Teddy's (Wilson) cleanliness on the instrument.;"
> 2) "Nat set up the pattern for trios, which just happens to be the correct pattern;"
> 3) "Nat sings naturally. That's really what his style amounts to. So do I. I'm not a singer. I know my limitations. I just sing the lyrics naturally as they come to me."

60s.[51] His commentary on American perceptions of class sheds light on another facet of Peterson's reception. In *Harper's*, Lynes published two articles (in 1949 and 1974) on the hierarchy of taste in the United States. In 1949, he laid out the parameters for the categories of highbrow, middlebrow, and lowbrow, naming jazz as a lowbrow pursuit, but one that Lynes perceived as non-threatening to the highbrow crowd:

> The highbrow enjoys and respects the lowbrow's art - jazz for instance - which he is likely to call a spontaneous expression of folk culture. The lowbrow is not interested, as the middlebrow is, in pre-empting any of the highbrow's function or in any way threatening to blur the lines between the serious and the frivolous. In fact he is almost completely oblivious of the highbrow unless he happens to be taken up by him - as many jazz musicians, primitive painters, and ballad writers have been - and then he is likely to be flattered, a little suspicious, and somewhat amused.
>
> A creative lowbrow like the jazz musician is a prominent citizen in his own world, and the fact that he is taken up by the highbrows has very little effect on his social standing therein. He is tolerant of the highbrow, whom he regards as somewhat odd and out-of-place in a world in which people do things and enjoy them without analyzing why or worrying about their cultural implications.[52]

Lynes' somewhat patronizing statements elucidate the perception of a distinct line of separation between social classes in the United States in the late 1940s. Lynes suggests that jazz was deemed lowbrow because of its association with America's folk traditions, showing that race and gender intersected in interesting but troubling ways. His statements, moreover, confirm that the racial divide in the United States was deeply connected to social class. In Peterson's case, his widespread appeal may have, in addition to the disagreement between popular and jazz aesthetics, hit on this complex intersection, disrupting what Lynes describes as a class divide between high and lowbrow as well as the racial division implicit in these categories.

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[51] Richard Severo, Russell Lynes, 80, an Editor and Arbiter of Taste, *New York Times*, September 16 1991, http://www.nytimes.com/1991/09/16/arts/russell-lynes-80-an-editor-and-arbiter-of-taste.html.

[52] Russell Lynes, "Highbrow, Lowbrow, Middlebrow," *Harper's Magazine* (February 1949), 23.

Decades later, jazz critic John McDonough addressed the implications that a perceived class difference might have had on Peterson's reception. He reviewed a Peterson concert at the Ravinia Jazz Festival in 1995 and noted that Peterson took a risk by trying to appeal to listeners across musical genre:

> Paradoxically, though, it has been Peterson's altitudinous [sic] technique that has brought him the most grief from jazz critics. Only in jazz, whose roots are in folk art but whose dreams are in the high-art clouds, could such an intellectual inversion occur. But there is something in this music that is profoundly suspicious of technique without rough edges; something that regards precision as the enemy of freedom, and craftsmanship as camouflage.[53]

McDonough refrained from commenting further, but his statement suggests that Peterson's mixed reception was shaped by disparities between the social perception of popular and jazz genres. Caught up in the mix, Peterson's reputation suffered as a result of this collective ambivalence. The overlapping tensions between expressions of social class and race are further set into relief upon examination of another aspect of Peterson's public image: his musical aesthetic and training.

Virtuosity, Technique, and Disparity of Values

Of all the criticisms directed towards Peterson, a frequently recurring charge was that he was essentially too good at his job. According to Peterson's most intense critics, his virtuosity and technical approach were weaknesses that obstructed musical and emotional expression, and worse, that it was a distraction to the listener. Some critics described Peterson's virtuosity as verbose, his aesthetic as an attempt to cram too many notes and musical ideas into a limited framework. Others took issue with what they perceived as the collateral damage of his rapid

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[53] John McDonough, "He Draws Fire -- and Crowds," *The Wall Street Journal*, January 11 1995, Series D1, 11 "Press Clippings - 1993-1997," Box 8, Oscar Peterson fonds, Library and Archives Canada.

finger-work resulting in a reduced capacity for expression because his speed and volume overshadowed his ideas. This point of view is well-expressed in the afore-mentioned 1961 program from a joint concert by the Oscar Peterson Trio and Ella Fitzgerald:

> The reasons for the likes and dislikes [of Peterson] are usually firmly held and clearly explained, and yet, when examined closely, they don't add up to a logical picture. "Too much technique for easy swing." " Tremendous swing made possible by fabulous technique." " He doesn't say anything." "He tries to say too much."[54]

The underlying subtext of critical discussions about Peterson's virtuosity was that he was part of a tradition established by other virtuoso jazz pianists, especially Art Tatum. Peterson's flamboyant technical style was frequently compared to Tatum's performances and although Peterson deeply admired him, his public image became inescapably overshadowed by Tatum's legacy. In the early part of his career, Peterson's virtuosity also became associated with his classical training, a point of pride that shaped public perception of his performance style.

Tatum's influence was understood in any discussion of Peterson and more often than not, Peterson was regarded as a lesser copy of his musical predecessor. Lees, acknowledging Peterson's debt to a range of pianists including Teddy Wilson, Nat King Cole and James P. Johnson, wrote that despite Peterson's wide range of pianistic influences "almost all jazz criticism has viewed Oscar as the derivation of Art Tatum."[55] And by Peterson's own account, Tatum's role in his early musical development was crucial and formative. Lees' biography and Peterson's memoir are full of anecdotes hailing Tatum as the pinnacle of pianistic artistry, from Peterson's encounter with a Tatum's iconic recording of "Tiger Rag" as a teenager[56], to their first personal encounter

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[54] Souvenir Program from "An Evening with Ella Fitzgerald and the Lou Levy Quartet & The Oscar Peterson Trio with Ray Brown and Ed Thigpen," Institute for Jazz Studies.

[55] Lees, *The Will to Swing,* 8.

[56] Peterson, *A Jazz Odyssey,* 33-34.

in the early 1950s[57], to Tatum's final illness in 1956 when Peterson reportedly rushed from a San Francisco concert to Los Angeles to see him one last time.[58] Critical coverage captures the romanticism with which their personal relationship was characterized. Leonard Feather elaborates:

> It was symbolic that when Tatum lay dying, Oscar rushed to his bedside. The passing of the foremost pianist in jazz annals left Peterson in the position of heir to the crown. If, as this writer and many musicians believe, the royal line has been passed along to the Canadian virtuoso, what are the qualities enthroned him? . . .
>
> Oscar's very eclecticism, sometimes used as a derogatory label to pin on him, is his crown. Here are embodied all the personalities of every other artist; for unlimited technique can mean unlimited style. Add good taste, stir well until swinging, and you have the greatest living jazz pianist. An aphrodisiacally [sic] potent yet fundamentally simple recipe. So simple even a critic could dig it.[59]

Feather's narrative suggests that Tatum bestowed his approval on Peterson, naming Peterson his jazz successor. Further along in the article, Feather acknowledges that in contrast to Tatum, Peterson fielded tremendous criticism, much more than Tatum ever did despite their common musical style.

Comparisons between Tatum and Peterson shed light on how critical interpretation of the "virtuoso" musical aesthetic could be fickle. Peterson had placed Tatum on a pedestal that was difficult to live up to given all of the additional factors that could have undermined his public image. A 1959 issue of *Boston Traveler* illustrates the degree to which musicians and critics elevated Tatum and in turn, the high standards it placed on Peterson:

> Tatum was a virtuoso. Sometimes I think the only one in jazz's brief history. The instrument seemed to pose no problem for him. Whatever he wanted to play he could execute with technical perfection. Now that might be reason enough to set him aside from ordinary mortals. As Oscar Peterson said with honest humility

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[57] Lees, *The Will to Swing,* 101.

[58] Lees, *The Will to Swing,* 121.

[59] Leonard Feather, "Gentleman Cat," 62.

> when I questioned him about his objections to critics rating him above Tatum: 'Tatum shouldn't have been in those polls. He should have had a special poll all to himself."[60]

Peterson obviously agreed with Tatum's legendary status in the jazz world, but he fought an uphill battle until late in his career to earn only a fraction of the accolades. Gene Wallace's 1982 article from the *New York Amsterdam News* reveals that Peterson's virtuosic style remained controversial even in the later part of his career:

> Since coming down from Canada many years ago, Peterson has been a source of controversy. It starts with his technique, which some swear is the finest since Art Tatum. Detractors, on the other hand, say his technique is a device to mask a distressing lack of originality. Further, say Peterson's critics, the man cannot play slowly. Even on ballads, he gives the impression he's dying to be off to the races. As for blues, they say, he cannot play them - particularly at very relaxed tempos.[61]

Virtuosity lies at the heart of this criticism, particularly Peterson's importation of classical training into his jazz performances. A skill commonly valued among practitioners across musical genre, virtuosity can also be judged by means of a common scale - a virtuosic performance is high in value if it provides a spectacular display of technical dexterity, emotional depth, and musical skill. Although aesthetics differ among genres, the fundamental aspects of musical virtuosity are shared: certain physical capabilities and the intellectual contributions of the performing musician. Among jazz pianists, this approach may include some or all of the following technical attributes: rapid finger speed, quick and accurate left hand stride formations, intricate block chord progressions, and chord inversions that capitalize on the pianist's technical prowess. As Peterson's reception shows, prevailing opinion among jazz musicians in the United States linked legitimacy to these aspects of performance as well as other factors including identity

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[60] John McLellan, "Peterson Rates as Piano Giant," *Boston Traveler,* October 8 1959, Series D1, 1 "Press Clippings - 1940-1959," Folder 8, Oscar Peterson fonds, Library and Archives Canada.

[61] Gene Wallace, "Listening to the Jazz Enigma Oscar Peterson," *New York Amsterdam News,* 3 July 1982, 30.

and cultural background. Such subjective assessments could range from high praise to an unappealing alternative - charges of musical repetition, derivation, or worse, imitation.

Peterson's virtuosity, while considered an offshoot of Tatum's musical approach, was also perceived in the context of his classical training. Among jazz musicians, Peterson was not unique in this regard. Many jazz pianists - Herbie Hancock, Bill Evans, and Keith Jarrett, for instance - cite classical training as their foundation. Since Peterson, some have even built a career on their cross-over appeal - Jarrett especially comes to mind.[62] But Peterson is unique from the others in two respects: he frequently borrowed from classical repertoire in his performances and he looked to the culture of Western classical performance as something for the jazz community to aspire to. In contrast to Miles Davis' negative reaction to the classical establishment (in his case, his experience at the Juilliard School of Music), Peterson embraced it and in doing so, reinforced his image as a jazz outsider.

Early in his career, Peterson's maintained strong links to his classical training, reflected in his repertoire choices. As Miller wrote in his history of Canadian jazz:

> He [Peterson] stood still further apart from many of his American contemporaries on the strength of his background and active interest in classical music, evident - for example - in his use of Chopin's *Prelude in A Major* as a basis for improvisation in his concert programs throughout the 1940s.[63]

Peterson's programs from 1945 and 1946 list works by Chopin including the Prelude in A Major, "Minute" Waltz, a piece listed simply as Chopin's "Polonaise," and Dvorak's "Humoresque."[64]

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[62] Throughout the 1980s and 1990s, Jarrett has released recordings of works by Bach (on both modern piano and harpsichord), Mozart and Shostakovich, for instance.

[63] Miller, *Melodious,* 250.

[64] Concert Program for Oscar Peterson and His Trio, Glebe Collegiate Institute Auditorium, December 5 1945, Series B1, 1, "Concert Programs and Promotional Material - 1940-1959," Box 4, Oscar Peterson fonds, Library and Archives Canada.

Perhaps not surprisingly, in a 1950 interview, Peterson named Debussy and Chopin as his favorite composers.[65]

As Peterson frequently noted, he associated his early childhood musical experiences primarily with what he referred to as "serious" music. Peterson recalled that his family's piano bench was full of classical sheet music and hymnbooks.[66] Peterson also attributed his early love of music to his childhood music instructor, Hungarian concert pianist Paul de Marky. In Peterson's description of piano lessons with de Marky, he conveyed a deep admiration for his repertoire choices.[67] When Peterson won the prestigious Glenn Gould Prize in 1993, he reflected that de Marky's "influence on the way I came to approach playing the piano was as decisive as it was profound."[68]

The significance of Peterson's classical training further played out in his own comments on musical techniques and approach to composition. A *Time* magazine article from 1953 brought attention to Peterson's continued devotion to classical repertoire as a way of maintaining his playing technique:

> After he swings out of the Tiffany this week, Oscar will return to his family in Montreal. There he will spend four to seven hours a day practicing the classics. Why the classics?
>
> "I play Chopin because he give you the reach. Scarlatti gives you the close fingering. Ravel and Debussy help you on those pretty lush harmonics. Bach gives you the counterpoint."[69]

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[65] Ralph J. Gleason, "A Piano-Man From Maple-Leaf Land," *The San Francisco Chronicle*, November 5 1950, 13, Series D1, 14, "Press Clippings - 195?-199?," Oscar Peterson fonds, Library and Archives Canada.

[66] Smithsonian Oral Jazz History Project, Part 1, Smithsonian National Museum of American History Archives Center.

[67] For Peterson's memories of his experiences with Paul de Marky, see Peterson, *A Jazz Odyssey,* 46-49.

[68] Peterson, *Odyssey,* 314.

[69] *Time Magazine*, December 28, 1953, Series D1, 1, "Press Clippings - 1940-1959," Box 8, Oscar Peterson fonds, Library and Archives Canada.

Classical repertoire was also an essential part of his early path to jazz piano performance. Recalling his first encounter at the age of thirteen with jazz repertoire, he "found at that time, that the only way I could get answers was to use the theory and solfeggio that I had learned and then do an awful lot of listening."[70] Describing his classical training as a gateway to acquiring a thorough knowledge of jazz harmony and improvisation, Peterson also felt that this method could and should be adapted for other beginning jazz musicians.

This became especially relevant when he opened a school for jazz study in Toronto in 1960. The Advanced School of Contemporary Music was one of the first to introduce formal jazz instruction to Canada. With Canadian clarinetist Phil Nimmons, Brown, and Thigpen, it welcomed students from across the world for seminars, practical instruction, and music appreciation classes in Toronto until 1963. Peterson built on his experience of crossing genres when he opened the school, suggesting that the jazz community could benefit from a method similar to classical programs of instruction. Upon opening the school Peterson elaborated on what he hoped to contribute to the jazz community through this instructional method:

> The present state of technical knowledge and instruction does not fulfill all the needs of communication in the jazz medium. . .I'm writing the first of a series of technical studies for jazz piano. It is my ambition to make a definitive technical contribution to jazz.[71]

Specifically, he argued that a technical method including "piano etudes, preludes, and sonatas" would be of benefit to students of jazz piano and the jazz community at large:

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[70] "Legendary Giant of Jazz Piano: Oscar Peterson" *Modern Keyboard Review*, April 1971, 8. Series D2, 4, "Periodicals - 1971-1973," Box 9, Oscar Peterson fonds, Library and Archives Canada.

[71] Gabriel Favoino, "The Jazz Beat," *Chicago Sun-Times*, July 16 1960, 19, 21.

> Peterson believes jazz needs it own [repertoire]. "I don't know why we don't have these works [preludes, etudes, and sonatas]. Perhaps it's because we have so many players (the Charlie Parkers) as opposed to writers (the Duke Ellingtons).[72]

Peterson's emphasis on the technical aspects of music performance and his contention that these skills could be acquired through instruction and practice was a departure from the paradigm that a jazz musician's authority accumulates from a deliberate lack of practice, discipline, and training.

Two years after the school closed in 1963, Peterson stated that his effort towards formalizing jazz instruction was a deliberate turn against the image of the jazz musician as untrained:

> We put up with standards in jazz that are intolerable in classical music. How often do you hear a really bad performance on the concert stage? How long do you think it takes to really learn an instrument so that you can go out and perform? Now how does somebody like Ornette Coleman get to learn the violin in 18 months or two years? I question this . . . the public is being fooled.[73]

Peterson's identification with the classical music tradition became as much a part of his public image as his nationality and his association with JATP. Critics and fellow musicians, in fact, began to associate Peterson with the composers that he glorified. The Argentinian jazz musician and composer Lalo Schifrin, for instance, drew parallels between the behemoths of nineteenth-century pianism and twentieth-century jazz virtuosos, including Peterson:

> In the nineteenth century, somebody said that Liszt conquered the piano and Chopin seduced it. Oscar Peterson is our Liszt and Bill Evans is our Chopin.[74]

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[72] Morris Duff, "Oscar Peterson takes a holiday," *Toronto Daily Star,* January 6 1964, "Oscar Peterson Clippings - 1945-1968" Folder, Oscar Peterson Clippings Collection, Institute of Jazz Studies.

[73] Leonard Feather, "Jazz Beat - Peterson: No Oscar For the Critics," *New York Post,* May 9 1965, "Oscar Peterson Clippings - 1945-1968" Folder, Oscar Peterson Clippings Collection, Institute of Jazz Studies.

[74] Gene Lees, "Evans: jazz piano's Chopin," *Globe and Mail,* August 3 1972, 11.

In another interview, Schifrin focused his attention on what he thought were Peterson's contributions to this new incarnation of pianistic virtuosity:

> Oscar represents a tradition lost in this century -- the virtuoso piano improviser, like Chopin, the tradition of bravura playing that started with Beethoven and reached its apotheosis with Franz Liszt. After that, the pianists began playing what was written. Oscar is true romantic in the 19th-century sense, with the addition of the 20th-century Afro-American jazz tradition. He is a top-class virtuoso.[75]

In a review of Peterson's album with the MPS record label entitled *Exclusively For My Friends*, Richard Palmer referred to Peterson's intro to "Green Dolphin Street" on *The Sound of the Trio*, as "Chopinesque."[76] Reviews of Peterson's live performances and recordings are full of references to Chopin and Liszt in particular, frequently associating formidable piano technique with Peterson's proficiency as a jazz musician.

While some listeners regarded Peterson's classical training as one of the positive attributes of his playing aesthetic, others viewed it as his downfall. The role that virtuosity played within assessments of the jazz aesthetic is central to this paradoxical judgment of Peterson's playing. One reason for this difference of opinion is that Peterson bridged the values of disparate time periods, genres, and in turn, two different sets of aesthetic values. Peterson's aspiration towards a more methodical approach to jazz performance signaled a striving for "perfection," a goal that meant two different things in the realms of classical and jazz aesthetics, respectively. In his analysis of improvisation and the "aesthetics of imperfection," Andy Hamilton drew a parallel between the dichotomy of perfection-imperfection with improvisation-composition, suggesting that certain incompatibilities inevitably result from different values encompassed within such dominant musical concepts as the work-concept and the lack thereof - as in improvisation-based

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[75] Lees, "Best Damn Jazz Piano," *Maclean's* (July 1975), Library and Archives Canada.

[76] Richard Palmer, "Exclusively for Peterson's friends," *Jazz Journal* 26 No. 7 (August 1973), 3, "Oscar Peterson Clippings - 1971-" Folder, Oscar Peterson Clippings Collection, Institute of Jazz Studies.

forms of musical performance.[77] As Hamilton explains, these dichotomies are nuanced -- improvisation balances values of perfection (the acquisition and understanding of concepts, knowledge of chord changes, styles, cultural references) as well as an overall musical aesthetic that tolerates certain imperfections (a polished playing style erodes the "rough" imperfection of the ideal jazz performance, for example). This tension between aesthetic values became an issue for Peterson in relation to his virtuosic playing style. As his image evolved in the 1950s, the critiques of Peterson took shape in response to a pattern of issues. Peterson's practiced technique and clean physical execution became associated with a lack of authenticity and what is more, blurred the line between an older style of jazz performance and his own.

Among Canadian jazz critics, the polarized view of Peterson's virtuosity was particularly pronounced, revealing that an increased complication of factors were at play in Peterson's Canadian reception. Focusing on a handful of Canada's most prominent jazz critics for the papers *The Globe and Mail, The Toronto Daily Star,* and *The Telegram,* a collision of factors arise in Canadian reviews of Peterson's performances including the idea of musical virtuosity as a display of excess and the perception of Peterson's accessibility to the Canadian media. It seems ironic to think that a Canadian reviewer might be reluctant to bestow praise on a fellow Canadian, but there was also an implicit double-standard to their judgements. Peterson was himself aware of it and observed in his memoir that "Canadians have always looked on the acceptance of anyone's endeavours by our southern neighbours as a full endorsement of their worth, even though they may themselves have entertained doubts about that person's talents."[78]

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[77]Andy Hamilton, "The Art of Improvisation and the Aesthetics of Imperfection," *British Journal of Aesthetics* 40 No. 1 (January 2000), 169.

[78] Peterson, *A Jazz Odyssey,* 65.

Critics such as Helen McNamara at the Toronto *Telegram* regarded Peterson's virtuosity as an asset, but many countered the praise with harsh censure. Two reviews from the same 1968 concert at Massey Hall in Toronto illustrate this polarization well. The day after the concert, McNamara wrote a review lauding Peterson's contribution to the concert:

> Peterson's magnificent command of his music, built on a solid technical foundation, imbued with a natural talent and genius for melodic concept and an awesome range of dynamics, were all very much in evidence. Not only is he a pianist of taste and imagination, but he can generate a background excitement that has been illustrated on several hundred recordings. .... While his prowess as a soloist was exploited in the first half, it was the role of the accompanist that he once again assumed with exciting results in the latter part of the concert, when Clark Terry, an Ellington alumnus, stepped forward to play trumpet and flugelhorn.[79]

McNamara's commendations ran the gamut, from Peterson's abilities as a soloist to an accompanist, his technique, to his tasteful musicality. But she situates Peterson's "solid technical foundation," a reference to the learned and practiced characteristics of his playing, as the touchstone of his performance abilities. Moreover, McNamara highlights Peterson's flexibility at the keyboard, his various on-stage roles and above all, his balance of melody, dynamics, imagination, and technicality.

McNamara's description strongly contrasts with many critical reviews of Peterson's playing, made evident in Patrick Scott's observations of the same concert:

> Unfortunately, his penchant for also using every technical trick at his command - in every bar of every chorus of every number -- still manifested itself as offensively as ever throughout his trio offerings. It makes little difference who Peterson's associates are - last night they happened to be Sam Jones on bass and and Bobby Durham, drums - because Peterson does not even know how to pace himself, let alone how to achieve a proper rapport with others. Nor does it matter what he plays, since it all sounds the same. Peterson may well be the only pianist alive who not only can disguise every tune he touches beyond recognition but who can make every tune ever written sound precisely the same. As a master technician he is

[79] Helen McNamara, "The Key Man in Command," *The Telegram,* May 27 1968, 43.

> more formidable than ever: as a bland, superficial, perpetual-motion, assembly-line cocktail pianist he is simply beyond compare.[80]

Again focusing on Peterson's tendency for displays of rapid dexterity, Scott's opinion of Peterson veers sharply from McNamara's. To Scott, as well as many other critics, Peterson's technical abilities were a distraction from the melody of the tunes, making his performances boring and flat.

Peterson's critics noted a downside to his speed and tendency to consolidate many ideas into one performance: damage to Peterson's image as an original, an innovator. Some made the direct connection between his seemingly facile technical approach and these negative characteristics in the same review. In a 1963 article for instance, Martin Williams described Peterson's virtuosic style, highlighting the negative side of his technical abilities:

> Quite often his dexterity seems to be a detriment. He cannot resist, it seems, obvious triplets, scales, and arpeggio runs as they occur to him, and time and again he will interrupt the perfectly respectable musical structure he has been building to run off such pianistic platitudes. . . One might almost say that Peterson's melodic vocabulary is a stockpile of clichés, that he seems to know every stock riff and lick in the history of jazz.[81]

Continuing in that vein, Williams further commented that Peterson's aesthetic crossed the boundaries of musical styles, an unappealing aspect of Peterson's playing:

> For all his dexterity, his phrasing is so deeply rooted in the earlier period that when he occasionally reaches for a Parkeresque double-timing (as on the aforementioned Joy Spring, for example) he seems a bit strained and uncomfortable.[82]

Canadian critic John Norris, in a concert review of a Peterson concert at Ryerson University in 1967, agreed with Williams' assessment that repetition was one of Peterson's musical faults and

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[80] Patrick Scott, "Peterson the Soloist: Too Little, Too Late," *Toronto Daily Star,* May 25 1968, A30.

[81] Martin Williams, *Jazz Changes* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), 273-274.

[82] Williams, *Jazz Changes*, 275.

that it belied an outdated aesthetic. Norris described Peterson as playing a style of jazz piano that had been "frozen for past 15 years":

> Because nearly all of Peterson's improvisations are based on running chord changes, there is a great deal of repetition in his playing. His solos have become a collection of his favorite cliches [sic], and these ideas are repeated over and over. Rhythmically, his playing showed little imagination. He seemed intent on getting into a hard, swinging groove, but as he likes to play on top of the beat, the end result showed little more subtlety than a good rhythm 'n' blues band. . .
>
> Peterson's playing was boring. The type of jazz piano that he developed has produced the hip cocktail music of the Nineteen Sixties [sic] (vide Ramsey Lewis, Three Sounds). Now, Peterson sounds little better (or less original) than his imitators, but is more popular than ever.[83]

From Williams' and Norris' perspective, Peterson's virtuosity was a sign of repetition rather than skill and creativity. Such opinions were echoed among other critics, for example, Patrick Scott's statement that the Trio's 1966 album *Porgy and Bess* "might just as well have come straight off an assembly line."[84] Peterson's virtuosity became associated with a style that, according to these critics, had long passed. His music was derivative, the worst possible charge against a jazz musician.

Some listeners regarded Peterson's performance style as a display of excess, a point of view overlapped with negative viewpoints on Peterson's tendency toward repetition. Hinting at the verbosity that some critics detected in his performances, a passing comment in an anonymously-authored concert review from 1965 stated that Peterson "shot his bolt on the opening selection and made everything else redundant."[85] Scott took particular issue with what he interpreted as Peterson's display of excess in a series of concert reviews published in the Canadian national newspaper, *The Globe and Mail,* in the early 1960s. These reviews reflect an

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[83] John Norris, "Peterson style frozen for past 15 years," *Globe and Mail,* February 2 1967, 11.

[84] Patrick Scott, "The New (Don't You Believe It) Oscar Peterson Trio" *Globe and Mail,* October 29 1966, 18.

[85] "Fitzgerald, Peterson, Eldridge show talents, but only briefly," *Globe and Mail,* January 22 1965, 13.

intolerance for Peterson's virtuosity because he perceived it to be a display of unnecessary extravagances. His 1962 review of a Town Tavern concert in Toronto lambasts Peterson for his musical display of "too much":

> . . .the Peterson Trio's celebrated swing has become more frenzied than fluid, more contrived than contagious - and, as far as I am concerned, more exhausting than exhilarating. Or in other words, too much.
>
> The next voice you hear will be that of the patron of the arts (Town Tavern chapter) who assured me this week that if he were a critic he could say all there was to say about the Oscar Peterson Trio in exactly two words: Too Much! Technique has its place, I guess, but I would rather not have it thrown at me by the fistful all night. I have been willing for some time now to concede that there is probably nothing Mr. Peterson cannot do with a piano - it would not even surprise me to see him pick it up and tuck it under his arm at the end of a set some night - but why he feels he has to do it all at the same time, all the time is more than I can grasp.
>
> Nor can I fathom his apparent determination to play fortissimo at least 97.5 per cent of the time, and like a would-be Roger Williams the remaining 2.5 (When the waitresses at the Town Tavern start sidling around with their fingers in their ears, unable even to hear themselves should at the customers, this is, fortissimo to end all fortissimo.)[86]

Scott maintained this point of view in a review of Peterson's appearance in Toronto the following year:

> I honestly don't think that the man who invented the grand piano...intended that all of its 88 keys should be sounded simultaneously, but Oscar Peterson obviously does, and he is doing it this week, more violently than ever, at the Friar's Tavern, and if you like it you can have it.[87]

A few months later in the same column, Scott returned to the topic of Peterson, suggesting that he learn a thing or two from jazz pianist Dave McKenna - "knowing what to leave out."[88] In yet another concert review, entitled "Prisoner of the Assembly Line," Scott gave up trying to justify

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[86] Patrick Scott, "Oh, Oscar: too much (too often, too loud)" *Globe and Mail,* February 3 1962, 11.

[87] Patrick Scott, "88 keys at once is too much" *Globe and Mail,* June 15 1963, 14.

[88] Patrick Scott, "Some tips for Oscar Peterson" *Globe and Mail,* March 11 1964, 8.

his position on Peterson and instead declared what had been obvious from his earliest reviews: Scott's animosity towards Peterson was largely irrational:

> I keep going back to hear Oscar Peterson for the same naive reason I keep getting his records: a childlike hope that one night he will lose the key to his automatic piano and be forced to play it by hand again. . .Why is it that a certain other pianist, down the road a piece, can also feature the glissando, in a manner calculated to make my hair stand on end, whereas Peterson's make me want to throw up my hands?[89]

Scott's articles are, admittedly, only one reviewer's opinion on what he perceived to be Peterson's tendency to indulge in the technical aspects of his playing. But Scott's reviews held sway among jazz audiences, reaching a readership across Canada that, perhaps limited by geography and mobility, may not have had many opportunities to hear Peterson live. While it is impossible to say to what degree of influence he had on his readers, Scott's harsh critiques, especially in contrast .... indicate that opinion within Canada was clearly as polarized as it was within the larger jazz community. Another prominent Canadian jazz critic, Alex Barris, was a regular contributor to the Toronto paper *The Telegram.* He noted one possible reason for Peterson's criticism within Canada in the early 1960s:

> Peterson lives here. He is "available." He is one of the few internationally known "names" we have living in Toronto....In the 1961-62 season, the CBC has used him exactly twice. And each time, the money he received was well below the money paid to "imported" stars.[90]

Peterson's reputation in Canada may have been damaged as a result of his easy accessibility, referring to his choice to live in Canada and his active visibility as the leading founder of the Advanced School for Contemporary Music. Barris' and Scott's columns indicate that in Canada,

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[89] Scott's fixation on the issue of excess over this period of several years suggests that he, in many ways, lacked objectivity in his perspective. Admittedly, his remarks about Peterson seem as if they were written impulsively rather than from thoughtful engagement with Peterson's playing. Patrick Scott, "Prisoner of the assembly line," *Globe and Mail,* September 23 1964, 10.

[90] Alex Barris, "Peterson pays for living in Toronto," *The Telegram*, February 22 1962, 9, Series D1,2, "Press Clippings - 1960-1965," Folder 8, Oscar Peterson fonds, Library and Archives Canada.

with a small community of jazz musicians, it is possible that some critics and listeners reached a point of saturation to Peterson's unique status in the country and as his subsequent high media exposure. Keeping in mind, of course, that there were jazz critics, such as Helen McNamara, whose perspective we have already read, who were wholly positive with respect to Peterson's international status and his trademark sound.

Conclusions

Late in his career, Peterson reflected on the obvious challenges he faced in the jazz world in a statement that addressed the issue of genre categorization as it pertained to his reception: "Certain critics seemed to abhor technique or any control of the instrument in jazz whereas it's lauded in classical music."[91] Others within the jazz community shared Peterson's opinion. Jean P. Le Blanc in the previously mentioned 1962 *Esquire* article expressed similar concerns over the disparity of standards between the classical and jazz communities:

> Let's remember too that Casals, Heifetz and Horowitz were never criticized for paying too much attention to technique; similarly the well-organized creativity of Ellington and Kenton, the genius of Peterson, the unique facility and versatility of Previn and the rest of the reviled major talents of jazz will prevail simply because talent is a form of truth. The real truths of jazz have a way of making themselves seen and heard, and will continue to do so long after the cackle of the critics has sputtered its way to an inky, inglorious coda.[92]

Le Blanc's dubious equation of "talent" and "truth" is less significant for this argument than his critical assessment of the value system among jazz listeners and critics that disparaged the technical, practiced, and organized qualities of a trained musician. Reviews and other journalistic coverage show that Peterson consistently faced this obstacle to his acceptance in the

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[91] Interview with John McDonough, Smithsonian Oral Jazz History Project, Part 9, Smithsonian National Museum of American History Archives Center.

[92] Le Blanc, Jean P. "Jazz: The Happy Sound is Dying," *Esquire* (April 1962), 144. Series A1, "Correspondence - 1945-1966," Folder 1, Oscar Peterson fonds, Library and Archives Canada.

jazz community. Although many praised him, as this chapter has shown, his reception was far from unanimously positive.

Mixed reviews were not unique to Peterson, but his reception provides a useful case study for several reasons. As the evidence presented in this chapter has shown, Peterson's nationality, musical training, public image, and status as world-class piano virtuoso intersected in ways that shed light on his reception and furthermore, the complexities of jazz criticism overall. In his review of a JATP from early in Peterson's career Ernest Bornemann, though responsible for calling Peterson "a total blank," offers crucial insight about his simultaneous success and failure as a jazz pianist:

> Reading through the notices of the concert one gets the unmistakable impression that all our critics felt the occasion to warrant some signs of praise, gratitude and appreciation -- but that no one was really sold by anything the horns or drums were doing. In this situation, Oscar was a godsend. Here was a man who obviously had all the qualities we ask of our own jazzmen: taste, technique and an unflagging sense of accuracy in his timing. Here, thank heaven and Norman Granz, was a man behind whom the British could rally to say: 'Lo, a great jazzman!' Dear, dear! All that remained to be said was: "He's really one of us -- he's a Canadian. He's not one of those noisy, raucous Americans. He's a gentleman. And so he is, but is he also a jazzman?[93]

Bornemann's perspective, like that of many others quoted in this chapter, conveys the conflicted perspective that often made it difficult for Peterson to be accepted among jazz musicians in the United States. Although Peterson was regarded as a musician who displayed desirable qualities of musicianship and creativity, he was also perceived as emphatically not from the United States, a fact that cast an inescapably negative light on opinions about his musical abilities. The ripple effect of Peterson's identity extended even further. Although he was able to execute the most sophisticated of musical ideas, he was frequently criticized for his lack of substance and authenticity, a critique that raised issues about Peterson's classical training, and his clean and

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[93] Borneman, "Oscar Peterson -- A Total Blank," Library and Archives Canada.

practiced virtuosity. Compounded, these complex and sometimes contradictory factors made it difficult for Peterson to achieve the legacy that other musicians, such as Art Tatum, had.

At the outset, this chapter set out to explore the precarious realm of critical reception, specifically, Peterson's polarized and complex reception on the part of critics. Inevitably, subjectivity on the part of each critic and within each performance assessment is at the heart of the uncertainty in a study of reception. The focus of this chapter has been especially on the negative side of Peterson's critical reception, but it is not intended to detract from the incredible success he experienced as measured by reader's polls and the accolades of his fellow musicians. Indeed, Peterson's ability to break into the jazz scene as practically no other Canadian jazz musician before him stands as a great achievement. His crucial role within JATP, as a collaborator with some of the most prominent and important jazz musician of his era continues to stand the test of time. And as I have argued in this chapter, Peterson's reception, because of the controversies surrounding his acceptance into the United States jazz community, provides a vital component to the cultural and historical role of virtuosity within it.

I still feel the need to keep exploring the as yet untouched technical possibilities of the movie and optical cameras. And, I shall still feel the need to have an over-riding and passionate concern with the music of the film.
- "Statement On My Own Work," Norman McLaren, 1974[1]

Chapter 3

Performance as Narrative in Two McLaren Animated Shorts

Canadian avant-garde filmmaker and animator Norman McLaren (1914-1987) created his experimental films at a pivotal moment in the history of experimental animation and the development of filmmaking technology.[2] During his over forty-year career at the National Film Board of Canada [NFB], he experimented with a plethora of new film techniques that opened a world of creative possibility for filmmakers and animators. McLaren embraced the evolution of techniques and technologies, adapting innovative approaches especially in the area of sound and animation. Much of McLaren's film work centered on his ingenious use of the optical soundtrack, essentially visual analogues of the film soundtrack printed onto film stock. The manipulation of the optical soundtrack allowed for almost complete control of audio-visual synchronization and became the site for McLaren's incorporation of audio and visual.[3] Optical soundtracks made sound synchronization a more straightforward endeavor than it had previously been, and McLaren took it to its limits in his experimental animated shorts.[4] As a result of McLaren's many experiments with sound he became known for composing electronic music for

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[1] Norman McLaren, "Statement on my Own Work" (Untitled St. James Press Film Book Series (Ottawa: National Film Board, 1974), 1.

[2] Born and educated in Glasgow, Scotland, McLaren's career took him to New York City and then Montréal in 1941 where he established the animation department at the National Film Board of Canada [NFB].

[3] For instance, in his 1971 animated short "Synchromy," McLaren incorporated images from his audio track directly into the film's animation, augmenting the visuals and revealing that the deep connections between sound and film were essential to his compositional process.

[4] McLaren wasn't the first to use this technique, but he was among the first to use it extensively in his films. In his "A Brief Summary of the History of Sound on Film" he acknowledges the pioneering work of the Italian futurists Ginna and Corra, the German filmmakers Oskar Fischinger and Rudolf Pfenniger, and Len Lye, the filmmaker from New Zealand. All of them dabbled with some form of the drawn-on sound technique. Norman McLaren, "A Brief Summary of the History of Sound on Film," (Montréal: National Film Board, 1952), 1-2.

his films by drawing directly onto his film's optical soundtracks in a process he documented in a short NFB documentary entitled "Pen Point Percussion."[5]

The fantastical conjunction of the visual and the auditory is a persistent theme throughout McClaren's work and became even more prominent in his films featuring live performance. Although many of his films employ his own electronic compositions as soundtrack, McLaren also used sound recordings in many of them, including two films - the focus of this chapter - set to performances by Glenn Gould and Oscar Peterson. Like their musical soundtracks, the abstract visual styles of these films differ greatly. In "Begone Dull Care" (1949) McLaren and animator Evelyn Lambart created abstract visuals by etching and painting directly onto film stock to portray the brilliant intensity of Peterson's original jazz improvisation with the Oscar Peterson Trio. McLaren created "Spheres" (1969) with animator René Jodoin, an animated short that features a series of painted circular cutouts in slowly controlled motion, coordinated in synchronization with Gould's recordings of Fugue in B-Flat Minor, Prelude in A Minor, and the Fugue in F-sharp Minor from Book One of J.S. Bach's *The Well-Tempered Clavier.* Using primary source materials from the production of these two films, I situate them within the context of McLaren's works, arguing that musical performance provided a new stimulus for his innovative approach to the visual portrayal of music.[6]

This chapter explores Gould's and Peterson's collaborations with Norman McLaren as a rare point of creative junction during their careers. This analysis serves as a complement to the

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[5] National Film Board, "Pen Point Percussion," 1951, http://www.nfb.ca/film/pen_point_percussion, last accessed January 27 2014.

[6] These archival materials include files from the Norman McLaren fonds, the Lambart family fonds, and the Glenn Gould fonds at the National Library and Archives Canada. I have also used extensive materials from the National Film Board, both from their online repository (Marcel Jean,"Norman McLaren: Overview of His Work, http://www3.nfb.ca/animation/objanim/en/filmmakers/Norman-McLaren/overview.php, last Accessed January 27 2014) as well as physical documents from their archives, requested under the Access to Information Act.

other chapters of this dissertation by taking into account the creative intersections of their musical creativity outside the traditional settings of their musical oeuvres. Despite the twenty-year gap between their collaborations, the differences in creative process, and the disparity between the aesthetics of the two animated shorts, I draw attention to the common role that the performances of Gould and Peterson played in McLaren's creative endeavors. In doing so I widen the scope of my dissertation, taking into account the artistic influence of these two pianists within Canada's cultural community. Artistic collaborations of this sort were able to flourish especially in the wake of World War II when the Canadian government allocated considerable resources to the support of such national cultural organizations as the National Film Board.[7] Although Gould and Peterson have historically been regarded as commercial solo artists, separate from the collective impulse towards a Canadian national culture, this study illuminates how they concretely and directly contributed to the Canadian creative community.

Within the context of McLaren's body of work these two projects shed light on the significance of sound synchronization as a unifying tool in the absence of characteristics typically associated with traditional narrative film. Narrowing in on a micro-level of any film, the moment of temporal alignment between audio and visual events imparts crucial information about the sound source, its implications for the film's content and in turn, the hierarchy of sight and sound. Michel Chion has referred to this powerful moment of audio-visual synchronization as synchresis: "the spontaneous and irresistible weld produced between particular auditory

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[7] Although scholars such as Mary Vipond have uncovered evidence to suggest that Canadians were in active discussion about this issue from as early as the 1920s, the Royal Commission on National Development in the Arts, Letters and Sciences (also known as the Massey Commission), led by Governor General Vincent Massey and released in 1951, has been regarded as a major moment in Canadian governance towards consolidating and supporting cultural activities within the country. Comprehensive historical and critical coverage of this historical commission may be found in Karen Finlay, *The Force of Culture: Vincent Massey and Canadian Sovereignty* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2004), Paul Litt, *The Muses, The Masses, and the Massey Commission* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1992), and Paul D. Schafer, *Aspects of Canadian Cultural Policy* (Paris: UNESCO, 1976).

phenomenon and visual phenomenon."[8] As Chion explains, synchresis occurs even if image and sound do not agree, forming "monstrous yet inevitable and irresistible agglomerations in our perception." McLaren's abstract aesthetic diverges from "representational" cinema that represents characters and situations, reconfiguring the relationship between his film's visual and aural components. His synchronization of audio and visual at specific musical moments in these two films draws attention to the soundtrack's formal qualities, placing greater importance on music and sound. In "Begone" and "Spheres," McLaren tests the limits of the syncretic moment. His engagement with the performances of Gould and Peterson reveal that the close links between sound and film were more than aesthetic fascination, but a crucial part of the film itself.

McLaren as Visual Musician

McLaren's fascination with music and the potential for animation to reflect musical events was a concern he shared with many filmmakers before him. The idea of using visual art to create readable sound data or "visual music" - to employ the term used by musicologist Richard Brown - dates back as early as 1912. The Italian Futurist filmmakers, brothers Arnaldo Ginna and Bruno Corra, penned a manifesto on the topic of drawn-on experimental animation articulating concepts that predated the projects undertaken by animators in the 1930s.[9] Almost a decade later, several German filmmakers became interested in linking sound and experimental animation.

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[8] Michel Chion, *Audio Vision: Sound on Screen*, Claudia Gorbman, trans., (New York: Columbia University, 1994), 63. See also Claudia Gorbman, *Unheard Melodies* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1987), 32. Gorbman's term, *anchrage*, borrowed from Roland Barthes, suggests the relationship between audio and visual provides an "anchor," "enforcing an interpretation of the diegesis." See also Nicholas Cook, *Analysing Musical Multimedia* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 100. Cook proposes the term "conformance" to describe this moment of synchronization.

[9] Giannalberto Bendazzi, "The Italians that Invented the Drawn-On Film Technique," *Animation Journal* 4 (1996): 70. The brothers Corra and Ginna jointly wrote the manifesto *Abstract Cinema - Chromatic Music.* Their nine corresponding films and music are thought to no longer exist, but Bendazzi argues that there is sufficient evidence to suggest that they once did.

Among them was Oskar Fischinger, who, in addition to being known for bridging the gap between commercial and experimental filmmaking, also made strides towards systematizing film sound through his experiments in film phonography.[10]

Donald Crafton's monograph on the early history of the animated film describes a period in which animators explored the physical and conceptual possibilities of the medium and its related technologies. This nascent stage was not only experimental, but also experiential, characterized by creative fits and starts involving filmmakers across Europe and in North America.[11] But by the 1930s and 1940s, major commercial film studios in the United States such as Disney, Warner Bros., and Paramount stifled some of that creative energy. Music and sound fell by the wayside of mainstream animation, treated as an auxiliary to characters and narrative. In a 1948 interview Scott Bradley, the composer for the American animated series *Tom and Jerry*, expressed frustration at this implicit hierarchy in the culture of cartoon-making:

> Only cartoons give the picture composer a chance to hear a composition of 6 to 7 minutes' length almost without interruption. I wish that our contemporary masters would take interest in cartoon work. For men like Copland, Bernstein, Britten, Walton, Kodaly, Shostakovich or Prokofiev it would be a very fruitful experience. Their contributions would certainly advance the cartoon as a genre.[12]

What Bradley perceived to be a lost musical opportunity was a challenge taken up by a small community of experimental filmmakers whose work in animation made them more than just filmmakers, but also film music composers.

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[10] Richard Brown, "The Spirit inside Each Object: John Cage, Oskar Fischinger, and "The Future of Music," *Journal of the Society of American Music* 6 (2012): 83-113.

[11] Donald Crafton, *Before Mickey: The Animated Film 1898-1928* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993), 347. Another parallel in the development of animation is the trans-Atlantic relationship between Europe and North America in this creative practice. As David Crafton notes, American studios were further ahead in terms of cultivating the links between capital investment in animation. Experimental filmmakers in Europe, such as the German animator Oskar Fishinger, relied on commercial film endeavors (animation for advertising firms) to fund their abstract and experimental works. McLaren was keenly aware of this creative exchange having trained in Scotland and emigrating to North America in the 1930s.

[12] John Winge, "Cartoons and Modern Music," *Sight and Sound* 17-18 (Autumn 1948), 136-137.

McLaren's auspicious encounter with the animated shorts by Oscar Fischinger suggests an aesthetic lineage especially apparent in McLaren's use of music.[13] He recalled early experiences as a teenager listening to the radio in his parents's living room as triggering visualizations of moving objects.[14] But it was his encounter with German filmmaker Oskar Fischinger's "Studie No. 7," a 1931 animated short set to an orchestral recording of Franz Liszt's Hungarian Rhapsody No. 5, that really captured his attention. His reaction was immediate: "That's it, film's the medium to express my feelings about music."[15] This moment, cited by many as McLaren's artistic awakening, was deeply significant and marked his early transition from visual artist to animator.[16]

Devoid of the narrative pressures characteristic of mainstream Hollywood films, music was the foil for Fischinger's imaginative visual world; only together could audio and visual capture and keep the attention of his audiences. Fischinger's interest in music developed out of his responsibilities as a filmmaker for the Electrola record label in the 1920s. By synchronizing audio and video, Fischinger's short visual novelties publicized Electrola's musical recordings to moviegoers in Berlin. Using sound-on-disc technology, Fischinger marked the disc at appropriate moments to indicate where and when visual and audio events should align ensuring that the film and music played in perfect synchronization.[17] Film scholars Robert Russett and Cecile Starr

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[13] James Lastra, *Sound Technology and the American Cinema* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000), 98.

[14] Derek Elley, "Rhythm n' Truths," in *The Canadian Film Reader,* ed. Seth Feldman and Joyce Nelson (Toronto: P. Martin Associates, 1977), 95.

[15] Terence Dobson, *The Film Work of Norman McLaren* (Eastleigh: John Libby Publishing, 2006), 32.

[16] "...there was my world and my dream on the screen! After seeing that, [British filmmaker and student at the Glasgow School of Art] Stewart McAllister and myself got together and started painting on film; we figured, we don't have a camera, so how could we do those things like Fischinger?" Elley, *The Canadian Film Reader,* 95. Also mentioned in William Moritz, *Optical Poetry: The Life and Work of Oskar Fischinger* (Indianapolis: University of Indiana Press, 2004), 30.

[17] Moritz, *Optical Poetry*, 36.

identify Fischinger's principal goal in his approach to depicting musical works visually as centering on "complete audio-visual harmony:"

> It is not that visual symbol, a line, a curve, a triangle, is equated with a note of music, indissolubly, so that, like a marriage made in heaven, the two may not be put asunder, but that Fischinger is exploring the emotional content of a musical work . . .[18]

Synchronization techniques were not possible without the appropriate technological means to support them. The optical sound track thus became the site for filmmakers to experiment with audio-visual synchronization and sound composition.

Fischinger and McLaren were part of an expansive global community of experimental filmmakers engrossed in the world of visual music - graphic art that could be used create readable sound data from optical soundtracks. Almost twenty years after the brothers Ginna and Corra wrote their manifesto, Fischinger made strides towards systematizing methods of film sound composition and around the same time in Munich, Rudolf Pfenniger also developed a drawn-on sound method. Supported by the Tobis film studio. Pfenniger's methods began as an attempt to reproduce acoustic sounds - especially the sound of the voice - by transcribing its visual imprint. The German press was particularly taken with this method of graphic transcription for its uncanny ability to re-create sounds that resembled the human voice.[19] And McLaren's fascination with sound, inspired by Fischinger's distinctive abstract animation, led him to the realm of drawn-on animation and synthetic sound-making.

Filmmaker Valliere Richard credits McLaren with having "rediscovered many of the lost animation techniques which had been introduced by the early film pioneers" and transforming

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[18] Robert Russett and Cecile Starr, eds., *Experimental Animation* (New York: Da Capo Press, 1988), 60.

[19] Thomas Y. Levin, "'Tones from out of nowhere': Rudolph Pfenninger and the Archaeology of Synthetic Sound," *Grey Room*, 12 (2003), 34.

them into newly viable creative methods.[20] As one of the first to utilize drawn-on sound and synchronized electronic soundtracks, McLaren refined the techniques of his predecessors, taking a boundless approach to film sound and doing away with pre-conceived sonic expectations of reproducible sound.[21] Without the limitations of trying to reproduce recognizable acoustic sounds, McLaren adapted their methods, transforming the optical soundtrack into an electronic musical instrument.[22] Working with a brush and India ink, he painted directly onto the optical soundtrack, resulting in a range of synthetic electronic noises (Figure 3.1).[23] Although technically elementary, freehand drawing produced a wide range of audible squeaks and sputters, its pitch and dynamics easily controlled depending on the shape and saturation of the image.[24]

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[20] Valliere T. Richard, *Norman McLaren, Manipulator of Movement* (London: Associated University Presses, 1982), 13.

[21] McLaren documented the details of the various methods to create optical soundtracks that he developed at the NFB in his *Technical Notes*, (Montréal: National Film Board of Canada, 2006), 61-81.

[22] This technology is a far cry from sound-on-disc technology that was in place when the earliest sound films were first made in which the film (without sound) was played alongside a disc that played music, requiring the projectionist to time the start of both machines. Sound-on-film technology allows the visual and audio parts to be printed on respective film reels and played simultaneously is translated to a graphical pattern, printed on film stock. When read by an optical reader, the optical soundtrack is played back as a reproduction of the original sound, and because both film reels are read simultaneously on the same machine, the issues relating to the synchronization in sound-on-disc technology are minimized.

[23] This method of musical composition is documented in the NFB short documentary, "Pen Point Percussion."

[24] William Jordon, "Norman McLaren: His Career and Techniques," *Quarterly of Films, Radio, and Television* 8 (Fall 1953), 6. McLaren describes the various visual elements that had different effects on the timbre, volume, pitch, and quality of the resulting sound. "The number of strokes to the inch controls the pitch of the note: the more, the higher the pitch; the fewer, the lower is the pitch. The size of the stroke controls the loudness: a big stroke will go "boom," a smaller stroke will give a quieter sound, and the faintest stroke will be just a little " m-m-m." A black ink is another way of making a loud sound, a mid-gray ink will make a medium sound, and a very pale ink will make a very quiet sound. The tone quality, which is the most difficult element to control, is made by the shake of the strokes. Well-rounded forms give smooth sounds; sharper or angular forms give harder, harsher sounds. Sometimes I use a brush instead of a pen to get very soft sounds. by drawing or exposing two or more patterns on the same bit of film I can create harmony and textural effects." Quoted in Richard, *Manipulator of movement*, 40.



Figure 3.1: Screen shots from the documentary, "Pen Point Percussion."

Unlike Fischinger and Pfenninger, McLaren's experimentation with the film soundtrack was driven not solely by curiosity, but to fulfill a practical necessity. McLaren's first projects requiring visual composition - several commissions in 1940 by the Guggenheim Museum curator Hilda Rebay - were instrumental in his development of visual sound. With limited film stock and capital, McLaren needed to use music that did not require costly legal permissions; drawn-on sound technique allowed him to compose original soundtracks for the films "Loops" and "Dots." The moment of creative discovery turned out to be revelatory as his approach to electronic composition very clearly relied on its visual antecedent.

> I drew a foot or two's worth of images then immediately afterwards I drew on the sound. It fascinates me to realize that I was capable of drawing on the sound without being able to hear it.[25]

Though initially inspired as a student by the conceptual relationship between sound and film, the very practice of implementing his techniques in these projects was a crucial moment of creative genesis.

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[25] *Norman McLaren: The Master's Edition* DVD, Disc 5 (Chicago: Home Vision Entertainment, 2006).

McLaren's soundtracks began as whimsical clusters of electronic sounds that interacted with abstract shapes. The visuals and the soundtrack were executed almost simultaneously and McLaren invested a great deal of effort in synchronizing the audio to the visual. He recalls that he limited himself to controlling rhythm more than pitch in "Loops" and "Dots." For both, his sound tracks have very little by way of regular rhythm, form, or repetition.[26] Rather, the sounds seem to emerge from the motion and movement of the abstract shapes on the screen. Animated loops appear to disappear into the distance, marked by electronic sounds that fade and appear in response (Figure 3.2). The Quebecois composer Robert Marcel Lepage described his reaction to these early shorts.

> I was struck by the clarity of the motifs he was trying to develop. Listening to these exercises, you immediately imagine lines and dots and verticals and loops. It's music that instantly evokes graphic values.[27]

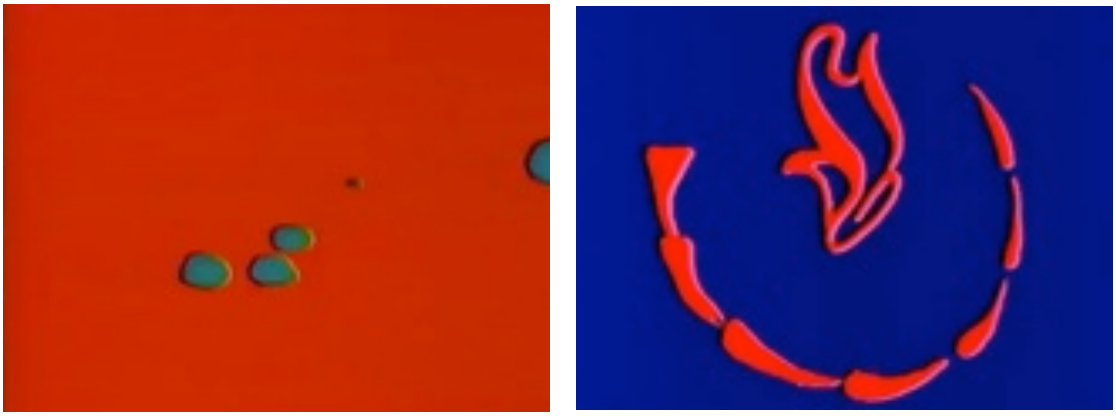


Figure 3.2: Screen shots from McLaren's "Dots" (L) and "Loops" (R)

Chief among McLaren's filmmaking achievements was his ability to control sound in

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[26] Norman McLaren, *Night Cap: The Five Faces of Norman McLaren,* Radio broadcast (Ottawa: Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, August 1977). Released as a supplement to *Norman McLaren: The Master's Edition* DVD, Disc 2.

[27] Robert Marcel Lepage interview, *Norman McLaren: The Master's Edition* DVD, Disc 5.

terms of pitch, rhythm, and volume, without the use of any recorded acoustic sound.[28] In an effort to explore the possibilities of visual sound and to acquire greater control over the elements of his electronic instrument, McLaren created another system of composition, similar to Fischinger's principle of "ornamental sound." Drawing striations with strokes of various length and width onto index cards, McLaren photographed graphic patterns onto the optical track which produced pitches and timbres when played by the reader (Figure 3.3). By photographing them onto the optical soundtrack during the filmmaking process, the filmmaker produces electronic music.[29] By developing these techniques, McLaren achieved one of his foremost goals as a filmmaker, "to control the soundtrack precisely and personally."[30] McLaren's compositional techniques facilitated the creation of animation and soundtrack together. Synchronizing objects on the screen to sound, McLaren achieved what Fischinger referred to as artistic "sovereignty" - a high degree of control on the part of the filmmaker.[31]

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[28] McLaren, *Technical Notes,* 61-81. McLaren wrote a very detailed account of his experiments and documented the results, including a manual on how to created his versions of "animated sound" in his technical notes, published in 2006 by the National Film Board.

[29] McLaren describes the method, as developed by him and Lambart, in his technical notes for "Synchromy." "Around 1950, Evelyn Lambart and I worked out a method of shooting soundtrack optically on film, without using a microphone or regular sound system, but with the use of an animation camera. We called it "animated sound", because it was shot frame by frame, onto the soundtrack area at the edge of the picture. For pitch control we used a set of 72 cards, each having stripes or striations, and each representing a semi-tone in a chromatic scale of six octaves. The more stripes the higher the note, the less stripes the deeper the note." McLaren, *Technical Notes,* 57.

[30] Terence Dobson, *The Film Works of Norman McLaren* (Eastleigh: John Libby Publishing, 2006), 108.

[31] Levin, "'Tones from out of Nowhere,'" 57.

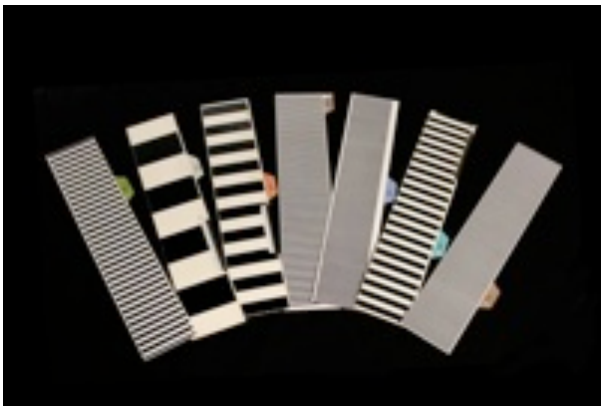


Figure 3.3: Samples of McLaren's square wave cards

McLaren's 1971 animated short, "Synchromy," is a striking example of these efforts in animated sound. In this short film, the visual aspects of the audio track are also the basis for the animation. The soundtrack consists primarily of electronic monody based on broken dominant seventh chords and the blues scale, with the occasional sonic intrusion of a contrapuntal line. The multicolored animation features blocks of color superimposed with the audio track. Other than coloration and spatial placement, McLaren made very few alterations to the animation (Figure 3.4). This film, regarded by his biographer Terence Dobson as a departure from McLaren's earlier works, is McLaren's only film in which the visuals consist of a literal translation of the audio track.[32]

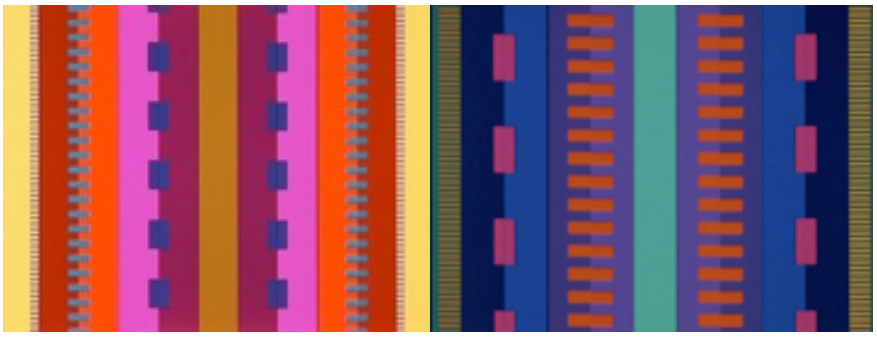


Figure 3.4: Two screen shots from McLaren's "Synchromy"

[32] Dobson, *Film work,* 208.

By incorporating images from his audio track directly into the film's animation, McLaren augmented the visuals, revealing the deep connections between sound and film in his compositional process. Referred to by Thomas Y. Levin as "the magnum opus of the synthetic sound film," "Synchromy" is considered by many to be a landmark piece of experimental animation.[33]

McLaren's keen interest in the relationship among sound, image, and movement was one that he pursued throughout his career. Dobson notes that McLaren's films fall into one of two thematic categories: films with a social message and those without.[34] Among many of McLaren's films with a social message, sound and music play a prominent role in service of narrative and character development.[35] From those without a social message, McLaren created both abstract and non-abstract films. Among his non-abstract films, McLaren maintained an acute sensitivity to sound and music. For instance, he contributed to an NFB series based on French Canadian folk songs and performed by such groups as The Four Gentlemen and the folk singer Anna Malenfant.[36] His animation evokes the stories told in the lyrics of the tunes themselves, as in "La

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[33] Levin, "'Tones from Out of Nowhere,'" 65.

[34] Following in the tradition of public service announcement films supported by the GPO Film Unit in Scotland and he National Film Board in Canada, McLaren famously created short films with a social message, such as "Keep Your Mouth Shut" (1941), "Neighbours" (1952), and "A Chairy Tale" (1957). "Keep Your Mouth Shut," released during the Second World War, relays a message about the dangers of rumor-mongering during a period of heightened political tension. The Academy Award-winning short film "Neighbours" is an allegory for the senseless nature of war and violence. The film conveys a narrative of two men who become embroiled in a conflict that devolves into violence and results in their deaths. In "A Chairy Tale" McLaren uses pixillation animation to portray a man who attempts to sit on a chair. The chair actively resists. After a considerable amount of active opposition, the man realizes that the chair will give in only if he allows the chair to sit on him first.

[35] In "Neighbours," for instance, McLaren composed his own soundtrack using sine wave cards to create optical animated sound. In "A Chairy Tale," McLaren approached sitar player Ravi Shankar to create a soundtrack to accompany his stop-motion animated visuals. McLaren's decision to approach Shankar was influenced by a desire to portray the universality of his message of cultural and political harmony. McLaren wanted "a kind of international music" that emphasized rhythm what he believed to be the "the most inter-cultural aspect of music." Dobson, *Film Work*, 237.

[36] Some of McLaren's earlier films are depictions of characters and stories narrated in French folk songs in a series entitled *Chants Populaires*. They include "Alouette" (1944), "C'est L'Aviron" (1944), "La Poulette Grise" (1947), "Le Merle" (1957)," "La Haut Sur les Montagnes" (1981).

Poulette Grise" and "Le Merle."[37] Whether he used his own compositions or worked with a musician or composer, McLaren's musical decisions were deliberate, chosen to reinforce an on-screen event or an emotion that could be captured on film. Whether creating his own soundtracks or using pre-recorded music, McLaren was guided by his ambition to create films that were greater than the sum of their audio and visual parts.

The most significant contribution McLaren made to experimental filmmaking came out of his innovative and resourceful approach to the audio-visual connection. While European filmmakers had experimented with the relationship between the two throughout the 1920s and 30s, McLaren took the spirit of experimentation to a different level, leaving a body of work that demonstrated a range of techniques and approaches. This approach set him apart from his colleagues, many of whom were employed by North American film studios and forced to balance creative aspirations with corporate goals and mass appeal. In large part because of the technological developments and the support of the NFB, McLaren thrived creatively through his explorations of film and sound.

Virtuosity in Two Animated Shorts

Without characters, a conflict, or a plot, abstract film lacks the major pillars of film music analysis. Film music research methodology has traditionally taken as its basis that music plays a supportive role to these central filmic elements. Claudia Gorbman, for instance, proposes a perspective on film music grounded in the audio-visual experience, arguing for its consideration not as pure music (to use her term for non-film music) but within "the narrative context, the

[37] "La Poulette Grise" (1947) features pastel animation that visually accompanies Anna Malenfant's performance of a French folk lullaby. Available on the NFB website: http://www.nfb.ca/film/la_poulette_grise/, last accessed December 9 2012. In "Le Merle" (1957) McLaren depicts the eponymous blackbird that loses a body part in each verse, both in the fantastical lyrics of the traditional Quebecois tune and on screen. Available on the NFB website: http://www.onf.ca/film/le_merle, last accessed December 9 2012.

interrelations between music and the rest of the film's system." These contexts, in turn, "determine the effectiveness of film music."[38] The very notion of diegetic music relies on the existence of a scene, a setting, and by extension, a plot or narrative. The concept of visual/aural counterpoint in turn, relies on the assumption that one of those elements is misaligned. An approach to abstract film must take exception to these guidelines. In the absence of any of these signifiers most commonly found in commercial films, the abstract film relies on shape, color, and movement to maintain audience attention.

Even without a conventional narrative, however, "Begone" and "Spheres" retain features relevant to a narrative function. Both films have a sense of unity and temporal linearity, suggested by their visual elements and imparted by their music. In this examination, I explore the disruption that results from a lack of traditional narrative and the role that music plays in fulfilling that absence. Musical form, spatiality, and synchronization inform one another as they converge in the audio and video of "Begone" and "Spheres." Conventional film music theory implies a hierarchical relationship between audio and video that privileges visual narrative elements, yet in these films, we witness a collapse of this directional relationship. Clark Farmer argues that abstract filmmakers, like abstract artists, have adopted music as a model and guiding metaphor.[39] McLaren excelled in this area, employing music as a metaphor that unfolds visually in his approach to both of these films. Although abstract film lacks the traditional features of conventional film as I've pointed out, the viewer nonetheless experiences a sense of linear temporality in these films, emphasized by McLaren's attention to musical events. Both animated shorts differ in visual style, but the importance of musical form takes precedence in both. Their

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[38] Claudia Gorbman, "Narrative Film Music," *Yale French Studies Journal* 60 (1980), 184.

[39] Clark Farmer, "Every Beautiful Sound Also Creates an Equally Beautiful Picture: Color Music in Walt Disney's Fantasia," in *Lowering the Boom,* ed. Jay Beck and Tony Grajeda (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2008), 184.

process of creation demonstrates McLaren's "overriding and passionate concern for the music of the film."[40]

McLaren's process of merging audio and visual required a careful negotiation to balance both, each in service of the other. The order of McLaren's working methods - whether he began with sound or visuals - varied depending on the film, but in terms of the final product, the order of composition is inconsequential.[41] His partnership with Oscar Peterson yielded an interactive process in which McLaren was invited into a collaborative space with the Oscar Peterson Trio while they recorded the soundtrack. In response to their improvisations, McLaren made suggestions based on what would work with the visuals he had in mind. Later, McLaren and Lambart worked with the recordings in their film studio. In contrast to his collaboration with Peterson, McLaren's work with Gould during the creation of the visuals for "Spheres" was less interactive. McLaren and Gould agreed to use Gould's Columbia Recordings of the *Well-Tempered Clavier* mainly because Gould was uncertain that he could maintain accurate enough timing if he re-recorded the pieces. They instead agreed to curate three recordings to correspond with McLaren's animation from over twenty years earlier and edit them as necessary.

McLaren was keenly aware of the challenge he faced as a filmmaker: to create compelling visuals that could maintain ab audience's attention without the benefit of conventional narrative elements. In 1975 McLaren discussed his perspective on the art of balancing an abstract aesthetic within an extended film:

> Many years ago I was confronted with a problem regarding abstract film visuals. It is relatively easy to make a one or two minute abstract film that will hang together and be a unity. But with an eight or ten minute abstraction, it is much more difficult. One runs the risk of creating either too much monotony, or too much

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[40] McLaren, "Statement on my Own Work," 1.

[41] *The Art of Glenn Gould*, "Take Fifteen," Interview with Norman McLaren, radio broadcast, August 24 1969, AIN 690824-8, CBC Radio Archive.

> diversity. Some kind of format or structure seemed necessary to vary the uniformity or to discipline the variety. I found that some of the forms which music has evolved (to solve the same problem) lent themselves to abstract visuals.[42]

If film provided a medium to express McLaren's feelings about music, music, in turn, allowed him to address one of the major challenges he faced as a filmmaker. To McLaren, music provided what Roland Barthes might have referred to as the functional aspects of the film's structure. According to the same system of narrative analysis, McLaren's abstract visuals, void of explicit information about characters or plot events, are the indices and informants, the signifiers of mood and situational context for the visual action rather than players in the narrative action.[43] In many of McLaren's films, film and music are mutually dependent, contributing to one another to create a coherent whole.

"Begone Dull Care" and Visual Improvisation

Begone, old Care, and I prethee be gone from me,
for Ifaith, old Care, thee and I shall never agree[44]

"Begone Dull Care" (1949) remains one of McLaren's most celebrated films, having received international accolades and in 2005, honored as a recognized Masterwork by the Audio Video Preservation Trust of Canada. It might also be considered one of McLaren's most inventive films in terms of its genesis and technical execution. Notably, his collaboration with Peterson was the only time he partnered with a musician to record the soundtrack *before* creating the accompanying visuals. The process clearly presented some difficulties for both artists, while it

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[42] McLaren in response to Ivan Stadtrucker questionnaire, March 1975, National Film Board Archives, McLaren files. 1184 D112, 5. Quoted in Dobson, *Film work*, 205-6.

[43] Barthes provides extensive discussion of these terms in "An Introduction to the Structural Analysis of Narrative," Lionel Duisit, trans., *New Literary History* 6 (1975), 237-272.

[44] John Playford, *The Musical Companion* (London: W Godbid, 1686), 13.

also opened up creative opportunities. Beyond the challenges that McLaren and Peterson faced in order to achieve satisfactory results for both musician and filmmaker, an analysis of this film renders salient the elements that made it both musically and visually successful.

As with many of his films, McLaren's idea for "Begone" arose from his experience listening to music, in this case, recordings by the Oscar Peterson Trio. Hearing that Peterson was performing in Montréal (where McLaren also worked), he went to meet him and proposed the idea of collaborating on a film. McLaren recalled the events that followed.

> The next day he and his two musicians came to the National Film Board and I showed them "Dots," "Loops," and "Stars and Stripes."
>
> When I asked him when he wanted to start to work for me, he replied: Immediately of course. So we went back to the club, which is empty during the day time, and laid down the broad lines of his work.[45]

Their experience, though creatively fruitful, required dialogue and a great deal of negotiation throughout. Several weeks after their initial meeting, McLaren and the Peterson Trio met at a studio to record the soundtrack. Working within strict budgetary restrictions, McLaren requested that Peterson refrain from using any recognizable themes in his performance.[46] This first meeting presented McLaren with some unanticipated challenges.

> ...in the first run through I scarcely recognized what we had worked out because of the fact that he improvises all the time. Every time they rehearsed it, he improvised something new. And the new things get incorporated. And the whole shifts a little bit. Some of the new things he'd done were better than our original thing, but many of the things he had changed were not as good for me. We spent the first hour of the recording session trying to partly get it back to its original shape, while preserving the *good*, new things he had improvised. That was a good example of the cooperation, the give and take, between the composer and the person who's doing the picture.[47]

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[45] Quoted in Dobson, *Film Work*, 203. "Interview", Norman McLaren, exhibition and films (Edinburgh: Scottish Arts Council, 1977), 24.

[46] Quoted in Dobson, *Film Work*, 203.

[47] Maynard Collins, *Norman McClaren* (Ottawa: Canadian Film Institute, 1976), 76-77.

Their encounter was clearly an unexpected process of intense discussion and compromise, an understandable surprise considering McLaren was used to composing his own music or using pre-recorded music and sounds. McLaren describes a sense of disorientation in the context of Peterson's constantly changing soundtrack, yet his recollection discloses a central concern with the unity of the work. When McLaren describes the "new things" as affecting a shift in "the whole," it becomes clear that a sense of unity and form was important even at an early creative stage. Though their decisions required some compromise, McLaren came to regard musical improvisation as full of creative potential from the perspective of the filmmaker. He recalled his collaboration with Peterson as follows:

> We spent four days together working out the music. We decided to use his own themes. He has a terribly prolific mind, full of invention....So we shaped it, building up crescendos here and making the music thin there, cutting out the piano here and just having drums there. I made many suggestions. He would always pick them up and provide several examples of what I had suggested. He had a back of an envelope on the piano and he would occasionally write down the music. We went through the film in four days.
>
> I was very happy because I felt not only had he given me pictures and images to create a movement, but he'd left me leeway to be free to do anything. He'd have a passage where I could treat it this way or that way or any other way... [48]

The labor-intensive collaborative process, after much feedback, worked out to the benefit of the final film. McLaren quickly noted his reflections in his technical notebook after the film was released, mentioning exchange and its implications on the audio to visual translation. Fondly recalling the collaboration, he wrote:

> There was much give-and-take between us, in the sense that Peterson often did things on the piano that for me gave rise to new visual ideas; on the other hand, I had already certain visual ideas which dictated that he do certain things in the

[48] Collins, *McClaren*, 76-77.

> music. From his abundant improvisation I was able to select from and arrange ideas that would inspire us...[49]

Music, generated by way of dialogue and active collaboration, expanded the possibilities of McLaren's vision for the film. What seemed at first to be a limiting factor in the creative process, turned out to provide McLaren an increased freedom to pursue new techniques in the film studio.

Previous accounts of "Begone" have provided cursory descriptions of the short film. McLaren's biographer Maynard Collins described the film as it emerges from the tempo and style of the music.

> To the ragtime, blues, and boogie-woogie of the jazz trio, the restless lines, always moving, accompany, interpret and counterpoint the rhythms and meanings of the music.[50]

Collins's account of McLaren's visual interpretation of Peterson's ebullient and energetic improvisation demonstrates some of the difficulty in describing a primarily visual and aural experience of abstract animation. In adapting Peterson's original musical, however, McLaren's creative decisions offer insight into the musical elements that guided the filmmaking process, and the features he sought to underscore.

The Peterson Trio's performance was the first component of the creative project, after which McLaren and his associate, Evelyn Lambart, navigated the animation process. In their Montréal film studio, McLaren and Lambart made many attempts to create abstract visuals that suited the music. Although McLaren had planned the broad sequence of musical events before recording the music, the animation was not as carefully planned. McLaren and Lambart very quickly diverged from the cel animation methods typical of traditional mainstream animation

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[49] McLaren, *Technical Notes*, 5.

[50] Collins, *Norman McClaren,* 15.

and instead painted directly onto 35mm film stock, creating long sequences of frameless animation.[51] Subsequently, rather than create a scene with subjects and objects atop a stationary background image as in traditional cartoons, McLaren and Lambart filled the entire visual space with color and textures that, when traveling through the projector, creates a sense of constant upward motion. The film's visual frame is thus filled with colors, shapes, and patterns achieved by painting and scratching the surface of the film stock (Figure 3.5).



Figure 3.5:
Evelyn Lambart and Norman McLaren

Two years before "Begone," in 1947 McLaren created an abstract animated short, "Fiddle-De-Dee," that also used frameless animation and was, at least in terms of visual aesthetic and musical form, a precursor to "Begone." The film combined frameless animation with cel animation to a pre-recorded tune performed by the violinist Eugène Desormaux.[52] The frameless technique for "Fiddle" has less variety of texture and color than in "Begone," and more cel by cel

[51] In cel animation, the artist draws the same subject or object on each frame. To simulate motion, the artist must draw each subsequent figure as slightly shifted from the image before it. When the cels are photographed in sequence and projected at 24 frames a second, the subject or object appears to move. Traditional animation, in this form, capitalizes on the persistence of visual perception, the same principle that explains why a flipbook or a kineoscope can simulate motion.

[52] See McLaren, *The Master's Edition*, Disc 2.

animation, overlaid onto the textured background. McLaren developed a technique for "Fiddle" that allowed him to synchronize visual and musical moments in a way that highlighted its musical phrases and sections. As McLaren recalled in his technical notes,

> ...the beats, phrases and sentences of the music had been measured. These measurements were transferred to the film, as small numbers in the sprocket-hole area of the film.[53]

By marking the phrases directly onto the film, McLaren precisely timed the entrance of objects or changes in the music. In doing so, he punctuated them, emphasizing its visual and musical form. This technique, as well as the principle of frameless animation, carried over into his creation of "Begone."

The process of creating "Begone" was slightly different than "Fiddle." In their Montréal studio, McLaren and Lambart used tools ranging from brushes and paint to dust and variously-textured items. Many of the visual details - textures and scratch marks - were serendipitous effects. McLaren's technical notes provide insight into the nature of their filmmaking activities.

> We applied the dyes with big and little brushes, with stipple brushes, with sprayers, with finely crumpled paper, and with cloths of various textures. We pressed dry textured fabrics into washes of still wet dye. Netting, mesh and fine lace were stretched out tightly in various ways against the celluloid, to act as stencils when dye was sprayed on the film. Different types of dust were sprinkled on wet dye, which formed circles as it recoiled from each dust speck. We found a black opaque paint which, as it dried, created a crackle pattern. And so on. ...
>
> In the still other sections, painting with a full brush of wet dye was applied as the films moved through the gate of a moviola, the brush being moved to and fro, up and down, or pressed in and out, from its base to its tip, in rhythm to the music, which was run interlocked in the sound-gate of the moviola.[54]

Creating "Begone" required improvisation as their materials often reacted unpredictably once applied to the film stock. In an interview, Lambart recalled aspects of the creative process.

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[53] McLaren, *Technical Notes*, 23.

[54] McLaren, *Technical Notes*, 6.

> At one point we were terribly frustrated because of the dust in the room. It clung to the wet paint before it could dry. Then McLaren noticed that the dust itself created interesting patterns, so we started using it, stamping it on the floor to create additional dust, even waving the wet strip out the window. He found the projector scratched the film annoyingly as it was run through, then used this scratching to create an additional pattern. The black paint we used cracked as it dried; this became another texture.[55]

But the filmmaking process was not chaotic as these accounts imply. McLaren paid a great deal of attention to the phrase by phrase organization as well as the larger-scale organization of the almost eight-minute film. McLaren conceived of "Begone" as having three parts, ABA, with both A sections at a fast tempo and the B section, a slow-tempo ballad. Accompanied by Peterson's faster improvisations, the first and third parts of the film contain, correspondingly, faster-moving animation. To heighten the depth perspective of the two-dimensional on-screen image, McLaren and Lambart painted and etched on both sides of the film. In some sections, the double-sided use of film also contributes to the visual interest by supporting different rates of change and creating a simultaneous but varying perception of time and motion. McLaren and Lambart also painted or drew objects in individual cells in order to punctuate a chord or sharply attacked note, resulting in an object or several objects in motion across the continuous frameless animation. These techniques, sometimes utilized simultaneously, create a sense of constant motion, imparting a visual liveliness that matches the vitality of the Peterson Trio's upbeat boogie-woogie improvisation.

The second part of the film, by contrast, is slower in tempo and more visually sparse than the first and third parts. There, McLaren and Lambart used 35mm black film (exposed film stock), etching a series of lines into it that, in their visual stillness, mimic the measured attack of the piano and bass parts. While much this section features frameless animation, McLaren and

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[55] Ernest Callenback, "The Craft of Norman McLaren," *Film Quarterly* 16 (Winter 1962-3), 17.

Lambart capitalized on the visual theme of vertical lines on the screen, using their lingering presence to create a sense of spatial depth by etching thicker lines to depict close proximity to the viewer and thinner lines to make them appear further away (Figure 3.6).

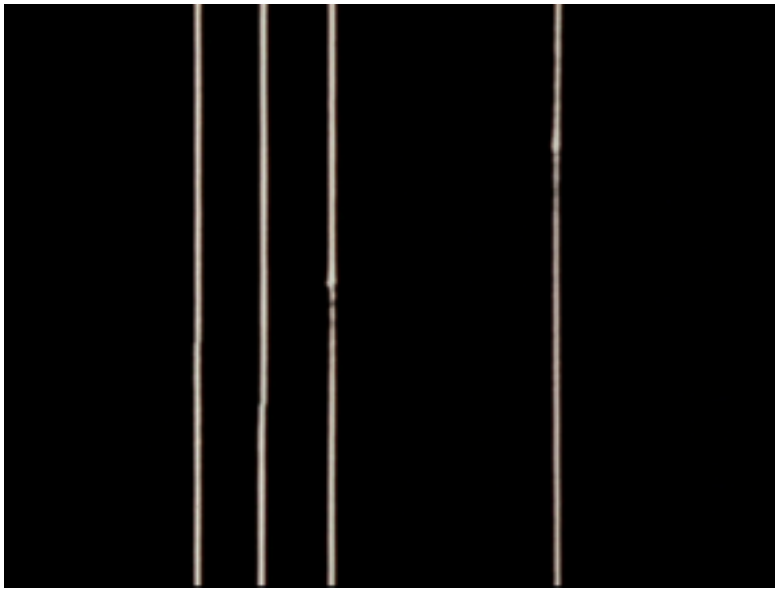


Figure 3.6:
From Second (B) Section of "Begone Dull Care"

In addition to the larger scale form imparted on the film by the musical structure, McLaren implemented a system adapted from "Fiddle-Dee-Dee" that ensured the alignment of visual and smaller-scale musical events. After the soundtrack was transferred to the film, McLaren marked the optical track by phrase, allowing him and Lambart to see where to emphasize musical moments:

> ...we tended to treat the visuals in metrical lengths of textured patterns corresponding to the paragraphs and sentences of the music. However, sudden musical accents or short phrases were later emphasized by additional painting or engraving, in which case the actual frames of the film were taken into account.[56]

Using these methods for "Begone" McLaren and Lambart invoked visual changes (in terms of color, pattern, and texture) in time to changes in Peterson's musical phrasing. As McLaren

[56] McLaren, *Technical Notes,* 6.

described, notes are sometimes accompanied by objects or a flash frames in a contrasting color or texture.

The fidelity of sight to sound was of utmost importance to McLaren, evidence of which can be gleaned from a piece of correspondence with Lambart. As well as being professional associates, Lambart and McLaren were also good friends and perhaps because of their closeness, their relationship thrived on active discussion and debate. Lambart confessed that in their working relationship she "questioned everything."[57] No doubt much of the outcome in this film happened as a result of their many discussions and joint decisions. Providing a rare window into their working relationship, a July 1950 letter from McLaren to Lambart contains recollections of audience feedback to the L.A. screening of "Begone." In addition to notes about his preferred materials and equipment, McLaren also enclosed some candid thoughts on how they might improve the film:

> I have regretted that the black crackle section had not continued to about twice its present length (that is, to the end of the musical phrase, instead of stopping halfway thru it as at present). The golden stuff that follows it,[sic] is a let-down, which only picks up when the golden turns to a heavy brown with an emphatic net pattern. If you feel at all strongly about this too, you might sometime make such a replacement; tho [sic] just if it does not involve too much trouble.[58]

Referring to beginning of the third part of the film (second A section), the short (as it currently exists on the McLaren Master's edition Box Set from the NFB) unfolds as McLaren describes it, suggesting that Lambart did not revise it.

Beginning with the phrase in the melody of Peterson's solo [6:06] the black crackled paint fills the visual space. As McLaren describes, the phrase does not end until 6:13, yet the animation

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[57] "Evelyn Lambart Interview," Interview conducted by Sam Kula, audio, ISN 327405, Lambart Family fonds, Library and Archives Canada.

[58] Undated letter from Norman McLaren to Evelyn Lambart, Volume 2, Folder 4, "Not Dated Letters," Lambart Family Fonds, Library and Archives Canada.

changes early [at 6:10] from black crackled paint to a splattered orange section, what McLaren refers to as "the golden stuff." Though the difference between the appearance of this new visual pattern is mere seconds, McLaren's obvious discontent with the visual disruption to the film's unity points to the broader goals of the work as an audio-visual composition. McLaren's comments about this perceived incongruity signal his attention towards formal visual elements and its correspondence with sound. McLaren's comments about his first meetings with Peterson indicate that McLaren was concerned with form and its relationship to sound when he wrote that "I knew what I wanted, so many seconds for the title, and three parts of which the first was to be medium fast, the second very slow and the third very fast."[59] Though McLaren's technical procedures required flexibility around the musical and filmmaking process, he nevertheless went into the project with a distinct idea of the broad organization of the work, and thus how he would approach its musical and visual characteristics.

McLaren learned early in his career that changes in musical range, phrase, or dynamics could initiate shifts in accompanying film and allow him to better hold the viewer's attention in the absence of a protagonist or traditional narrative. Very clearly drawing on the influence of Oskar Fischinger's music-centered works, McLaren leads the viewer through a musical and visual structure that serves as a form of narrative even in the absence of characters and conflict.[60] Though created many years after "Begone," he relied on some of the the same principles in his collaboration with Gould for the animated short, "Spheres."

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[59] Quoted in Dobson, *Film Work*, 203. "Interview", Norman McLaren, exhibition and films (Edinburgh: Scottish Arts Council, 1977), 24.

[60] Fischinger, in his animated short "Optical Poem", for instance, uses a single geometric motif - a two-dimensional circle cut-out - as a recurring visual theme. In order to avoid a visually monotonous film, Fischinger changed the viewer's perspective of the circles, marked aurally by changes in musical theme. In one section for instance, the viewer sees paper cutouts of circles falling towards a flat surface. The spatial perspective changes at the start of the next musical phrase to a rotating mobile of cutout circles that emphasizes three-dimensional space featuring constant movement rather than motion towards a static destination as in the previous section.

"Spheres" and Animated Counterpoint

Although McLaren's partnership with Gould in "Spheres" was less of an active collaboration than in "Begone Dull Care," the guiding principles of form, unity, and audio/visual connection were still crucially important to McLaren's creative approach. Two conflicting stories exist about the initial idea for the partnership. One account suggests that Gould invited McLaren to contribute a visual component to audio recordings of his version of the *Well-Tempered Clavier* while in the planning stages of his CBC television program, *The Well-Tempered Listener*.[61] McLaren's version of the account was that he revisited the film - the visuals had been created in 1948 along with the NFB animator René Jodoin - soon after purchasing Gould's recording of the *Well-Tempered Clavier.* McLaren experimented with the tracks from the album while watching the film and, pleasantly surprised at the outcome, contacted Gould for his input.[62]

The different recollections about how the pairing came about are inconsequential to the way that the film and the soundtrack came together. The visuals for "Spheres" in 1948 were originally created as a small part of the short animated film "A Phantasy." Initially, the animated short was set to original music, composed after the visuals had been created, by NFB composer Maurice Blackburn performed by Bert Niosi on saxophone with electronic musical accompaniment. McLaren quickly put the film aside after its initial completion, dissatisfied until twenty years later, when he saw potential in pairing the film with Gould's recordings.

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[61] The transcript for Gould's interview with McLaren is printed in the *GlennGould* journal 8, No. 1, (Spring 2002), 13-19. The editorial notes preceding the transcript indicate that Gould asked McLaren to contribute something for his 1970 television program, "The Well-Tempered Listener," the audio of which is available online. Glenn Gould, "The Well-Tempered Listener, http://www.cbc.ca/player/Radio/Glenn+Gould+-+The+CBC+Legacy/Audio/1970s/ID/2134483429/, last accessed September 6 2014.

[62] McLaren, *Technical Notes,* 56.

"Spheres" is visually abstract with no narrative or lyrics, and like many of McLaren's films, such as "Dots" (1940), "Loops" (1940), "Hen Hop" (1942), and "Mosaic" (1965), features a theme that Gould described as "object takeover." In using this term, Gould referred to McLaren's films that emphasize the movement and interaction of inanimate objects.[63] Though the object and subject of the film might sometimes take on anthropomorphic characteristics (as in the hen in "Hen Hop," for instance), McLaren highlights their object-ness, foregrounding the asynchronous status of part and whole. A hen, for instance, might break into its constituent parts: a beak, a head, a neck, a body, and feet, thereby bringing attention to the parts rather than its status as a bird. In "Spheres," the slow, yet measured movement of the spheres and their relationship to one another similarly provide a clear sense of a relationship between parts and whole. The spheres are coordinated in terms of the rhythm and timing of their movements, yet each object moves independently, sometimes on its own, sometimes in tandem with a group, and sometimes altogether.

Movement and specifically, constant motion, was a central visual feature of this animated short from its earliest stages. The short consists of a series of circular cutouts that move across the screen in a way that Maynard Collins describes as "balletic," that is, controlled and choreographed to the musical tempo and synchronized to musical events.[64] McLaren discussed the role of movement and motion in evoking musical features in his films.

> I see movement rather than specific images. My whole mind thinks in terms of movement. Movement is my basic language. It's the movement in the music that captures my imagination first - other things come second. The images, the particular shapes, are relatively unimportant. Still important, but relatively unimportant.[65]

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[63] *The Art of Glenn Gould*, "Take Fifteen," CBC Radio Archive.

[64] Collins, *Norman McLaren,* 78.

[65] Collins, *Norman McLaren*, 77.

In the creation of "Spheres," the notion of movement and motion again, became an important characteristic. McLaren and Jodoin deliberately set a technical goal when they created the visuals for "Spheres." As McLaren remembers it,

> René Jodoin and I set ourselves the exercise and goal of making an abstract film which would use only sphere-like circles whose animation would be restricted to constant motion.
>
> Accelerations and decelerations were so much a part of the motion and interest of abstract as well as figurative animated films that we wished to discipline ourselves with the challenge of constancy. The greatest risk we could run would be that of monotony. We would attempt to compensate for this by gradually increasing the number of spheres, and the paths they followed; but here again we limited ourselves to straight-line, horizontal, vertical, diagonal and circular paths movement.[66]

McLaren and Jodoin used frame-by-frame animation of the cutouts, meticulously arranging the spheres so that their collective motion maintained balance and symmetry (Figure 3.7).[67] Their attention however, to the idea of constant motion had a downside and McLaren was, ultimately, dissatisfied with the film.

> On completion of the picture, we considered the film as a whole (though perhaps calming to the nerves) to be visually too monotonous for release. We tried accompanying it with many sorts of existing disc music, but none seemed to fit, none seemed even to hint at an appropriate kind of soundtrack, and I didn't have the effrontery to ask a composer to write a special score, for I considered he would find the picture too uninspiring.[68]

By using acceleration, deceleration, the illusion of spatial depth, and a variety of directional motion across the two-dimensional plane, McLaren put special effort into maintaining visual interest. Yet McLaren acknowledges that he succumbed to monotony - one of the challenges that

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[66] McLaren, *Technical Notes,* 55.

[67] In this style of animation, the filmmaker photographs objects to create the illusion of motion. Each photograph yields one frame of animation. In this case, Jodoin and McLaren animated a set of flat metal circle cutouts that they painted to resemble three-dimensional spheres.

[68] McLaren, *Technical Notes,* 56.

he articulated in the aforementioned 1975 NFB questionnaire. On this matter, McLaren felt that Gould's performances brought something to the film that couldn't be achieved with its original soundtrack or on its own.

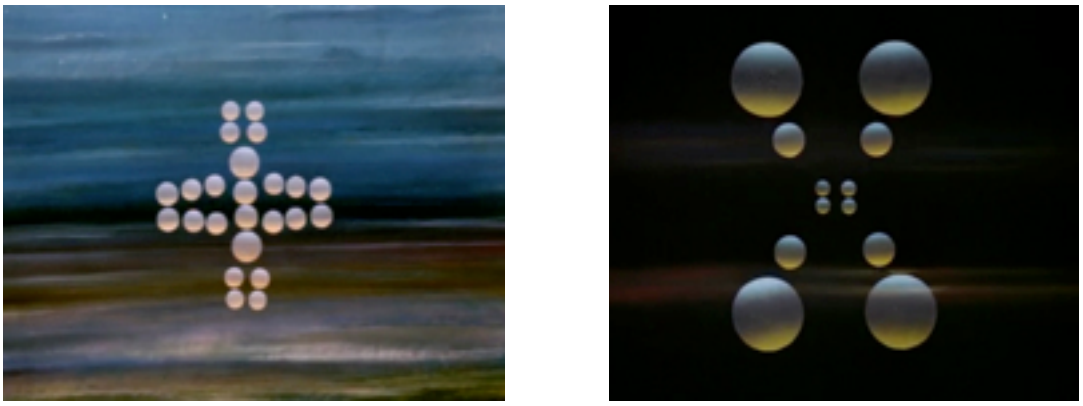


Figure 3.7: Still shots from "Spheres"
L, at 1:44; R, at 5:40

While in "Begone" McLaren's aesthetic and musical approach developed from the perspective he took in creating "Fiddle De Dee," in "Spheres" his visual evocation of form and musical features similarly draws on his previous visual depictions of musical form. This is most evident in McLaren's *Workshop Experiments in Animated Sound* and his publication entitled *Six Musical Forms Put Into Drawings* which provide evidence for his interest in the links between visual art and musical form.

McLaren's *Workshop Experiments in Animated Sound* were a series of animation tests from the 1950s that reveal an early interest in the optical soundtrack as a source for visual themes.[69] This collection of four shorts contains a selection of different animated sound techniques. Each short focuses on an optical idea, evoking a musical concept and demonstrating a different animation technique. These tests record his early attempts at a drawn-on optical soundtrack. The first short

[69] This fascinating collection of four shorts was not available to the public before their inclusion in the Norman McLaren "Master's Edition" boxed set released by the National Film Board in 2006.

consists of a soundtrack of percussive patterns evoked from shapes etched onto (black) celluloid as its optical soundtrack. The second is an example of McLaren's technique of painting onto his optical soundtrack with India ink (Figure 3.8). There, he creates a bass line and melody, capturing both the audio and visual depiction of a scale and broken triads. This test is musically similar to the soundtrack to McLaren's "Synchromy," in which the optical soundtrack is directly translated to the film itself.



Figure 3.8: Stills from McLaren's Workshop Experiments in Animated Sound *(early 1950s) Sound hand-drawn with India Ink (L); Radiating fan of black lines on white cards (R)*

This collection of sound experiments is intriguing, especially in the context of "Spheres," providing a tangible record of McLaren's early interest in the visual interpretation of musical characteristics and features. His experimental trials, document the musical concepts that emerge throughout his work such as counterpoint and musical form. Of particular note is the third experiment from the series entitled "Radiating fan of black lines on white cards (Figure 3.8)." There, McLaren juxtaposes two sets of diagonal striations. Each set, when played by the optical reader, plays its own separate melodic line. Two sets of radiating lines, when played on the optical reader create two contrapuntal melodies. One is a walking twelve-bar blues bass line and the

other, a higher pitched melody in the style of a blues improvisation (Figure 3.9). In the next section McLaren uses radiating fan lines on the optical track to transcribe the first ten measures of the Fugue in E Minor from the first book of Bach's *Well-Tempered Clavier*. His technique results



Figure 3.9: Transcription of blues "improvisation" from Workshop Experiments in Animated Sound

in a rhythmically precise performance of the fugue on an electronic instrument that anticipates Walter Carlos's Moog renditions of Bach from his album *Switched On Bach* of 1968. Released almost twenty years after McLaren's electronic "performances," both Carlos and McLaren toyed, albeit in different modes, with electronic interpretations of musical counterpoint. McLaren went further, however, by pursuing the visual possibilities of these technologies as well. Building on themes that he articulated in his experimental workshop films - films that he created with the sole intention of trying out ideas and techniques - McLaren draws on the formal elements of Gould's performance to provide landmarks and points of reference for the visual events in "Spheres."

In the publication *Six Musical Forms Put Into Drawings* (1967) and his animated short "Canon" (1964) McLaren again interpreted musical form on film. *Six Musical Forms* is the published version of a project commissioned by the *Canadian Music Journal*. The book combined McLaren's visual depictions of musical form with text by Marthe Blackburn and short musical compositions by Maurice Blackburn. While McLaren's art was an abstract interpretation of

musical form, Blackburn also used the illustrations as models for his short compositions. For each of the six musical forms - the rondo, the fugue, the minuet, the canon, the fugue, the sonata, and theme and variations - McLaren drew a representative set of images and Blackburn composed an original short piece. The musical examples are supplemented with McLaren's images that mark the entrance of each section, thereby highlighting the musical characteristics and structure of each form. These symbols, printed on a plastic transparency, can be laid over top of the music to mark the sections. The book and its accompanying LP may have had a pedagogical function, but it serves just as well as a piece of visual art. In the foreword to the collection, Blackburn comments on the strong connection between his compositions and McLaren's art:

> The pieces are aural interpretations, as faithful as possible, of McLaren's drawings, but from the point of view of academic criteria they are musically free and make real sense only when taken along with their corresponding visual patterns.[70]

As in his *Workshop Experiments in Animated Sound*, McLaren experimented with the idea of counterpoint, representing musical form through illustration. In *Six Musical Forms* for instance, he depicts the canon and the fugue using simple shapes and patterns to illustrate the features of both forms. Using the page as a spatial canvas to represent temporality and the relationship of one melody to the other, McLaren visually depicts "Canon" and "Fugue" by mapping the simultaneously interlocking melodies on the page (Figure 3.10). Rather than representing the melodies in Western notation, however, McLaren uses shapes and lines. Represented by a series of curved and straight lines, McLaren's "Canon" is a simple visual portrayal that conveys information about interlocking harmonies and the relationship of each individual melody to the overall structure of the work. By expanding and reducing the size of the curved shapes,

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[70] Norman McLaren, Marthe Blackburn, and Maurice Blackburn, *Six Musical Forms Put Into Drawings* (Montréal: Jeunesses Musicales du Canada, 1967), 1.

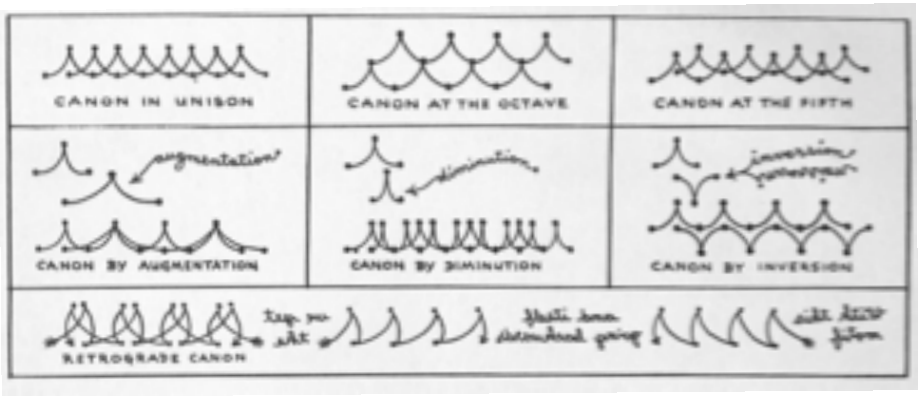


Figure 3.10: An excerpt from "Canon," Six Musical Forms Put Into Drawings

McLaren illustrates the principles of augmentation and diminution and their resultant effect on the contrapuntal relationship of the melodies. His visual representation of a fugue uses the physical text of the word to represent the subject, its entries and its various transformations (Figure 3.11).

Counterpoint is also the theme of McLaren's "Canon," from 1964, a lighthearted collection of three films, each set to a different piece of music, composed and performed by Eldon Rathburn. In all three, McLaren sets a series of objects into choreographed motion. Each sequence of movements corresponds with the melody, thus, as each melody of the canon enters, a new object appears and the series of movements are set in motion. While McLaren reduces canon form down to the graphic notation of *Six Musical Forms*, the short film allowed McLaren to go further with his audio-visual portrayal. In the first part, McLaren depicts Rathburn's canon melodies as a series of wooden blocks which move in a sequence over black and white squares on

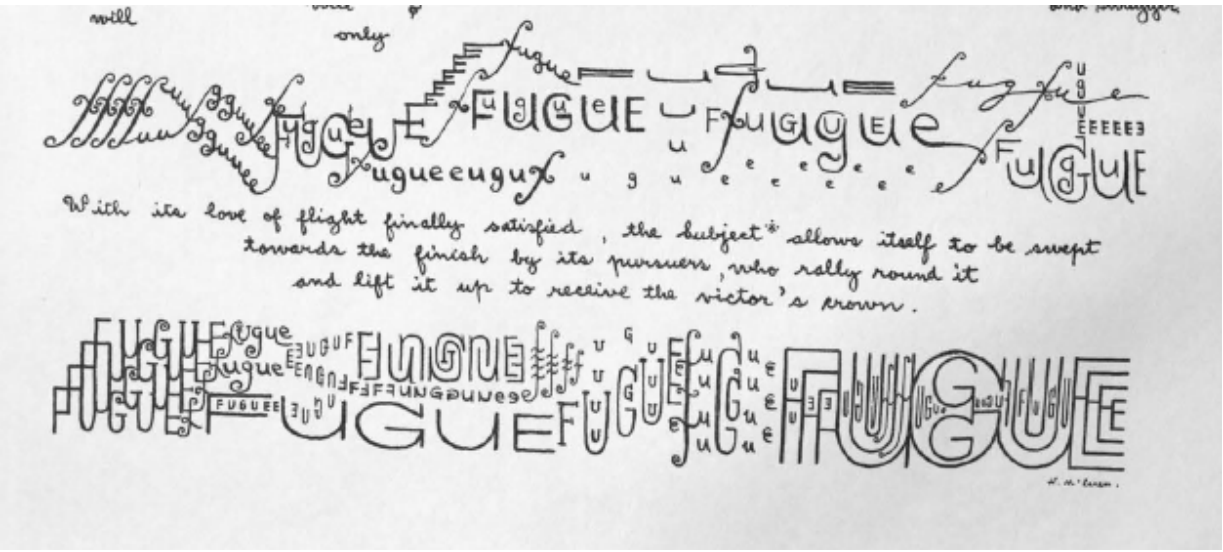


Figure 3.11: An excerpt from "Fugue," Six Musical Forms Put Into Drawings

a chess board (Figure 3.12).

In the second, McLaren animates cartoon men who perform a sequence of moves that correspond to the canon melody. In the final short, McLaren uses live action footage of his collaborator Grant Munro. Like the animated men, Munro's choreographed sequence corresponds with the canon melody. As the soundtrack plays a increasingly thicker polyphonic texture, the screen fills with more and more figures whose movements correspond to the interlocking musical features. These visual representations of counterpoint demonstrate McLaren's interest in depicting multi-voiced, polyphonic music and his engagement with musical form as a structure for his visual art and films. Although McLaren created the visuals for "Spheres" many years before pairing them with Gould's recording, the very act of pairing his visuals and the music has implications for a consideration of this work.

Gould's recordings fulfilled many of the qualities McLaren sought in the musical accompaniment for "Spheres." Not only did they complement the constant motion of the visuals,

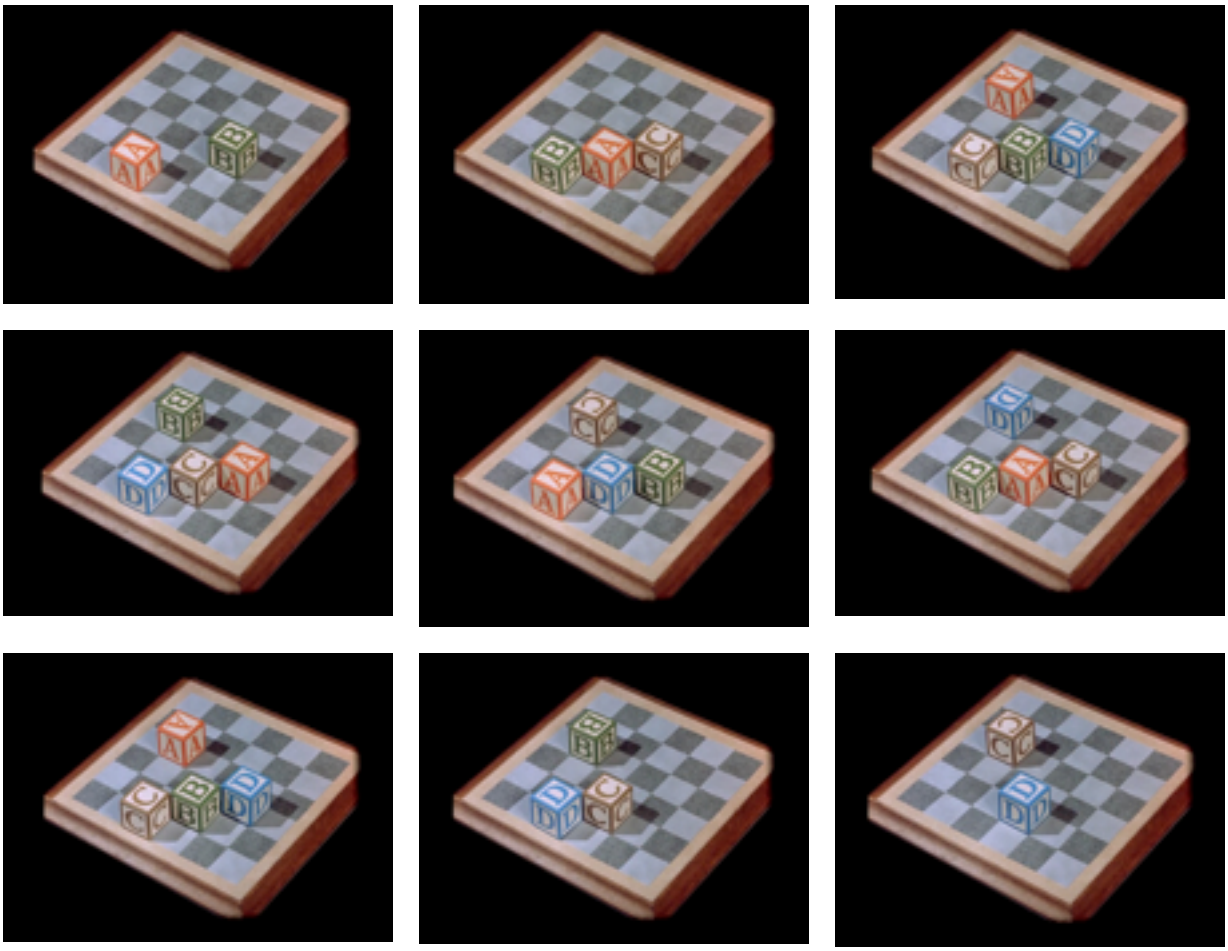


Figure 3.12: Stills from McLaren's Canon (1964)
Each block (A, B, C, D) and its corresponding movement across the board represents a melodic line played in canon. As the blocks move across the board, the patterns of visual choreography mirrors the canonic melody that is visually depicted and represented aurally.

but they also corresponded well to the length of the film. McLaren's technical notes summarize the reasoning behind his choices.

> One day while listening to them [Gould's recordings], it suddenly occurred to me that the constant, steady and flowing motion of some of the slower fugues and faster preludes might be just the right kind of accompaniment for the 'spheres'. . .After considerable searching, I fortunately found that Fugue 22, Prelude 20 and Fugue 14, apart from being right in tempo and mood, were also of the same duration as the three visual parts of the film; in only one case did a repeated musical phrase have to be omitted.[71]

[71] McLaren, *Technical Notes,* 56.

Contrary to this account, the music in the film tells a different story. McLaren omitted more than a repeated musical phrase in one of the recordings. In the first part of the film, Gould agreed to take out almost fifty-four measures of the Fugue in B Flat Minor and in the third part they deleted almost seven measures of the Fugue in F Sharp Minor. In the second section, they incorporated a repetition of the first twenty-four measures of the Prelude in A Minor. These alterations are considerable, particularly given the effect on the fugal structure of the music of the first and third sections. Presumably because the music had to be altered in service of the film's length, the edits occur in the middle of the measure, increasing some of the measure lengths by several extra beats disrupting the integrity of the musical works.[72] These alternations, while substantial from a musical perspective, nevertheless had little impact on McLaren's goals for the collaboration because they still allowed for synchronization of audio and video at key moments in the film.

In a radio interview with McLaren for his CBC radio program *The Art of Glenn Gould,* Gould remarked at the impressive level of synchronization between the film's visual and musical events.[73] Indeed, one of its most salient visual characteristics is their coincidental precision. Moreover, McLaren frequently used distinct visual moments as markers of musical ones that bear significance throughout the film. Thus, rather than rely on formal fugue structure to lend unity to the work as a whole, he instead drew on the contrapuntal texture of the music to connote the relationship of the spheres to one another, employing aspects of its formal visual structure to punctuate significant musical moments.

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[72] For instance, in the edited version of the Fugue in B-flat minor, the transition from m. 14 to m. 66 results in the loss of the first quarter note beat of m. 66. The result is a feeling that the transition measures are combined into a long measure of seven quarter notes. As a result of the dissolve from m. 25 to the repetition of m. 1 in the Prelude in A minor, the recording in "Spheres" acquires an additional three eighth-note beats.

[73] *The Art of Glenn Gould*, "Take Fifteen," CBC Radio Archive.

Two actions - the division of a sphere into multiple spheres and the reunion of several spheres into a single one - are the film's dominant gestures. The geometric choreography relies on measured and symmetrical motion - what happens on the right half of the screen also happens on the left. In first section, for instance, McLaren marks the opening interval of the subject with the dramatic motion of a single sphere symmetrically dividing into several - first two, then four, then eight - that expand from the center of the screen to its outermost edges [00:28-00:34]. Like a consequent phrase to its antecedent, the eight spheres close in again, becoming six, then four, and then two [from 00:34-00:40] and divide yet again while still maintaining the symmetry of the group. To bring attention to a musical moment particularly crucial to the rest of the film, McLaren synchronized the music with a particularly dramatic gesture, such as accelerated outward motion.

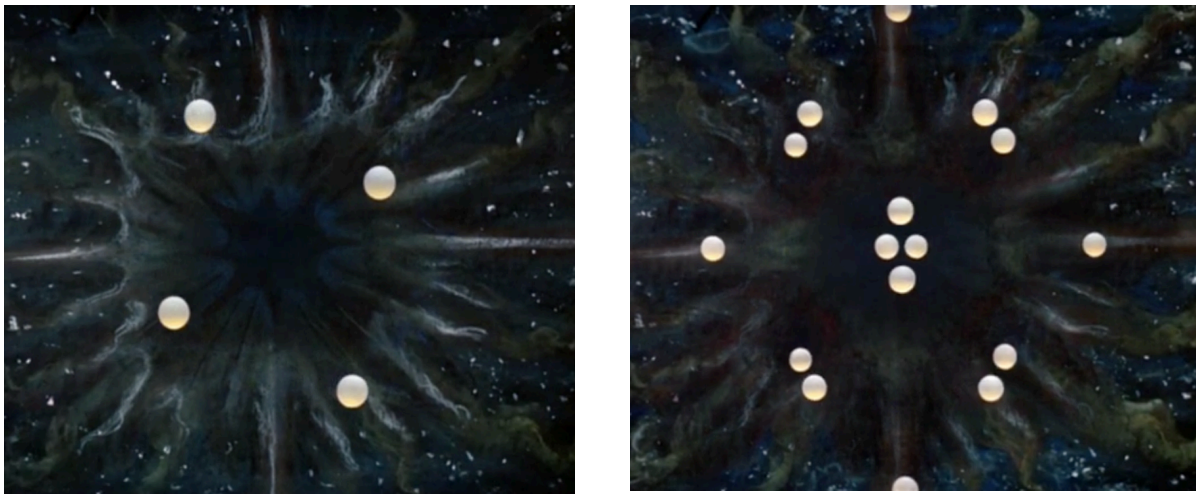


Figure 3.13: Still shots from "Spheres"
L, at 00:59; R, moments later, at 01:03 upon the fourth and final subject entry

Though the integrity of Bach's composition is disrupted by edits to the music, McLaren employed striking visuals to mark what he deems to be significant musical moments. For instance, the subject opens with a descending perfect fourth, an aural moment that announces the entry of

each subject and is often marked visually. McLaren accompanies the first evocation of B-flat and its descent to F with outward motion - the splitting of a single sphere into two [00:29] and then the two into four [00:31]. He proceeds to synchronize subsequent subject entries with a similar visual, the division and outward movement of spheres. Such is the case with the third subject entry (m. 10). Until this point, the melody has been in the upper register within the octave from B-flat 4 to B-flat 5. But this subject entry is octave lower than the low B flat, adding range and timbral dimension. McLaren signals the importance of this musical occurrence with a striking division of eight spheres into sixteen, coinciding with the perfect fourth descent [01:02] (Figure 3.13).

Variations in the speed and direction of motion also indicate certain structural features throughout the fugue. As I've shown, McLaren accompanied fugal entries on the screen with fast-moving outward motion. He marks the last four measures of the fugue [01:35-01:41], however, with the inward motion of twenty-one spheres that slowly come together, joining into six spheres at the final cadence [01:49]. From 01:35 to 01:38, twenty-one remaining spheres come into close proximity, their final coordinated movements occurring on the third and fourth beats of m. 71 and the downbeat of m. 72. Subsequent motion is minimal. In contrast to the spatially expansive movement associated with the opening subject entries, these spheres are contained, serving as a visual response to the previously outward-moving gesture (Figure 3.14). The spheres move towards the center rather than away from it. The union of the spheres marks the progression in the final two measures, on the quarter note, to its resolution at the final tiers de picardie cadence.

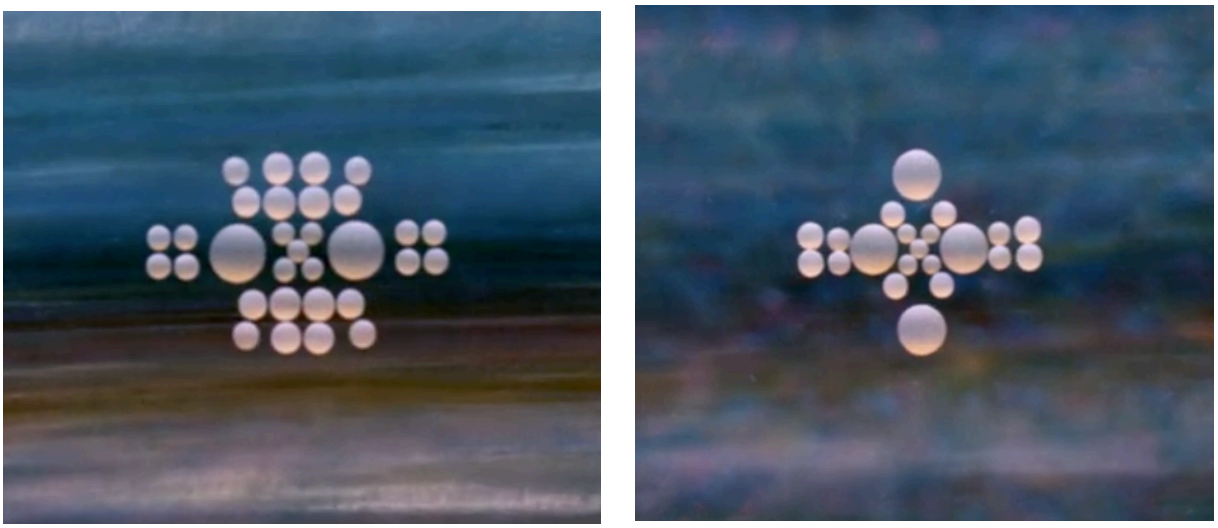


Figure 3.14: Still shots from "Spheres"
In the closing sequence of Fugue in B Flat Minor, McLaren keeps the spheres very close to one another. This sequence features inward motion in contrast to the outward motion that characterized the work up until this point.

The audio and video in "Spheres" do not meld seamlessly as they do in "Begone" and some of McLaren's other animated shorts. Nevertheless, certain musical characteristics resonated with McLaren's original film, and his use of the visual space, likewise, represented something fundamental about the music. Perhaps McLaren felt a connection between the meticulousness of Bach's counterpoint - its balance of fugal entries and the importance of every part to the whole - and the characteristics of his film. McLaren's use of visual space moreover, mirrors the tonal space and texture of Gould's performance. With each subject entry, the movement of the spheres contributes to a general sense of expansion to the outermost edges of the screen. As the contrapuntal lines converge in the last few measures of the work, so too does the movement of the spheres. In the absence of conventional conflict and narrative, McLaren very clearly utilized musical characteristics, reinforcing them with visual occurrences, to create a sense of unity and narrative arc.

While the edits made to Bach's compositions by McLaren and Gould diverge significantly from the formal structures of the originals, McLaren nevertheless used the works to impart form

to his previously monotonous film. Contrapuntal music aligned with the images and movement, emphasizing the relationship between the part and the whole. The relationship between movement and contrapuntal structures in his earlier *Six Musical Forms* and the animated short, "Canon" demonstrate an early interest in these links. And although his use of Bach's Prelude and Fugues in "Spheres" isn't literally translated into the visuals as they are in his previous projects, it still serves to underscore a relationship between audio and video, drawing connections among form, music, and animation.

While most mainstream animation progresses with the benefit of a central protagonist, a narrative plot, and most often, conflict and resolution, the central challenge of abstract animation, as McLaren articulated it in 1974, is to find different ways to maintain audience attention.

> Progressively, with the years, I've become more conscious of the need for unity, maybe to the detriment of the film. . . So, at one end of the spectrum, you have films which are monotonous, but unified. At the other, there's diversity. . . In between, somewhere, you get the nice balance, a diversity within a unity. That goes for all art.[74]

Aware of the difficulty of his genre and medium, McLaren frequently tackled the problem of reconciling the tension between unity and diversity in his films as he did in "Begone" and "Spheres." In these films, McLaren sought to achieve similar goals for both musical and filmic structures. In order to achieve a sense of unified form, but also develop a narrative for the benefit of the viewing audience, he looked to a standard musical form - ABA - for both shorts.

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[74] Norman McLaren, *On the Creative Process*, (Montréal: National Film Board of Canada, 1991), 20.

Conclusions

In an article championing McLaren's contribution to Canadian culture, columnist Robert Fulford casts McLaren's work as prescient of multimedia's widespread prominence in the twenty-first century. On the topic of the possible long-term impact of McLaren's films, he wrote about "Begone Dull Care":

> In one of his masterpieces, "Begone Dull Care," he (with his frequent collaborator, Evelyn Lambart) set a series of abstractions and near abstractions to a soundtrack by Oscar Peterson, anticipating music videos a generation before they became part of mass culture.[75]

In hindsight, it is clear that McLaren's legacy had implications beyond his impact on experimental filmmaking. The various interactions and the creative decisions undertaken by Gould, Peterson, and McLaren were part of a larger artistic movement characterized by a willingness to experiment with new and changing technologies. McLaren took advantage of the optical soundtrack and by closely synchronizing it with moving pictures, he created what one of his biographers called a "universe of his own creation."[76] With the introduction of magnetic audio tape and digital recording, the labor of drawn-on sound became less appealing to filmmakers and McLaren's musical techniques became obsolete. For a time, though, McLaren and his colleagues anticipated the creative approach to audio-visual media of contemporary multimedia artists and musicians, albeit almost fifty years before the apex of multimedia art's popularity.

The process of collaboration, as I examine in this chapter, yielded moments of artistic inspiration that challenged Gould, Peterson, and McLaren to expand the boundaries of their

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[75] Robert Fulford, "Norman McLaren, Our Very Own Genius," *National Post*, September 12 2006. http://www.nationalpost.com/story.html?id=ca465693-7d76-4964-9f2f-8c8291fa9c31&k=18586 Accessed 31 August 2012. Fulford, a journalist and resident of Toronto, has written extensively on the arts in Canada. He grew up with Glenn Gould in Toronto's east end.

[76] Collins, *Norman McClaren,* 15.

respective creative fields. McLaren adapted his working methods beyond his established ways of thinking and working and similarly, Gould and Peterson re-conceptualized the musical performance and introduced a new visual facet to their performances. Their collaborations had wide-ranging impact. Though most twentieth-century listeners experienced virtuosity as a private audio experience or less frequently, in a concert hall, these films brought their performances to movie theaters, community centers, and schools.[77]

Gould's and Peterson's collaborations with McLaren occurred twenty years apart, but with the two films, McLaren achieved similar goals of integrating sonic and visual media. As points of artistic convergence, the films shed light on the relationship between musician and filmmaker. From McLaren's perspective, music served as an alternative creative impetus to his electronic sound techniques, and though his goals for both forms of sound were the same, the "liveness" of these performances provided a different point from which to anchor the viewer's experience. As virtuosi whose contact with their listeners had largely been mediated through

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[77] The reach of "Begone" and "Spheres" can be measured in part by their worldwide distribution and international recognition, largely attributed to the NFB's international and national distribution networks. The film board's original task, to disseminate its wartime newsreels and short films, made great strides in setting up connections with film distributors worldwide. After the war, NFB films continued to benefit from the familiarity of international film companies who purchased their shorts to show in movie theaters, with the growth in popularity of the television, through television broadcasts. Through these networks of distribution, "Begone" and "Spheres," alongside other NFB films, were widely disseminated, winning recognition from international film festivals as well.

"Begone Dull Care," upon its initial release in October 1949, was seen by many viewers in Canada and internationally. At this time the NFB supported a group of traveling projectionists as part of their outreach program. These individuals received films directly from the board, traveled to more remote communities to show the films and sometimes host a discussion afterwards. This practice, though quickly fading by the early 1950s, was a remnant of wartime practice when the government wanted to make quality NFB productions available to all Canadians, no matter how far from the urban centers they resided. Many Canadians thus saw the film in their schools, libraries, art galleries, and service clubs.

"Spheres" was also distributed widely, though it had less of a theatrical history because of the general popularity of the television in 1969, the year of its release. Purchased by the BBC in 1970, it was broadcast on television in the United Kingdom, and included in a BBC documentary about McLaren entitled, "The Eye Hears, the Ear Sees" released in the same year. That year, the film was released in movie theaters in Spain, Switzerland, and Portugal, though it remains unclear as to how many showings it received. "Spheres" also received an award at the Cordoba Film Festival in 1970. Canadian viewers saw the animated short on their television screens via the CBC throughout 1970 and 1971, as part of the NFB documentary The India Trip. Though the films had nothing to do with one another, "Spheres" was the perfect length to fill the hour, thus they were broadcast together. Records from the National Film Board contain more detailed information about the purchasing history for both films. Suffice it to say that there are hundreds of purchase records from all over the world for television broadcast as well as theatrical release information.

sound technology, these collaborations augment the singular audio experience, in the process transforming virtuosity from that of a primarily auditory experience to a visual one.

McLaren's fascination with the audio-visual relationship originated from his philosophy that sound served as a unique sensory catalyst to the viewing experience, exploding the familiar audiovisual concept introduced by Michel Chion, of "added value." If, for Chion, the aural aspects of the film supplement the information from the film's visuals, then the soundtracks provide *all* of the information to the viewer in McLaren's abstract animated shorts. By emphasizing musical features and form through moments of synchresis in both films, McLaren achieved similar creative goals despite the twenty years between their dates of creation. Sound and music, rather than an auxiliary aspect of McLaren's films, became a crucial part of the filmic experience and perhaps even more significantly, a key aspect of his creative process.

This . . . makes drama out of life itself, expressed by the living, and welded by the artist into an art, an art of today, but wholly by sound - spoken sound, musical sound, noise.[1]

Chapter 4

Sound, Silence, Solitude; Glenn Gould's *Solitude Trilogy* and the Canadian Sound

Although Glenn Gould was best-known as a pianist, his creative energies also blossomed in other sonic pursuits including a trio of radio documentaries known as the *Solitude Trilogy.* Composed and broadcast on the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation National Service from 1967 to 1977, this series of radio documentaries is among his best-known original works.[2] Chapter one of this dissertation highlighted Gould's outspoken musical philosophies, as well as his advocacy of technology's importance for future musicians. This chapter turns to his creative activities in the period following his retirement in 1964 from the concert hall, which occurred at a time when his philosophies came to the forefront of public attention. By this time, Gould had established himself as a prominent audio-visual presence through television and radio appearances, but he was still recognized more as a pianist than as provocateur. Gould's ongoing commentary on technology and music was still freshly in the collective consciousness when CBC radio broadcast the first installation of *Solitude Trilogy,* entitled "The Idea of North" in 1967. Indeed, the entire *Solitude Trilogy* should be considered an integral creative component of Gould's musical philosophy.

Gould's radio documentaries bridged his concurrent professional activities as musician and as a radio broadcaster, allowing him to experiment fully with the technology of the recording studio. But like his more traditional musical compositions, such as his *String Quartet* (1955) and the

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[1] Pat Pearce, "What we can learn from Gould's 'aleatoric' documentary," *Montreal Star,* February 9 1968, Item 1979-20 42-2-2, Microfilm Reel 35, Glenn Gould fonds, Library and Archives Canada.

[2] "The Idea of North" was broadcast in 1967, followed by "The Latecomers" in 1969 and "The Quiet in the Land in 1977."

satirical piece for vocal quartet, *So You Want to Write a Fugue?* (1963), they also emerged from Gould's efforts towards creation rather than interpretation. In *Solitude Trilogy* Gould ruminated on themes that fell outside the purview of the traditionally musical and in doing so, he explored the intersection of technology and sound in a deeper and more profound way than he had been able to before.

Although Gould is most often thought of as a performer, his most significant artistic and intellectual contribution was to challenge traditional ideas about music and sound. He actively did so by simultaneously embracing technology and turning his attention to sound and his sonic environment, both of which came together in the production of his experimental radio documentaries. Gould's controversial perspectives on the potential of studio recording and his work with experimental radio documentaries both emerge from the impulse to use technology to push his creative limits, to create rather than interpret, and to explore sound and the act of listening. In this realm Gould's philosophical and musical approach is, notably, not far removed from the work of his Canadian contemporaries: musicians and artists who, in the 1960s, were also rethinking the very nature of sound and man's changing relationship with it.

I argue for a sound-centered study of Gould's *Solitude Trilogy* that redresses what has hitherto been an auteur-centered discourse about his radio documentaries. This chapter demonstrates how Gould responded to changes in his everyday sound experience impacted by urban life and the mass media. He engaged with ideas about music and sound and in doing so helped shape these documentaries both thematically and also in his exploration of the experimental radio format. To that end, I examine *Solitude Trilogy* as part of an intellectual discourse in the 1960s and 70s that responded to a greater sensitivity and interest in sound not only as music, but as part of a greater awareness of the spoken word, environmental sound, and

noise. In conjunction with a close analysis of the radio documentaries, I examine primary source material from the Glenn Gould fonds at Library and Archives Canada. Providing an examination of the sonic confrontations of documentary, music, and radio drama within these works, I situate *Solitude Trilogy* within the context of a culture shaped by what Canadian journalist Robert Fulford deemed Canada's "radio generation."

My analysis begins with the first part of the trilogy, "The Idea of North," addressing Gould's paradoxical characterization of the north; between the scant sounds of a barren arctic landscape, Gould's fabricated nordic soundscape is, what I call a "conflicted soundscape," to borrow a term from Canadian composer R. Murray Schafer. The north has traditionally been portrayed as remote and therefore silent, but "The Idea of North" goes against that trend, presenting a populated and noisy setting replete with multiple simultaneous voices and the mechanical sounds of the locomotive.

In the remaining two radio programs Gould incorporated the added sonic dimension of stereo sound. He used interviews with individuals from an isolated outport in the remote Maritime province of Newfoundland in his second program, "The Latecomers." Commissioned by the CBC for the inauguration of their new FM-radio stereo transmitters, Gould made full use of the dramatic and sonic possibilities of stereo sound which offered new ways of thinking about the construction of drama in the radio documentary. In the final program of the trilogy, "The Quiet in the Land," Gould used sounds and interviews from Mennonite community in Red River, Manitoba (near Winnipeg) to explore a religious perspective on solitude. It seems counterintuitive that Gould used very little recorded Western music in *Solitude Trilogy*. Aside from the inclusion of Herbert von Karajan's recording of Sibelius' Symphony No. 5 in the finale of "North," it isn't until "Quiet" that Gould incorporated musical recordings into the radio

documentary. Here, notably, musical recordings dominate the opening: a recording of a Mennonite congregation singing a traditional hymn is interrupted by Janis Joplin's 1970 recording of "Mercedes Benz," layered with an improvised cello solo and spoken word from two interviews conducted for the program by Gould. In this analysis of the final program from the *Trilogy*, I explore Gould's use of music not only as an aesthetic object, but as an object of polysemic meaning at the junction of music and spoken word.

More recently, scholars have observed that Gould's radio documentaries incorporate conflicted perspectives on the issues of solitude and sound. In 1996, McNeilly began a conversation about the plurality of ideas contained within Gould's contrapuntal radio, writing that

> Gould's North is not a single topos, a functional "idea" of North, but a site at which many voices and "ideas" coalesce, antagonize, support, subvert, mingle, and separate. The North acts, for Gould, as a name for a certain multiplicitous music, an imaginative zone in which the voices, noises, and ideas of the human community entangle and sound themselves out.[3]

Indeed, McNeilly assessed the "The Idea of North" as an exploration of artistic interiority, acknowledging that it possibly expressed a state of internal conflict.

Gould biographer Kevin Bazzana and radio scholar Howard Fink observed that Gould's radio documentaries incorporate the influence of contemporary developments in sound and technology. Howard Fink, reflecting his approach from the field of radio studies, argues that Gould's "The Idea of North" is a new "syncretic" genre, situating the program at the intersection of documentary, drama, and music.[4] Bazzana's assessment of "The Idea of North" picks up on Fink's argument, suggesting that at its heart "The Idea of North" is a

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[3] Kevin McNeilly, "Listening, Nordicity, Community: Glenn Gould's 'The Idea of North'," *Essays on Canadian Writing* 59 (Fall 1996), 87.

[4] Howard Fink,"Glenn Gould's Idea of North: The Arctic Archetype and the Creation of a Syncretic Genre," *GlennGould* 3 No. 2 (Fall 1997), 35-42.

> synthesis of three principles: documentary, drama, and music. . . it *is* a documentary about the North, but the documentary material is dramatically charged, conveyed through confrontations of characters with different perspectives, blended evocatively with other sounds.[5]

My analysis begins with the premise forwarded by Bazzana and Fink that Gould's *Solitude Trilogy* is a hybrid genre of several influences relating to music, technology, and sound. Rather than completely displace the obvious musical components to Gould's work in radio production, I suggest that sound and technology had an overwhelming impact on Gould and his intellectual and artistic contemporaries, including his Canadian contemporaries who, during the 1960s and 70s who, while not in direct communication with Gould nevertheless took a similar interest in traditionally non-musical and environmental sounds.

The Radio Generation

The new and ubiquitous sonic presence of radio broadcasting played a powerful role shaping the everyday soundscape for a generation born in the 1920s and 30s and deeply influenced Gould's approach to the *Solitude Trilogy*. Timothy Taylor describes this major cultural shift as follows:

> It's impossible to explain the impact that radio had on the world to anyone who didn't live through that time. Before radio, people had to wait for the newspaper to learn what was happening in the world. Before radio, the only way to see a performer was to see a performer.[6]

The increased prominence of radio programming during Gould's formative years made an indelible mark on his everyday sound environment and encouraged a greater awareness of

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[5] Kevin Bazzana, *Wondrous Strange* (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 2003), 301.

[6] Timothy Taylor, "Radio: Introduction" in *Music, Sound, and Technology in America,* ed. Timothy Taylor, Mark Katz, and Tony Grajeda (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2012), 238.

auditory sensation and its relationship to technology and sound. In what follows, I examine the broad cultural forces at play in the establishment of a national radio service in Canada during Gould's early life, its impact on his relationship to radio broadcasting, and the role it played in his concept for the *Solitude Trilogy*.

Recent research has brought issues surrounding radio broadcasting and programming to the forefront of scholarship on technology, media, and sound, highlighting the incredible degree of cultural work that occurred as a result of radio's growth in popularity during the early part of the twentieth-century. Studies of early radio broadcasting by Michelle Hilmes, Jason Loviglio, and Christina Baade have focused on its unprecedented role in unifying nations across geographies.[7] Hilmes and Loviglio comment on radio's magnitude of influence, especially in its early days: "There was something about radio waves and their impervious mobility across social boundaries that served as an ideal symbol for national togetherness."[8] Hilmes expands further on this point, putting forth the argument that radio was instrumental in building communities through common cultural experiences:

> Radio, more than any other agency, possessed the power not only to assert actively the unifying power of simultaneous experience but to communicate meanings about the nature of that unifying experience. Radio not only responded to the dominant social tensions of its era but, by addressing its audience's situation directly in music, comedy, and narrative drama, made those tensions the subject of its constructed symbolic universe.[9]

Symbolically and culturally, radio's relevance to the everyday experience of North Americans during the 1930s and 40s was matched only by its geographical reach and impact

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[7] See, for instance, Michele Hilmes and Jason Loviglio's edited volume, *Radio Reader* (New York: Routledge, 2002) and Christine Baade's *Victory Through Harmony: The BBC and Popular Music in World War II* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012).

[8] Michele Hilmes and Jason Loviglio, eds., *Radio Reader* (New York: Routledge, 2002), xi.

[9] Michele Hilmes, "Radio and the Imagined Community," in *The Sound Studies Reader,* ed. Jonathan Sterne (New York: Routledge, 2012), 352.

across social class. Scholarship on radio broadcasting has focused on its impact in the United States and Britain, but increasingly, radio scholars have taken notice of the trans-Atlantic resonance among listening patterns in North America and Europe.[10] This area of research has also incorporated, on a smaller scale, studies of the Canadian Radio Broadcasting Commission [CRBC], and the implications of its local and national broadcast programming.

Radio made its cultural mark in the United States very soon after World War I, but it wasn't until the 1920s that its popularity rapidly grew among the general public.[11] Canada's history of radio technology paralleled that of the United States with the activities of The Marconi Company from 1902 until the 1930s on Canada's east coast.[12] Marconi's investment of time and resources focused on transatlantic shipping communications and wireless mass communication within the country took longer to establish. The biggest breakthrough came with the Canadian Radio Broadcasting Commission in 1932, the results of which provided Canadians with nation-wide radio programming. But even then, Canadians were forced to wait until the late 1930s for regular radio broadcasting and until 1941 for a national news service.

Canadians saw a rapid development of a national wireless infrastructure especially in the 1930s, alongside an increased demand for radio sets and licenses. Sales of radio licenses doubled from 1938 to 1941, triggering the greatest period of active growth in radio's popularity among

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[10] Michele Hilmes' study examines the transnational flow of ideas between the United States and Britain and how national broadcast traditions developed through each respective nations' reaction to these influences: "opposition, resistance, adaptation, exchange, or emulation, or some combination of all of those." Hilmes, *Network Nations* (New York: Routledge, 2012), 3.

[11] During this period an infrastructure that could support radio's popularity expanded, including the establishment of radio broadcasting stations and the growth in radio sales. Timothy Taylor, "Radio," in *Music, Sound, and Technology in America,* ed. Timothy Taylor, Mark Katz, and Tony Grajeda (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2012), 241.

[12] See Mary K. MacLeod, *Marconi: The Canada Years, 1902-1946* (Halifax, N.S.: Lancelot, 1992) for a more detailed account of the Marconi company and its investment in wireless technologies primarily in Cape Breton in the early part of the twentieth century.

Canadian households.[13] Writing in 1955, radio conductor Geoffrey Waddington reflected on the first two decades of Canadian radio, attributing its considerable influence to the nation's population and physical characteristics:

> In these days of mass communication, the influence of radio upon the intellectual life and cultural character of a community can be said to be of unusual importance in Canada, by reason of its small population in an extremely thin distribution.[14]

Attaching significance to radio as a Canadian cultural phenomenon, Waddington's reflections about the interaction between technology and national characteristics resonates in comments by other Canadians on the role of radio technology and communication on their everyday lives in the 1930s and 40s including Gould and his contemporaries.

As documented by Gould's childhood friend and Canadian newspaper columnist Robert Fulford, rapid developments in Canada's national broadcasting code coincided with Gould's early life in Toronto. Fulford described his early childhood experiences with radio broadcasting, many shared with Gould, as life-changing. Fulford reveals that the dramatic cultural shift felt across Canada as a result of radio's pervasive social and cultural presence was also felt in the domestic sphere, in family dens and living rooms:

> . . .when you think of Glenn and the idea of sound, you have to think of him as a kid who grew up with radio. The phonograph was important too, but at that time, you are talking about the 10 or 12 inch 78 RPM variety which had to be constantly turned over if you wanted to hear a whole piece of music. So, the first time you actually heard a great classical symphony was on the radio.[15]

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[13] David Skinner, "Divided Loyalties: The Early Development of Canada's 'Single' Broadcasting System," *Journal of Radio Studies* 85 No. 1 (May 2005), 144.

[14] Geoffrey Waddington, "Music and Radio" in *Music in Canada,* ed. Ernest MacMillan (Toronto: University of Toronto, 1955), 131.

[15] Interview with Robert Fulford by Rhona Bergman in Bergman, *The Idea of Gould* (Philadelphia: Lev Publishing, 1999), 9.

As Fulford notes, Canadians born in the early 1930s grew up during the CBC radio's nascence, arguing its central place in Gould's relationship to radio broadcasting. Both Fulford and Gould shared excitement and awe in response to this cultural phenomenon:

> I remember once saying to Glenn, "You know, I'm embarrassed to say this but I'm thrilled by the idea that we can be here in Toronto listening to a live broadcast by the Winnipeg Symphony Orchestra on a Sunday night.' and he'd say to me, "Don't be embarrassed by it. It IS thrilling!"[16]

Argued that a greater attention to *listening* was specific to his and Gould's generation, Fulford directed attention to the development of radio in Canada. They were members of a generation whose media experience centered on listening to the radio before the pervasiveness of the home television. Fulford wrote:

> Members of the radio generation developed an aural sensibility, and an aural dependency, that were both new in the world. We were the first to grow up with radio all around us, and pretty well the last to grow up without television. Radio provided the sound track of our lives, and as we grew toward maturity we began slowly to understand its effects on our way of thinking. It was an alternative centre of existence.[17]

This paradigm shift alerted their generation to the possibilities of the mediated aural experience.

Contrapuntal Radio and "Radio as Music"

Not only experimental from a thematic point of view, Gould's radio documentaries were sonically innovative, demonstrating a new recording technique he called "contrapuntal radio." By layering multiple tracks of spoken word, sound, and musical recordings, Gould achieved multi-dimensional and dramatic sound environments, heightening the narrative of the radio programs. By broadening the texture of the radio documentary to include several voices at once, he

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[16] Bergman, *The Idea of Gould*, 9.

[17] Robert Fulford "Glenn Gould in the Age of Radio," *GlennGould* 6 No. 1 (Spring 2000), 18.

challenged the listener to actively attend to multiple meanings of the interviews. Canadian broadcaster and journalist Barbara Frum noted the importance of Gould's contribution to the radio documentary genre, particularly because of his application of contrapuntal techniques, what she interpreted as a groundbreaking innovation. After its 1967 broadcast she wrote:

> The usual radio documentary . . . by now has been refined to a formula. And perhaps it takes an outsider like Gould to redirect. The likelihood of course, is that Gould's undoubted imitators won't have his sense of rhythm or balance and will obliterate in technique the flow of ideas that must still be the basis of a documentary.[18]

Much like he aspired to do with his piano recordings, Gould challenges his listeners to engage with the radio documentary rather than just hear it as a passive receiver.

Although Gould sought to decode the documentaries for his listeners by way of musical terminology, his explanations indicate that he was also reluctant to cast them as strictly musical. In "Radio as Music" Gould admitted that by using the term "contrapuntal radio," and "basso continuo," for instance, Gould was grappling with the pragmatic concerns of how to discuss the various sound elements of his programs. Musical terminology, as he discussed, was one way to communicate legibly and specifically about different aspects of the programs.

> (So) it's not just a question of dealing with musical forms. Sometimes one must try to invent a form which expresses the limitations of form, which takes as its point of departure the terror of formlessness. After all, there are limited number of rondos you can exploit in the radio documentary; then you find you have to invent according to the criteria of the medium, which is essentially what we ended up doing.[19]

In other words, musical form was one tool that Gould used to describe his radio goals, but he also did so with caution, resisting the creative limitations of using such terminology.

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[18] Barbara Frum, "Gould documentary the best of Ideas," *Toronto Daily Star,* December 30 1967, 26, Item 1979-20 42-1-14, Microfilm Reel 35, Glenn Gould fonds, Library and Archives Canada.

[19] "Radio as Music," reprinted in Glenn Gould, *The Glenn Gould Reader,* ed. Tim Page (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1984), 379.

Gould's own reference to "contrapuntal radio" likely initiated this conflation between musical counterpoint and Gould's radio production technique that mingled simultaneous spoken word, musical, and sound. Listeners picked up on Gould's musical perspective, often relating his (and his technical assistant Lorne Tulk's) hours of laborious editing and splicing to an extended compositional process. Record producer Robert Hurwitz, for instance, invoked vocabulary that suggested the radio documentaries were on par with large-scale musical compositions, calling "The Idea of North" a "symphony."[20] In 1985, Darrell Mansell discussed Gould's contrapuntal radio technique as creating the impression of "two entirely different pieces of music that just amazingly happen to cross, recross, and harmonize with each other like motorboats cavorting around a lake."[21] In 1988, Richard Kostalenetz referred to Gould as a radio *composer*, in a single sentence comparing Gould's performances as " a masterful interpreter of fugues" to his role as producer radio work as "a masterful creator of fugues."[22]

The dominance of Western music concepts and vocabulary bubble up through these statements, demonstrating the challenge of discussing sound-based art independent of established musical paradigms. Dan Lander, a Canadian composer with an interest in sound art and the medium of radio, reasons that the dominance of musical concepts rooted in Western art music has been partly to blame for the perceived limitations of radio art:

> the imposition of a borrowed musical discourse applied to all sound phenomenon, [strips] away any social and/or cultural referentiality, thus creating a situation in which aurality in general is perceived as music, as if the origin, context and

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[20] Robert Hurwitz, "Towards a Contrapuntal Radio," in *Glenn Gould Variations,* ed. John McGreevy (Toronto: McMillan Canada, 1983), 256.

[21] Darrell Mansell, "Glenn Gould: The Idea of South by North," *The Iowa Review* 15 No. 3 (Fall 1985), 60.

[22] Richard Kostalenetz, "Glenn Gould as Radio Composer," *The Massachusetts Review* 29 No. 3 (Fall 1988), 561.

> phenomenology of any given sound or noise can be measured only by its contribution to a renovation of western art music.[23]

The inclination to use musical vocabulary to discuss the *Solitude Trilogy* has hindered discussions about Gould's radio programs. In light of Lander's statements, Gould's innovative use of the radio medium to manipulate sound and the perception of time and space cries out for discussion beyond the sometimes stubborn fixation on Western music's rigid analytical frameworks.

Gould's interview with John Jessop, published in 1971 as "Radio as Music" in *The Canadian Music Book*, reveals that issues pertaining to music and radio technology nevertheless had an impact on Gould's radio documentaries. The title alone suggests that musical understanding took precedence in Gould's perspective of his work for radio. But evidence from the interview alludes to the deeper role that radio broadcasting played in the *Solitude Trilogy*. Gould explained that the radio dramas ". . .came out sounding 'Over to you, now back to our host, and here for the wrap-up. . .' - in a word, predictable."[24] Contrapuntal radio allowed Gould to attain his creative goals by helping him break free from the "linear" radio documentary, to borrow a term from his intellectual contemporary Marshall McLuhan:

> It seems to me terribly important to encourage a type of listener who will not think in terms of precedence, in terms of priority, and collage is one way in which to do it. I think, at the same time, it ought to be possible to play around with the time sense, the time scale in relation to an individual voice, to hear only one voice and yet received separate and simultaneous messages, you know, from the statement it offers. That's something that, as far as I know, has not really been done in radio. I think it should be done.[25]

The practical constraints of the sixty-minute radio program also contributed to Gould's development of a contrapuntal radio technique. Gould's original plan for "The Idea of North"

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[23] Dan Lander, "Radiocasting: Musings on Radio and Art" in *Radio Rethink - Art, Sound, and Transmission* (Banff: Walter Phillips Gallery, 1994), 13.

[24] "Radio as Music," reprinted in Page, 374.

[25] "Radio as Music," reprinted in Page, 380-381.

was to create five different documentary programs, one based on the material from each respective interviewee. The temporal constraints of the radio schedule however, forced Gould to think in contrapuntal terms by finding a way to use the voices simultaneously. Responding to Gould's revelation about the birth of contrapuntal radio, John Jessop described it as "pretty inauspicious."[26]

Contrapuntal Radio and Solitude

Throughout his life Gould's statements about the role of music and technology were remarkably consistent, but on the issues of solitude and his ideas of the north, his statements and actions were conflicted. Gould expressed a firm personal view about the importance of solitude, stating that "isolation is the indispensable component of human happiness . . . for every hour you spend in the company of other human beings, you need x number of hours alone."[27] Initiated by Gould's own suggestion, "The Idea of North," more so than the other two programs, has been regarded as a form of an artist's statement: "Yes, it[The Idea of North]'s very much me, in terms of what it says . . . it's about as close to an autobiographical statement as I am likely to make at this stage of my life."[28] As newspaper columnist William Littler observed, Gould played into the "reclusive image," as he did in an interview with Elyse Mach for her volume of interviews with pianists: "...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

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[26] "Radio as Music," reprinted in Page, 376.

[27] Quoted in Otto Friedrich, *Glenn Gould: A Life in Variations* (New York: Random House, 1989), 204 and Friedrich Ostwald, *Glenn Gould: The Ecstasy and Tragedy of a Genius (*New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 1997), 231.

[28] Quoted in Friedrich, *A Life,* 205 and Bazzana, *Wondrous Strange*, 300.

kind of Howard Hughesian secrecy."[29] Such statements became part of Gould's self-perpetuated myth - that he was solitary by choice, a state that he preferred - was a crucial part of his public persona during his life and beyond. Photographs, films, and literary accounts depict and describe his affinity to the north and the state of solitude.[30]

Gould expressed this point so emphatically that biographers understandably wove this personality trait into narratives of his life. The radio scholar Howard Fink, for instance, wrote that:

> The Idea of North was clearly autobiographical for Gould, in the sense of playing out his own development: he abandoned the definition of himself as a stage performer, a definition forced on him by our urban civilization; he left the concert stage and turned inward, to the solitude of the studio which led him to fulfill his urge to create by means of his contrapuntal documentaries.[31]

Friedrich Ostwald, a Gould biographer, wrote that "Solitude was for Glenn a cherished state of existence. He preferred being alone."[32] In a 1985 article about *Solitude Trilogy*, Darrell Mansell drew connections between Gould, the "solitary, strange, cold, cerebral genius"[33] and another twentieth century icon with whom Gould had already expressed a personal resonance: "He saw himself as isolated in a cold, remote and lonely arctic circle - an anchorite, the self-proclaimed brother-in-solitude of that other modern misanthrope, Howard Hughes."[34] Connecting Gould's

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[29] Quoted in William Littler, "The Quest for Solitude," in *Glenn Gould Variations,* ed. John McGreevy (Toronto: MacMillian Canada, 1983), 218.

[30] See for instance, François Girard's 1993 biopic *32 Short Films About Glenn Gould* which features several scenes depicting Gould as a solitary figure in various settings: in the northern tundra, listening to music as a teenager at his family's summer cottage, contemplative and sitting alone in a room. *Thirty-Two Short Films About Glenn Gould*, DVD, directed by François Girard, (1993; Culver City: Sony Pictures, 2001).

[31] Fink, "Glenn Gould's Idea of North," 37.

[32] Ostwald, *The Ecstasy*, 230.

[33] Mansell, "The Idea of South by North," 65.

[34] Mansell, "The Idea of South by North," 61.

personality back to his radio documentaries, Mansell stated that "Idea of North" was "really a documentary about Gould himself."[35]

Although Gould fostered an image of himself as a hermit, reflections by his friends and colleagues have sought to debunk the widespread solitude myth surrounding his life and work.[36] They have, in contrast, described Gould as sociable. Their accounts reveal that he even had a tendency to reach out to strangers. In a 2013 interview with Gould's lawyer Stephen Posen, former CBC radio producer Larry Leblanc states that "The enduring myth that Glenn Gould was a recluse [also] isn't true." Posen in agreement with Leblanc, responded that he overheard a conversation with a man who described Gould as "the most gregarious guy I had ever known. I used to see him in the park all of the time, and he was very talkative and very chatty."[37] Recent interviews with his romantic partner Cornelia Foss suggest that he sought out romantic affection and a desire for a traditional family life even if was something he never attained.[38] Increasingly, scholars have mitigated the overwhelming attention on Gould's personality in discussions about the radio documentaries. In 1996, Kevin McNeilly nuanced the oft-stated idea that "Gould's life and art testify to his own obsession with isolation and with the connections between solitude and

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[35] Mansell, "The Idea of South by North," 62.

[36] The foremost "myth" associated with Gould concerned his sexuality, possibly fueled by speculation on the part of his colleagues and friends. See, for instance, Kazdin's reflection that Gould might be "a kind of [sexual] neuter." in Andrew Kazdin, *Glenn Gould at Work: Creative Lying,* (New York: E.P. Dutton, 1989), 61. The 2008 PBS American Masters documentary made headlines for including an interview with Cornelia Foss, wife of American composer Lukas Foss, who described her torrid affair with Gould in the late 1960s, effectively debunking rumors that Gould was "asexual" or homosexual. *The Genius Within: The Inner Life of Glenn Gould*, DVD, directed by Michele Hozer and Peter Raymont (2008; New York: Lorber Films, 2011). Michael Clarkson's 2010 *A Genius in Love* (Toronto: ECW Press, 2010) also aims to dispel rumors about his sexuality and personal relationships by presenting interviews from a string of former lovers and girlfriends.

[37] Larry LeBlanc, "Industry Profile: Stephen Posen," In the Hot Seat with Larry LeBlanc, http://www.celebrityaccess.com/members/profile.html?id=630&PHPSESSID=21hdlqtighrfqulao06p5driu1 (accessed Jan 30 2013).

[38] *The Genius within: The Inner Life of Glenn Gould*, directed by by Michele Hozer and Peter Raymont (2008; New York: Lorber Films, 2011 DVD).

creativity," elaborating that Gould's withdrawal from the concert hall was in fact, in the service of "greater intimacy with his audience."[39]

Gould glorified the notion of solitude and in fact, fetishized it throughout his career. Despite this initial disconnect between Gould as social and solitary, I suggest an understanding of these opposing perspectives not as a conceptual impasse, but as a dialectic, connected by Gould's interest in technological mediation. Gould's friends describe him as talkative and describe his infamous propensity to call them late at night and talk for hours at a time.[40] Gould's preference for social contact over the telephone channeled his affinity with the mediated reach of the radio broadcast.

If Gould felt as if his radio documentaries communicated from a deep well of personal artistic conviction, his lack of audible presence in the documentaries is worth noting. Gould biographer Otto Friedrich noted that if the radio documentary reflects a personal perspective, Gould's voice is conspicuously absent from them. Gould's only aural appearance is in the introduction of "The Idea of North," where he describes the premise and the characters, hardly a statement of a personal or revelatory nature. He almost immediately leaves the documentary, never to return. As Friedrich puts it, "In the way Gould presented "The Idea of North," he made it seem that these were his own ideas, his own creation. And yet he never signed the check."[41]

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[39] McNeilly, "Listening, Nordicity, Community," 88.

[40] Cott wrote in his account of his professional relationship with Gould that, ". . . in 1974, I had the opportunity of talking to Gould on the telephone for six hours over a three-day period, the results of which were published as a two-part interview in *Rolling Stone* magazine. . . It was, in fact, during these phone conversations that Gould and I became friends - the phone made it easier for the pianist to make contact and keep in touch with people he liked." Jonathan Cott, *Conversations with Glenn Gould* (Boston: Little, Brown, and Company, 1994), 23. See also Kazdin, *Creative Lying,* 29. Kazdin includes accounts of his and Gould's long telephone conversations pertaining particularly to the editing of Gould's recordings. Journalist and artist Richard Kostelanetz similarly describes Gould's insistence that he conduct his interviews over the telephone. As Kostelanetz put it, "he not only does as much business as possible by phone but he would sooner telephone his family and friends -- extend himself literally into their ears -- than visit them or even have them visit him." Richard Kostelanetz, *Three Canadian Geniuses*, ed. Richard Kostelanetz and Oriana Leckert (Toronto: Colombo & Company, 1999), 10.

[41] Friedrich, *A Life,* 206.

Kevin Bazzana's opinion about Gould's short introduction to "North" notes that Gould's narrative interjection is out of place in the radio program: "It was his only misstep in *The Idea of North*. . .The autobiographical comments, the introduction of the characters, and the tone of Gould's overwritten prose . . . are jarring in this context."[42]

Bazzana highlights the incongruity between Gould's manner of directly addressing the listener and the sense of "listening in" that he wished to simulate with his contrapuntal technique. Gould's general absence from his radio documentaries contributes to the idea that he intended to achieve the same goals with them as he aspired to in his musical recordings: to encourage active listening without the performer's intervention. Without Gould's guiding voice, he encouraged listeners to engage more actively and in turn, gather their own interpretation from the material. A first-hand account by Barbara Frum offers insight following the initial broadcast of the "The Idea of North": "I found myself listening at two levels simultaneously - to the stream of ideas, but just as compelling in this production, to the pattern of sounds Gould wove out of his speakers' voices."[43] Whether intentional or inadvertent, by drawing listeners into active listening, Gould's contrapuntal radio became an exercise in community building rather than isolation.

Gould discussed a concept of "active listening" in the context of his musical recordings, but his contrapuntal radio documentaries offered yet another medium that pushed the idea to its limits, forcing the listener to deeply engage with the multi-layered sonic environment. Recordings appealed to Gould because they placed responsibility onto the listener yielding an unprecedented shift from the concert hall where the responsibility fell on the performer. Gould frequently returned to the idea that simultaneous aural stimuli sharpened the listeners' ability to discern a

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[42] Bazzana, *Wondrous Strange*, 298.

[43] Frum, "Gould documentary," 26.

single melody or voice. For instance, he recalled from his early musical development, that he could achieve an increased focus on the music if his mother vacuumed the house while he played the piano.[44] The simultaneous sound source of the machine drone goaded him to concentrate more fully on the contrapuntal structures of the music. In a way, Gould sought to create a similarly ideal listening environment for the listeners of his radio documentaries.

Gould's own enjoyment in hearing, parsing, and performing contrapuntal music was related to his desire to re-create this experience for his listeners. Contrapuntal radio encouraged the listener to simultaneously attend to individual voices yet hear them all together. Gould's interest in the idea of "active listening" was not unlike Marshall McLuhan's concept of hot media in which the listener is forced to engage more actively with the content of the media format as a result of its low fidelity qualities.[45] A mutual concern for the issues surrounding the relationship between the media and society, particularly with respect to sonic environments....

A Culture of Listening

Gould was part of a community of Canadians that included composer R. Murray Schafer and public intellectual Marshall McLuhan, who reflected in their work on the impact of radio's ubiquity on their everyday perception of sound. While Schafer's World Soundscape Project [WSP] emerged from a political impulse to preserve aspects of the natural environment through the preservation of an environmental acoustics, McLuhan's interest in mediated sound was part of a larger project of understanding the role of media and its role in cultural transformation.

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[44] Glenn Gould, "Advice to a Graduation," printed Gould, *The Glenn Gould Reader,* ed. Tim Page (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1984), 6-7. This anecdote is also discussed at length in Ostwald, *The Ecstasy*, 76-77.

[45] For discussion about this concept see "Media Hot and Cold" in Marshall McLuhan, *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man* (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1964), 24-35.

Schafer, born only a year after Gould was, also experienced the new aural soundscape of Canada's radio age during the 1930s and 40s. Schafer's research and artistic activity in the area of "soundscape studies" reflects one outcome this cultural shift. The many writings associated with this community expound on a central thesis that the public should aspire to a heightened awareness of sound and noise and that they could do so through a variety of different means. In the 1978 publication from Schafer's project entitled *Handbook for Acoustic Ecology,* Barry Truax, a member of the WSP, described the core mandate behind their movement:

> It is our contention that the cause of this predicament can be traced to the public's waning auditory skills - a basic inability to hear clearly by those responsible for this imbalance, by which we mean to include as much the citizen who buys noisy appliances and vehicles, as the architects who build noise into their (visually and structurally) advanced designs, and the manufacturers who do the same with products that are thoughtlessly unleashed into the sonic environment regardless of their harmful effects.[46]

Behind the political edge of the WSP's activities, the underlying message advocated for a new form of listening. In contrast to Pierre Schaefer's influential position on sound which encouraged the listener to process aural stimuli as sound objects apart from their physical source, members of the WSP were, in contrast, invested in the connection between physical precursors and their aural resonances, that is, the very materiality of the sonic experience.

An attention to sound as an everyday phenomenon also reverberated in the Canadian literary imagination. While Schafer and members of the World Soundscape Project assembled in 1960 and 1961, a group of poets in Vancouver also gathered to begin a new publishing endeavor,

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[46] World Soundscape Project, *Handbook for Acoustic Ecology,* ed. Barry Truax (Vancouver, B.C.: A.R.C. Publications, 1978), v.

the bi-monthly poetry publication entitled *Tish*.[47] Although a print publication might initially seem to be far removed from a movement towards a *listening* culture, the editors of *Tish* were insistent that poetry was an aural practice, demonstrating that the deeply felt need for attention to sound and aurality was not limited to musicians and composers. One issue of the journal included the statement, in bold, that: "POEMS IN TISH ARE INTENDED FOR READING ALOUD."[48]

Especially in early editions of the journal's short run, its editors communicated their strong views about the poetry contained within from the perspective of sound. Instructions printed in each edition encourage the reader, in addition to reading the poems included in their journal, to experience them as sound works, invoking the participatory aspect of the listener/reader experience, very much like the listener's participatory experience that Gould advocated for. Its first issue contained a manifesto that would set out the goals for the journal's subsequent issues:

> Its [the journal's] poets are always obsessed with the possibilities of sound, and anxious to explore it meaningfully in relation to heir position in the world: their stance in 'circumstance.'[49]

Their insistence on poetry as sound returns again and again as a subject of interest. One editor, George Bowering wrote in the second issue:

> I have come to realize (as has LeRoi Jones) that poetry now of us young fellers is the what of the way we sound." ... the poet's job is to excruciate the natural

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[47] Published in Vancouver, British Columbia, from 1961-1963, *Tish* was a literary journal (containing primarily poetry) in the tradition of such underground literary magazines as *Origin* (Cid Corman, editor) and *The Floating Bear* (LeRoy Jones and Diana Di Palma, editors). The editors were students of University of British Columbia professor Warren Tallman, who described Canadian poetry as being in a "universist" tradition. The complete run of *Tish* was published as a collection in 1975 by Talonbooks.

[48] *Tish* (Vancouver, BC: Talonbooks, 1975), 84. Originally published in *Tish* 4 (December 1961).

[49] *Tish*, 13. Originally published Frank Davey, *Tish* 1 (1961).

> rhythms, word clusters of his own culture's idiom, as controlled by the breath, syntax - to find natural association of object/action/words.[50]

Editor Jamie Reid later invoked musical metaphors to describe the kinship between this new form of experimental poetry and the sensorial experience. He instructed the reader to:

> Listen to the sound of it. Pay attention to the automobiles and trains and people and jazzbands and Beethoven. Listen to the strange music of your own voice in the poem.[51]

The editors and poets involved with *Tish* were motivated by the potential for the literary arts to evolve into a multi-sensorial artform.

Throughout the 1960s the Canadian artistic community became open about the role that the auditory sense played in their work, evident in the published material by members of *Tish* and the WSP. In addition to their ideas, Gould also shared mutual interests with his contemporary Marshall McLuhan in the realm of sound and technology. Gould and McLuhan's relationship took shape at an important moment in both professional lives. In 1963, McLuhan was at the height of his career as a public intellect in the midst of a especially productive period. Only a year after the publication of *The Gutenberg Galaxy,* he was appointed head of the Centre for Culture and Technology at the University of Toronto which supported research on communications and new media.[52] Robert Fulford vividly described the prominence of this group of thinkers in Toronto's intellectual community in the 1950s and 60s:

> You could not live in Toronto in those years, and talk with other intellectuals, without stumbling across these ideas or their enemies or both. Gould was one of

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[50] *Tish,* 31. Originally published George Bowering, *Tish* 2 (October 1961).

[51] *Tish,* 71. Originally published Jamie Reid, *Tish* 4, (December 1961).

[52] This group of intellectuals is sometimes referred to as the Toronto School of Communications Theory, a name introduced by Donald F. Theall, one of McLuhan's doctoral students. Marshall McLuhan and Harold Innis are among the best-known of this group that also includes Edmund Snow Carpenter and Eric Havelock. A 2007 edited volume provides scholarly analysis of the research and ideas that guided them, though it focuses mainly on Harold Innis' and Marshall McLuhan's work. Rita Watson and Menahem Blondheim, eds., *The Toronto School of Communication Theory: Interpretations, Extensions, Applications*, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2007).

> the people most clearly affected. In that atmosphere, it was natural for anyone to wonder about the possibilities of the media they were using.[53]

A year after McLuhan's appointment to the Center, he published his groundbreaking volume *The Medium is the Massage* and the next, *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man.* Gould retired from the concert stage around this time, dedicating more time and energy to thinking about media and technology and eventually producing his radio documentaries including the first installment of *Solitude Trilogy*.[54] Gould's and McLuhan's most ground-breaking theories incubated around the same time, in the same city, and emerged from the same zeitgeist.

Faced with a quickly evolving culture of technology and mass media, Gould and McLuhan shared many topics of interest. Their collaborations were most importantly, mutually beneficial. Gould offered specialized expertise particularly relevant to McLuhan's thoughts on the relationship between the performer and audience and McLuhan in turn, contributed a different perspective on sound technology and the implications of media formats on the musician and his audience. McLuhan's theories seem to have provided a framework in which Gould articulated his philosophy about technology beyond his perspectives on musical recording. Fulford suggested that McLuhan's work played a significant role not only in the production of Gould's documentaries, but also in their reception:

> I think McLuhan's theories, and his own practice, helped legitimize the complexity of Gould's work in Gould's own eyes. In the years when The Solitude Trilogy was appearing critics and audiences often found the overlapping voices and apparently unresolved themes more boggling than stimulating. Gould could take heart from the fact that people said that same about McLuhan's work. Moreover, McLuhan, as a student of modern literature, emphasized process rather than product and claimed to be opening up any given subject rather than

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[53] Fulford, "Glenn Gould in the Age of Radio," 20.

[54] Though Gould had been aware of McLuhan's ideas, their relationship began in 1964 when he interviewed McLuhan for the CBC program "The Prospects of Recording." Their subsequent correspondence allowed them to discuss the material from the program. In turn, McLuhan invited Gould to contribute an article to the University of Toronto journal *Horizons*.

> delivering the last word on it. Wasn't this also what the Solitude Trilogy was all about?[55]

If Gould felt legitimized by McLuhan's uneasy reception among the general public, he likely found McLuhan's polemical ideas about media and mediation further confirmation that his radio work was on the cutting edge. McLuhan was concerned with radio as a medium of communication, but rather than focus on the environmental and artistic implications of radio broadcasting he took special interest in the sensory effects of radio on the individual listener. On this matter, he believed that radio played an even greater role than other forms of sound-based media: "Even more than telephone or telegraph, radio is that extension of the central nervous system that is matched only by human speech itself."[56] His comments fueled his idea that mass media served as an "extension" of the human sensory experience.

Gould's attention to the act of listening strongly reinforces the views shared with others of "the radio generation." And while radio as a medium was deeply fascinating to him, it was also part of the importance of all aspects of the radio listening experience: an awareness of sound, acoustic space, the relationship between sound and listening, and the fantastical possibilities afforded by radio broadcasting to create new environmental soundscapes and transmit them across geographic space to different and far away locales. Rather than suggest a one-way flow of influence, I envision this network of Canadian thinkers and institutions as an imagined community, to use Benedict Anderson's concept.[57] Although not always in direct contact with the members of this extended and international community, Gould was similarly engaged in these

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[55] Fulford, "Glenn Gould in the Age of Radio," 20.

[56] Marshall McLuhan, *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man* (Corte Madera, CA: Gingko Press, 2003), 302.

[57] Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso Press, 1983).

topics of discussion that in large part shaped the innovative production methods that he used in his radio documentaries.

Radio and Acoustic Space

Like others in the field of radio drama, Gould relied on sound to evoke physical and imaginary spaces. Concerned with the possibilities of denoting aspects of acoustic space, Gould's attention to acoustic space had origins in his experience of radio drama. Gould cited the CBC writer and producer of "Sunday Night Stage" program Andrew Allan, as a major influence:

> . . . I used to listen to the inevitable "Sunday Night Stage" something-or-others for which, in those days, Andrew Allan & Co., were responsible. I was fascinated with radio. A lot of that kind of ostensibly theatrical radio was also, in a very real sense, documentary-making of a rather high order. At any rate, the distinctions between drama and documentary-making were quite often, it seemed to me, happily and successfully set aside.[58]

Allan and his colleagues were particular about the space where they broadcast their live drama program. As Allan recalled his memoir, the studio where they recorded - an old CBC concert studio on McGill Street in Toronto - had a unique acoustic stamp that was as much a part of his show as its other sonic elements. He wrote:

> What we liked was the acoustical variety we could get there. It came to have an atmosphere of its own [for us].[59]

The relationship between physical space and its role in sound production, crucial to Allan's experience of creating his radio programs, was also as a means to an end. Because acoustical effects were an important part of the production the physical space of the studio played a key role in the age of limited post-production. In Allan's experience the relationship between the

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[58] "Radio as Music," reprinted in Gould, *The Glenn Gould Reader,* ed. Page, 374. Also quoted in Geoffrey Payzant, *Glenn Gould: Music & Mind* (New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold, 1978), 134.

[59] Andrew Allan, *A Self Portrait* (Toronto: MacMillan Canada, 1974), 108-109.

tactile qualities of physical world were inseparable from sound itself. *Stage* dramatist Gerald Noxon, Gould noted, was another key innovator who imported cinematic concepts of montage into the radio studio from his work in film production; Gould heard, for instance, some "very sophisticated microphone placement," which inspired his own later efforts to convey "space and proximity" in radio.[60]

The prominent role that acoustics played in the production of CBC radio dramas influenced Gould's approach to the trilogy, particularly "The Latecomers." Traditional radio shows or documentaries of the 1930s and 40s were recorded within an existing physical space. Depending on the desires of the production team, the acoustic profile of the room could be preserved in the recording process, simulating the physical relationship between people in dialogue, for instance, what James Lastra referred to as a simulative reproduction.[61] Gould's contrapuntal radio, on the other hand, fabricates acoustic space. The source material is void of any associative acoustic property and the intentions of the technique are not to create a sense of any real environmental space.

Gould created the contrapuntal effect in post-production with voices that were independently recorded, so he wasn't re-creating the acoustic space of a recording studio. Instead he created a sense of fictional space by adjusting dynamics and fading tracks to the right and left, creating a spatial relationship between the orator and the listener. Gould manipulated dynamics, dissolves, and the simultaneity of the interviews in all three documentaries, but in the second and third documentaries, Gould maximized the spatial effects made possible with stereo

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[60] Bazzana, *Wondrous Strange*, 302.

[61] James Lastra, *Sound Technology and the American cinema: Perception, Representation, Modernity* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000), 125-128.

broadcasting.[62] Gould revealed that his primary goal in doing so was to create tension and enhance narrative:

> You see, the sense of area, the sense of space and proximity in the technology is just not being used at all. But it is used the moment you say to someone, "But this has dramatic significance."
>
> . . . Because the moment you define characters as doing something - the moment you involve them in action - people assume that they ought to be more or less close, more or less distant from the auditor. The moment you give them only thoughts to express, the attitude is "Why don't they just sit there and tell you that?" And that's been the whole problem with documentary radio, you know. Thoughts have been disengaged from action and movement, and I think that's one barrier which should be dissolved.[63]

This concern with the relationship between sound and physical space is one he shared with R. Murray Schafer and Marshall McLuhan as well. Schafer's writings as they pertained to the WSP frequently foregrounded the relationship between acoustic space and sound. The concept of the soundscape so central to Schafer's projects relied squarely on the physical setting and its imposition on the acoustic experience. According to Schafer, the soundscape consisted of sounds and their relationship to "geography and climate: water, wind, forests, plains, birds, insects and animals."[64] Schafer's observations about acoustic space were not limited to the natural. He also discussed technology in terms of its impact on the soundscape and the personal sound experience.

Like Schafer, McLuhan was also influenced by the concept of space, a concept that extended into all aspects of his philosophy. Literature scholar Richard Cavell argues in his 2002 monograph that Marshall McLuhan's body of thought is best understood from a spatial understanding and that despite McLuhan's many subjects of interest, space in all of its diverse

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[62] Unlike the second two documentaries, "The Idea of North" was created and broadcast in monoaural sound.

[63] "Radio as Music," reprinted in Gould, *The Glenn Gould Reader,* ed. Page, 382.

[64] R. Murray Schafer, *The Tuning of the World* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1977), 9-10.

forms, is a common concept to all of them.[65] Influenced by McLuhan, Schafer regarded the radio as "extended acoustic space," though his understanding departed from McLuhan's in that for Schafer, radio technology was the cause of an interruption of natural acoustic spaces, provoking anxiety in response to its fragmentary nature.[66] Schafer envisioned sound technology - specifically, the ubiquity of sound as a result of technology - as a wall that enclosed "the individual with the familiar and excluding the enemy."[67] Reminiscent of Gould's fascination with solitude and sound recording, Schafer also expressed the idea that new technology enabled the listener to isolate one's self, shielding sonic distractions with more noise.[68]

Gould likened the modern recording process to filmmaking, particularly as it pertained to the use of multiple takes and the post-production editing process. Defending his position that a modern musician should be free to produce his performance, he stated that if in film, "many takes are the rule, not the exception," then the same should hold true without stigma in recording studio.[69] Gould's wishes were never fully embraced among classical musicians, but the cross-genre influences between filmmaking and sound production pushed him to think about the relationship between the perception of acoustic and spatial dimensions in his various projects in the late 1960s and early 1970s.[70] Among his conventional musical recordings, his experimentation with quadrophonic microphone placement allowed him to experiment with multi-track recordings and

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[65] Richard Cavell, *McLuhan in Space: A Cultural Geography* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2002), xiii-xiv.

[66] Schafer, *Tuning*, 92.

[67] Schafer, *Tuning*, 93.

[68] Schafer, *Tuning*, 95.

[69] Glenn Gould, *The Art of Glenn Gould, "*On Records and Recording," Radio Broadcast, November 13 1966, AIN 661113-6, CBC Radio Archive.

[70] This point has also been raised by Kevin Bazzana in *Wondrous Strange*, 265.

a microphone technique he called "acoustic orchestration."[71] Gould used this approach, strongly influenced by an dimensional awareness that he regarded as similar to that of a filmmaker, in his recordings of Scriabin's Fifth Sonata and other works by Scriabin and Sibelius.[72] Four microphones positioned around the studio allowed him unprecedented control over the musical "shots" as a result of greater accessibility to separate tracks, giving him creative freedom that allowed him to convey a new sense of space and environment.[73]

Gould's interest in the link between acoustic sound and space crossed over to his radio documentaries. In his discussion of "The Latecomers" he described scenes in terms of staging, as if he had directed a play or a film:

> There is a scene in my documentary about Newfoundland - "The Latecomers" - which would appear to be taking place between, I suppose, a man and wife, certainly a lady and gentleman who are engaged in rather intimate conversation. The scene is set very simply - the gentleman is slightly to the left of center ("The Latecomers," unlike "North," is in stereo, of course), the lady slight to the right. There is an open space between them, as it appears, through which one hears water - the sea being the basso continuo for "The Latecomers" as the train was for "North.[74]

Gould described the prologue and the epilogue as capturing a very dramatic sense of motion:

> There are two scenes in particular in the program on Newfoundland that relate to what we're talking about - the prologue and epilogue. They are the only segments of that program in which the entire cast, which was a formidable one - fourteen characters - appears, and they appear as kind of Greek chorus . . . In these two segments, it seemed important to have everybody on deck, and consequently, the opening is a long, slow pull-in as though from a helicopter, into and through what would appear to be a fog bank. As you pass through the fog bank, voices begin to

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[71] Bazzana, *Wondrous Strange,* 265. As Bazzana points out, Gould sometimes referred to it as "acoustic choreography."

[72] Gould's released his recordings of Sibelius' Three Sonatinas (Opus 67) and Kylliki in 1977 to mixed reviews. Andrew Kazdin mixed Gould's recording of Scriabin's Fifth Sonata for release in 1986 in a conventional audio format. Kazdin reflects on the process of Gould's quadrophonic recording in his memoir, *Creative Lying* (New York: E.P. Dutton, 1989), 137-142. These Scriabin and Sibelius recordings was recently mastered by Paul Théberge and released in 2013 as Glenn Gould, *Acoustic Orchestrations: Works By Scriabin & Sibelius*, Sony Music B008L8OFJU.

[73] Bazzana, *Wondrous Strange,* 265-266.

[74] "Radio as Music," printed in Gould, *The Glenn Gould Reader,* ed. Page, 377.

> accumulate around you. They are, however, static - as though marooned, unable to move. For the listeners, however, the perspective seems to be moving, because one becomes more and more aware of a cliff against which surf is breaking.[75]

Invoking visual metaphors, Gould envisioned the radio scenes very clearly in terms of cinematic grandeur. His comments about his experimentation with stereo sound also appeal to a smaller-scale sense of motion, again linking visual metaphor to sonic actualization:

> Whereas the prologue the water motion is left-to-right and the cliff seems to be someplace slightly right of center with each receding wave pulling back out across the screen, in the epilogue, on the other hand, we are clearly pulling away from the island, and as this transpired, the water motion changes and becomes left and right alternately. The effect is as though you are looking down from a considerable height and picking up surf sounds on both sides.[76]

An awareness of acoustic space played an important role in Gould's *Solitude Trilogy.* It was also symptomatic of a broader trend towards an increased attention to sound and the act of listening. As I have shown, Gould, R. Murray Schafer, the writers of *Tish*, and Marshall McLuhan shared these concerns, indicating a general fascination within Canada beginning in the late 1950s with these topics. Turning now to the three radio programs, I examine Gould's approach to the compositional process. Evidence from the documentaries as well as archival sources demonstrate how these issues emerged through Gould's portrayal of acoustic space, the relationship between sound composition and depictions of the environment, and his fascination with speech as music. More than just demonstrating a deeper interest in sound and radio, however, Gould's *Solitude Trilogy* is a window onto the different avenues that he took in his sonic explorations.

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[75] "Radio as Music," printed in Gould, *The Glenn Gould Reader*, ed. Page, 383.

[76] "Radio as Music," printed in Gould, *The Glenn Gould Reader*, ed. Page, 383-384.

"The Idea of North" (1967); A Sonic North and a Conflicted Soundscape

For Gould, the allure of radio originated with its most basic function, to carry sound wirelessly and alert listeners to the simple pleasure of the audio experience. To overcome the challenges of reaching across Canada's geographic expanse, radio was as important to national unity as the railway, reaching the far north as well as east and west. Radio's geographical reach piqued Gould's interest, a point he reiterated in his introduction to the broadcast of "The Idea of North" by the CBC Northern Services. In contrast to his more utilitarian lead-in for the National Broadcast of the program, Gould waxed philosophical in his Northern Services introduction, contemplating the sensorial interface that existed in the radio-listening experience between human and machine:

> It seems to me astonishing that radio, the simplest, best and most direct means of recording our auditory impressions of the world, should have largely ignored this aspect of its function. In its desire to provide for us clear concise portraits of the events which transpire in our world, radio is perhaps by-passing its own mirror-like function.
>
> When those first fascinated listeners sat wired to their crystal sets and recognised another human voice from five miles away, it was the fact of the voice, and not the message it presented that was important ... and access to information of news, or the weather, or any other reportage no matter how vital - was at that moment and in relation to the sensory experience of recognising another human voice, secondary.[77]

Was Gould suggesting that the themes that emerged from linguistic meaning were less important than sound itself? His attention to thematic organization and editing of the interview suggest otherwise, but Gould reveals that sound is part of the message and that the act of listening might reveal more than the words alone.

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[77] Glenn Gould, "Introduction to an Idea, CBC Northern Services," Item 1979-20 9-32, Microfilm Reel 4, Glenn Gould fonds, Library and Archives Canada.

Sound and its relationship to the north has long figured into myths and identity narratives for citizens of nordic nations. Daniel Grimley, for instance, has studied the influence of nordic landscapes in the music of Edvard Grieg and Carl Nielsen, particularly as they pertain to concepts of nationhood. Grimley explains that Grieg has been heralded by his countrymen as a "founding father" of Norwegian music, largely because of his appeal to landscape imagery and use of folk tune material.[78] The connection between Norwegian national identity and interpretations of the land is characterized by a particular cultural trope that Grimley identifies as "a sense of remoteness and inaccessibility that serves as a symbol of perceived Norwegian isolation," not unlike the barren desolation perceived of the Canadian arctic.[79] In the case of Nielsen, Grimley argues that the tension between opposing idea of Danish-ness and modernism is "central to a proper understanding of Nielsen's life and music."[80] The land was emblematic of Nielsen's national identity and the provincial origins and rural upbringing that were central to his persona legitimized him as a result.

Similarly to Grieg and Nielsen, Gould's relationship with the north was tied to the idea of nationhood. Aware of the powerful influence of iconic landscape images from his childhood, Gould recalled the "romanticized, art-nouveau-tinged" paintings by members of the Group of Seven that "in my day adorned virtually every second schoolroom."[81] These images, as Gould explained, forged his early associations between Canada and landscape. Detecting a kinship between Gould's artistic impulse and that of Group of Seven founding member Lawren Harris, Paul Hjartarson's 1996 analysis of "The Idea of North" juxtaposes Gould's documentary

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[78] Incidentally, Gould claimed ancestral relation to the Norwegian composer, Edvard Grieg. Bazzana, *Wondrous Strange,* 30.

[79] Daniel Grimley, *Grieg: Music, Landscape and Norwegian Identity* (Woodbridge, UK: Boydell Press, 2005), 2.

[80] Daniel Grimley, *Carl Nielsen and the Idea of Modernism* (Woodbridge, UK: Boydell Press, 2010), 2.

[81] Glenn Gould, "'The Idea of North': An Introduction," printed in Gould, *The Glenn Gould Reader*, ed. Page, 391.

alongside Harris' paintings and philosophical ruminations, arguing that their commonality lies in their similarly complex perspectives on Canadian north. Hjartarson claims that they both were particularly taken with what the north represented. "For Gould, the North was less a landscape than a figure for solitude and isolation; his particular concern was the effect of solitude on those who venture north."[82]

In fact there is evidence that Gould was as interested in the north as a physical place as he was in the idea of north as a symbol of isolation. In a press release announcing the first broadcast of "The Idea of North" Gould stated that his concept of the north was intimately bound to the idea of solitude, a theme that would eventually emerge as the connective thread of all three radio programs:

> Of course I am fascinated by the look, feel and smell of the land. Because there are fewer people there, I find that my powers of observation are sharper. . . . The North has been a filter for my thoughts. Some of my clearest, sharpest thinking has been done there. the only powers you sharpen among the pacemakers, the leaders, are rhetorical powers. Decisions that shape your life are best made alone.[83]

But Gould also communicated affection for the physical aspects of the north - "the look, feel and smell of the land." To Gould, the physical and the metaphysical north were inseparable concepts - two sides of the same nordic coin. Others, such as environmental historian Peter A. Coates, have also shared this association between wilderness settings and silence. Coates cites the 1964 Wilderness Act in his sound-centered research of environmental history, arguing that a greater awareness of sound can only be of benefit to environmental historians:

> Silence is an implicit ingredient of solitude and contemplative recreation, central to the definition of wilderness. The 1964 Wilderness Act refers to 'outstanding

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[82] Paul Hjartarson, "Inward Journeys and Interior Landscapes," *Essays on Canadian Writing* 59 (Fall 1996), 66.

[83] "Glenn Gould's Idea of North," Press release from CBC-FM Radio, December 13 1967, Item 1979-20 51-13-2, Microfilm Reel 37, Glenn Gould fonds, Library and Archives Canada.

> opportunities for solitude' and to 'the earth and its community of life untrammeled by man.'[84]

Much like Schafer's advocacy for preserving the wilderness for its visual beauty as well as its aural serenity, Coates implies that environmental preservation is intimately tied with the experience of silence. It seems incongruous, then, that Gould would convey his ideas about the north using his contrapuntal method. The north, a place supposedly barren and quiet is clamorous and full of utterances in Gould's "The Idea of North"- the "basso continuo" of the railway converges with a multitude of human voices and a recording of the final movement of Sibelius' Fifth Symphony.

The cacophony of voices is particularly chaotic in the opening sequence of the program. In the opening three minutes, Marianne Schroeder, Robert Phillips, and Frank Vallee ruminate on their northern experiences and Gould's contrapuntal editing reflects the dissonance of their accounts. Here, Gould constructs an exposition about the collapse of expectation, a metaphor for Gould's intentions to deconstruct this "idea" of north. The cultural trope that often emerges in discussions of the north, combining both awe and anxiety, emerges in all three voice parts, indeed it appears in some form by all five of the characters in the documentary. Schroeder is the first to speak, blissfully recalling the north's physical vistas. She remembers her initial flight into the arctic, only to confess that the polar bears and seals she had expected to see were absent from the landscape. Vallee's voice enters, skeptical of what he perceives as a fictional virtuous "northmanship." Phillips completes the trio, admitting the difficulty for those who have experienced the north and letting go of that enduring first impression.

Whereas in previous sound interpretations the human presence in the north has been expressed through appropriations of Inuit language or wordless expressions of anxiety about the

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[84] Peter A. Coates, "The Strange Stillness of the Past: Toward an Environmental History of Sound and Noise," *Environmental History* 10, No. 4 (October 2005), 649.

north's wild unpredictability, the land in its untouched state is frequently regarded as an empty resonant space. Composers have gravitated towards high-pitched, sustained notes and minimalist techniques to depict these physical characteristics of the northern regions. Gould challenges these ideas. Rather than portraying a serene nordic landscape, his imaginary space is one of human encounter. At once we go from hearing phrases, then words, and eventually, an incomprehensible tumult. In the sonic clutter, Gould's north is heavily populated. Gould's use of three simultaneous tape loops on the mono recording amplifies this claustrophobic spatial effect; this is especially true in contrast to Gould's subsequent radio pieces in which the stereo recording creates a sense of three-dimensional space.

Technology does not only enable Gould's imagined north, it also infiltrates the soundscape itself. The aural penetration of sounds from the Muskeg express is the setting for the narrative of Gould's encounter with Wally MacLean, the program's narrator. It also functions as a sonic signifier, neutralizing the fear that often characterizes the southerner's encounter with the arctic. Gould referred to the constant rumble as a basso continuo and it functions similarly to its musical counterpart: the listener becomes habituated to its progression - it provides, both in terms of register and theme, a grounding for what goes on above it.

Taking up the WSP's influential concept of the soundscape, I propose that "The Idea of North," connecting Gould's documentary to Schafer's attention to sound and place. Hildegaard Westerkamp, a founding member of the WSP, described the soundscape as an "intimate reflection of the social, technological, and natural conditions of an area" and Gould's contrapuntal technique might effectively be referred to, in the context of the concept, as a

conflicted soundscape.[85] Although Gould probably did not align himself with the reactionist politics of the WSP, his interest in the practice of listening coincides with their interest in sound environments. Schafer and his colleagues turned to technological innovation, mediating sound through their practice of acoustic ecology, electroacoustic techniques such as granular synthesis, and soundscape composition. For this group of musicians and thinkers, technological mediation presented a new avenue to transform sound and challenge the very nature of their listening culture.

If Schafer were to describe Gould's fabricated soundscape, he might call it "schizophonic," that is, a collection of sonic incongruities that have little to do with one another, and no relationship within a "natural" setting. In *The Tuning of the World,* Schafer quotes Hermann Hesse from his 1927 novel *Der Steppenwolf* to illustrate the violence that characterizes "schizophonic" sound:

> It takes hold of some music played where you please, without distinction or discretion, lamentably distorted, to boot, and chucks it into space to land where it has no business to be . . . When you listen to radio you are a witness of the everlasting war between idea and appearance, between time and eternity, between the human and the divine . . .
>
> radio . . . projects the most lovely music without regard into the impossible places, into snug drawing - rooms and attics and into the midst of chattering, guzzling, yawning and sleeping listeners, and exactly as it strips this music of its sensuous beauty, spoils and scratches and beslimes it and yet cannot altogether destroy its spirit.[86]

To Schafer, radio broadcasting is a culprit, causing a maniacal collision between foreign noises and the beautiful harmony of human sounds. Gould's contrapuntal radio is a complete rejection of Schafer's ideal, pitting voices and sounds against one another with very little effort invested in

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[85] Hildegard Westerkamp, "Bauhaus and Soundscape Studies - Exploring Connections and Differences," lecture delivered at the Goethe Institut Tokyo (October 1994), http://www.sfu.ca/~westerka/writings%20page/articles%20pages/bauhaus.html, last accessed September 9 2014.

[86] Schafer, *The Tuning of the World*, 92.

maintaing natural conversational rhythm or group dynamic. Gould does very little to unite the voices into conversational harmony. Every player speaks almost in monologue, without any indication of whom they are addressing their statements, providing even greater sense of aural disorientation.

Despite long-held associations between wilderness and silence, Gould was not the first to explore the north - real or imagined - by its sound. The Canadian-Icelandic anthropologist Vilhjámur Steffánson became a pioneer in Canadian arctic exploration when he documented his expeditions and life among the Inuit in the early 1900s. His prolific writings contain evocative descriptions of the sounds of his encounters. They are striking in their depth and detail. Here is an excerpt from his 1915 collection, *The Friendly Arctic:*

> In the far North not only is the ground continually cracking when the temperature is changing and especially when it is dropping, but near the sea at least there is, not always but on occasion, a continuous and to those in exposed situations a terrifying noise. When the ice is being piled against a polar coast there is a high-pitched screeching as one cake slides over the other, like the thousand-times magnified creaking of a rusty hinge. There is the crashing when cakes as big as a church wall, after being tilted on edge, finally pass beyond their equilibrium and topple down upon the ice; and when extensive floes, perhaps six or more feet in thickness, gradually bend under the resistless pressure of the pack until they buckle up and snap, there is a groaning as of supergiants in torment and a booming which at a distance of a mile or two sounds like a cannonade.
>
> Shackleton's men now and again commence their diary entries with the words "din, Din, DIN." The literary north is barren, dismal and desolate. Here we are dealing with words of indefinite meaning into which each of us reads what significance he chooses.[87]

Steffánson documents first-hand a moment in which his auditory sense reigns supreme, calling into question what has been the status quo in the imaginary sonic north. Rather than silence or a howling wind whistling through wide open spaces, he witnessed a resonant body that was host to

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[87] Vilhjámur Steffánson, *The Friendly Arctic* (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1921), 19-20.

a constant battery of noises and sound. Almost a century after Steffánson's daring journey into the northern topography, this vignette is a complete reversal of what remains characteristic of sound interpretations of the north - stillness, starkness, silence, and solitude still prevail.

Steffánson's narration is striking in juxtaposition to Gould's "The Idea of North." They both observe sound as central to their understanding of the north - as imagined and as experienced. Of course, Gould hadn't been to the Arctic Circle, never having it made it past the last stop - Fort Churchill, Manitoba - on the Muskeg Express.[88] Yet, like the northern explorers who physically traversed the north, Gould expressed ambivalence; reverence and awe as well as dissatisfaction. North was merely a point of access to the experience of solitude. He offered no conclusions, but urged his audience to explore solitude with him through sound.

Gould continued to be fascinated with the themes of northernness and solitude even beyond his exploration in "The Idea of North." Almost fifteen years later, he planned a sound documentary that was to be included on his 1981 *Silver Jubilee Album* entitled "A Glenn Gould Fantasy," but only made it to the preliminary planning stages. As revealed in a series of primary source documents that include a track list and the script for a comic scene entitled "Hysteric Return," Gould intended to use eight tracks of music, sound, and dialogue.[89] The scene enacts a fictional scenario: his triumphant return to the concert stage on an oil drilling rig in the Arctic region Beaufort Sea. Once again, Gould imagined himself in isolation and in the north.

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[88] The Muskeg Express is the railway line that goes further north than any railway line in Canada, from Winnipeg to Churchill in northern Manitoba, on the south coast of Hudson's Bay. The trip is still offered by VIA Rail, called the "Winnipeg - Churchill Train," generally as a tourist package for polar bear sighting. At 58 degrees latitude, Churchill is considered part of the subarctic region, just south of the Arctic Circle, which is north of 60 degrees. Gould was notoriously averse to flying and thus made his northward journeys exclusively on land.

[89] Some of this material was printed in the journal *GlennGould.* "'Glenn Gould's Hysteric Return': A recently recovered manuscript from the Library and Archives Canada" *GlennGould* 12 No. 2 (Fall 2007).

Gould turned to contrapuntal technique, this time including a dense sonic collection of pre-recorded sounds: the arctic wind, seagulls, splashing water, and a barking seal. CBC radio announcer Byron Rossiter describes the events, interviewing the chairman of the oil company, voiced by Gould. A restless audience joins him on the rig. Like the train sounds that rumble throughout "The Idea of North," the continuous sound of a turbine underlies in this contrapuntal mix. These sound effects provide the accompaniment to Gould's performance of the last few measures of Weber's *Konzertstück* in F Minor (he used the recording from a 1951 CBC radio broadcast of his performance). In "Hysteric Return" Gould returns to the idea of solitude and the north, exploring its connection to sound, and like "The Idea of North" he fabricates a soundscape that curiously, interprets an environment conducive to physical isolation with a dense mix of sounds of people, animals, and machinery.

Despite the prominent role that north played in Gould's artistic persona, his exploration of solitude in the subsequent two installations of *Solitude Trilogy* veered sharply away from the northern setting. The quotation in the opening of this chapter by newspaper columnist Pat Pearce was published in response to Gould's "The Idea of North," demonstrates an acknowledgement of the broader implications of Gould's experimental sonic format and the permeability of the borders between categories of "spoken sound, musical sound, noise."[90] Gould expressed ideas about technological mediation that similarly made note of the connection between music and sound:

> "it [music mediated by technology] is the way of the future...I think our whole notion of what music really is has forever merged with all the sounds around us, you know, everything our environment makes available."[91]

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[90] Pearce, "What we can learn," Library and Archives Canada.

[91] Friedrich, *A Life,*185.

From a technological perspective, Gould regarded sound as sound - the difference between music and noise was inconsequential. In this context, his use of musical vocabulary and terminology indicates perhaps that Gould preferred to communicate about sound in musical terms even if he understood it in its undifferentiated form. This point becomes more significant in the context of the second installation of the trilogy, "The Latecomers."

Speech as Sound; Speech as Music ("The Latecomers" [1969])

Commissioned as the inaugural program for CBC's first stereo broadcast facilities in 1969, "The Latecomers" documents the experiences of a remote community in the Maritime province of Newfoundland and their response to government efforts to consolidate and centralize its governance.[92] In addition to being a portrait of the people, Gould tied their personal reflections of living in Newfoundland with the province's natural features:

> [The program] was (obviously) to be about the province as an island; about the sea, which keeps the mainland and the mainlanders at ferry-crossing's length; about the problems of maintaining a minimally technologized style of life in a maximally technologized age.[93]

Much like the multi-scene form of "The Idea of North," Gould structured "The Latecomers" as a five-scene program with additional prologue and epilogue, each scene roughly organized by theme. The Press Release for the documentary describes the scenes as follows:

> There is a Prologue which looks at the community as through a fog-bank. Scene One is about the members of the village; Scene Two deals with anarchy and collectivity; Scene Three, insularity and the creative process; Scene Four,

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[92] Because of the importance of stereo sound to Gould's creative intentions and the purpose of the documentary, the program was only broadcast on the CBC-FM Stereo Stations on November 12 1969. Like "The Idea of North," "The Latecomers" was broadcast as a special program as part of the *Ideas* series. "The Latecomers Press Release," Item 1970-20 7-85, Microfilm Reel 7, Glenn Gould fonds, Library and Archives Canada.

[93] Gould, "'The Idea of North': An Introduction," reprinted in Gould, *The Glenn Gould Reader,* ed. Page, 394.

> education and abstraction; and Scene Five is about the death of the village and is a recapitulation of the first scene. In the Epilogue all the characters are present.[94]

Gould's interview transcripts and production notes provide evidence that the scene divisions were an important aspect of planning the program. Final scripts show detailed information including the name of the interviewee, dynamic markings (for fade-in and fade-outs), and reel numbers from the original recorded interviews. These scripts indicate that the program was planned well in advance of the editing process. Featuring interviews with fourteen community members, Gould's "cast" was significantly larger than the group of five interviewees in "The Idea of North." In addition to the increased sound options offered by stereo capabilities, Gould also had a much larger group of voices - and therefore timbres and voice ranges - to work with.[95]

Returning to the theme of solitude as it relates to geographical isolation, "The Latecomers" benefited from the new broadcasting system's stereo capabilities. In the official press release announcing the program, stereo sound became a key selling point for the radio documentary not because of its improved sound quality, but because of its contribution to the program's content:

> The dramatic and sculptural quality Gould refers to is a total three-dimensional feeling a listener receives upon hearing this drama because of the stereophonic reproduction and of the lyrical, almost musical way in which the voices float out of the speakers to the symphonic-like background of surf sound.[96]

Most of the program features only one speaking voice at a time with short moments of simultaneous voices in a contrapuntal texture. With regards to the increased sonic depth offered by stereo sound, Gould relied more heavily on environmental sounds than the placement of the

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[94] "The Latecomers Press Release," Library and Archives Canada.

[95] Although Gould interviewed fourteen individuals for "The Latecomers" he only used material from five interviewees (Leslie Harris, Lester Burry, Eugene Young, Ted Russell, Penny Rowe, and Harold Horwood) in the five main scenes. He used recordings of all fourteen voices, however, in the Prologue and Epilogue.

[96] "The Latecomers Press Release," Library and Archives Canada.

voices, shaping a constant stream of ocean wave sounds throughout the program rather than pitting voice against voice as he did more aggressively in "The Idea of North."

Ocean sounds are central to the soundscape of the "The Latecomers," both evoking the maritime setting of the documentary and highlighting the integral relationship between the community and the land. Gould's decision-making as it pertained to the arrangement of ocean sounds in this program was, guided by the notion of acoustic space. In his recollections of the program's production, technician Lorne Tulk remembered the impact of stereo sound on Gould's creative outlook as well as its importance to the use of ocean sounds, recorded directly from the coast of Newfoundland for the purposes of the documentary:

> [Stereo sound] gave Glenn wider parameters in which to exercise his contrapuntal methods. For instance, he considered political and or ideological correctness, often placing people across the stereo picture accordingly - that is, if such leanings were known. If not, we guessed, and Glenn loved to guess. There was also a larger cast of characters in *The Latecomers* and the "basso continuo" in this program - the surf - was much more varied than the train had been in *North.* Howard Moore, a CBC technician in St. John's, volunteered to get us a variety of Newfoundland surf. He literally went all over the island, recording everything from heavy waves to gently lapping water. He sent us reams of dripping-wet tape.[97]

While the train sounds in "The Idea of North" were from CBC stock recordings and looped during the final transfer process, Gould put greater efforts into creating the "basso continuo" of ocean sounds for "The Latecomers." He deliberately sculpted a sonic environment with a variety of wave sounds and panning "shots" across the audio plane.[98] Drafts of Gould's scripts shed light on the central role that the underlying wave tracks played in unifying the program while also demarcating scenes and other moments of narrative importance. Pencil markings of crescendo

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[97] Lorne Tulk, "Remembering Glenn Gould," *Glenn Gould* 6 No. 2 (Fall 2000), 66.

[98] The audible ebb and flow of the waves throughout the program is reminiscent of R. Murray Schafer's radio program and four-track electroacoustic composition *Okeanos* from the same year. Conceived of in the spirit of a radio documentary, *Okeanos* was created by Schafer with the intention of being a 24-hour program composed of recorded ocean sounds, but was edited down to only an hour and a half. R. Murray Schafer, "Radical Radio," *Ear Magazine* 11/12 No. 5/1 (1987), 18.

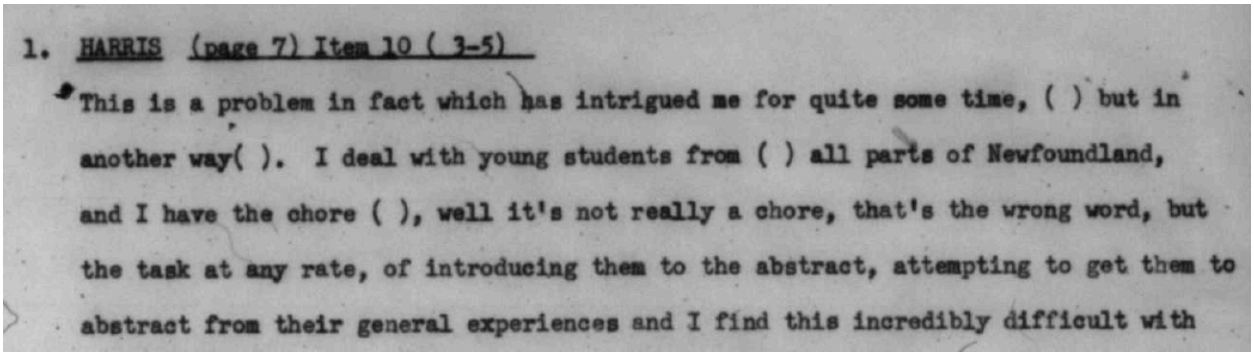
and decrescendo throughout the script indicate that the ocean sounds played their own role in the radio program. Stereo sound provided a wider audio spectrum and greater control of sound localization on the radio speakers, further contributing to Gould's expanded vision for the documentary's sound effects.

Gould's manipulation of sound is often relegated to a second-tier concern to thematic meaning in discussions of his radio documentaries. But he shaped interviews and drew out themes to treat sounds as sonic objects with the words independent of their role as signifiers. Gould recalled meticulously editing one interview for the program with great attention to the sounds themselves. In order to remove all of the "ums" and "ahs" from the interview, he had to perform over 1600 edits, taking him three weekends to complete because to Gould, they disrupted the flow of sound and thus the rhythm of his composition.[99] Interview transcripts from the Gould collection contain ample evidence of the extent of the editing, especially in the interviews with Leslie Harris who Gould used as the primary vocal anchor and narrator to the program (Figure 4.1).[100] Not to render linguistic meaning absent or insignificant in the work, but rather to suggest that cadence, phrase, rhythm, and the "grain" of the voice, bring to light another dimension to the listening experience.

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[99] Payzant, *Music & Mind,* 133.

[100] "Gould has chosen as narrator Dr. Leslie Harris, Dean of Arts at Memorial University in St. Johns, Newfoundland. Gould says: "He is an extraordinary man. He had come from a small out-port village destroyed by government order." From "The Latecomers Press Release," Library and Archives Canada.



1. HARRIS (page 7) Item 10 (3-5)

This is a problem in fact which has intrigued me for quite some time, ( ) but in another way( ). I deal with young students from ( ) all parts of Newfoundland, and I have the chore ( ), well it's not really a chore, that's the wrong word, but the task at any rate, of introducing them to the abstract, attempting to get them to abstract from their general experiences and I find this incredibly difficult with

Figure 4.1 Page from a draft script of "The Latecomers." The parentheses indicate where words were edited out.[101]

Gould's efforts towards editing the rhythmic speech patterns of his interviews can be understood within a broader attention to sound and the auditory experience. Conscious of the impact that poetic rhythm of the interviews could have on the radio program, his attention to these features of speech falls in line with statements made by the editors of *Tish* in the early 1960s. In a 1961 edition of *Tish* journal, editor Frederic Wah published the following comments about speech and the importance of rhythm and meter to the experience of reading poetry:

> I do repeat: "consonants as beats and the vowels carrying that melody." Keep it simple. Remember, you guys, any sound can come in (to you) but the word is what comes out - i.e. you CONSTRUCT the rhythm and give the melody as a representation of you and the sound. No one gives a damn about you, the one, but you the intermingler, and becoming bigger by this, are more important.
>
> But don't get stuck within the sound of it. Dissonance sounds nice too. In fact, where is the distinction between consonance and dissonance? Soundwise, (ear) that is where the world is now. So what are you going to do about your rhyme, poet? Tone leading gets you nowhere except to the end of the line. THE RHYTHM IS THE SOUND OF COUNTING. The numbers game.[102]

Wah's statements resonate with the impulse behind Gould's editorial execution in the composition of "The Latecomers." And while their respective projects were different, their attention to aural minutia was similarly driven by an appreciation for the musical aspects of the

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[101] "Scene 5 Draft 1," Item 1979-70, 7, 64, Microfilm Reel 7, Glenn Gould fonds, Library and Archives Canada, 1.

[102] *Tish,* 51. Originally published Frederic Wah, *Tish* 3 (November 1961).

spoken word. For Gould, this motivated his editorial decisions and largely shaped, from a sonic point of view, the final outcome in the radio program.

In "The Latecomers" Gould's vision for an experimental radio documentary evolved alongside changes in technology, allowing him to explore beyond the nordic theme of his first program into new sonic realms of acoustic space and dramatic tension. The stereo capabilities of the new CBC radio broadcast facilities opened further creative doors such as a cinematic approach to sound and technology. Gould also turned his attention to musical aspects of the interviews themselves. More so than in "The Idea of North," Gould applied a heavy compositional hand to "The Latecomers." In the final program of the trilogy, "The Quiet in the Land," Gould explores these themes even further by incorporating more traditional music to the contrapuntal mix.

The Quiet in the Land

"The Quiet in the Land" is not thematically centered on themes of geographical isolation, but focuses on solitude as an outcome of religious conviction and deliberate social isolation in the Mennonite communities of Winnipeg, Manitoba and Kitchener, Ontario. To take a line from his interviewees Clarence Hiebert, Gould's based his documentary on an "in the world and not of the world concept [that] is a favourite of Mennonites, historically."[103] Chronicling the experiences and struggles of nine individuals within these communities, Gould applied the contrapuntal radio technique to his interview material, combining spoken word with sound and music collected from his journey, as well as pre-recorded music. As he did with the

[103] Glenn Gould, "The Quiet in the Land," *Solitude Trilogy,* CBC Records PSCD 2003-3.

previous two programs, Gould structured "Quiet" as a five-scene program with a prologue and epilogue.

Gould explored solitude as a theme and took the contrapuntal radio technique to new heights. His scripts show that he combined the heavy interview editing characteristic of "The Latecomers" with his cinematic approach that capitalized on the sense of three-dimensional acoustic space. Much like the transcripts for "The Latecomers," those for "Quiet" are covered in edits indicating the removal of filler words to smooth out the interviewees' speech patterns. In addition, Gould's transcripts contain visual as well as audio descriptions, suggesting a approach that again, borrowed from cinematic editing techniques that prioritized the relationship of the listener to the "action" of the program. For instance, the first page includes a description of the "General and very quiet rural outdoor ambience" and "Traffic sounds - a country road, gravel surface, and with cars..."[104] The first two pages of the script, under the sub-heading "Prologue," includes a description of the ideal location of the spectator as well as reference to "pan shots" and descriptions of how to achieve them. For instance, Gould writes

> Automobile bypasses should increase in intensity and should probably simulate a triangulation - i.e. cars, if moving from right to left, should be introduced with a slow crescendo at the beginning of the pan, should establish maximum intensity at centre screen, and should be subjected to quick fade thereafter...[105]

Alongside these techniques which emerged from those employed in the previous programs, Gould also incorporated new sound elements, especially music, in the third program.

Gould's use of music is conspicuous not only because of the prominent role it plays in contrast to the two previous programs, but also because of his thoughtful use of melody and lyrics as commentary to the narrative. Gould incorporated a greater variety of sound,

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[104] "The Quiet in the Land - draft script," Item 1970-20 11-42, Microfilm Reel 10, Glenn Gould fonds, Library and Archives Canada, 1.

[105] "The Quiet in the Land - draft script," Library and Archives Canada, 1.

challenging his listeners to engage with a denser sonic texture than he had previously. Gould hinted at the extent to which he pushed his contrapuntal technique in a written response to Margaret Reiner, a reporter at *The Mennonite Reporter*: "this sort of technique does not make for 'casual' radio listening."[106] That "Quiet" was his favorite program from the trilogy provides some evidence that it may have been the program closest to his "ideal" contrapuntal radio documentary.

The listener is almost immediately inundated with music in the opening scene where Gould simultaneously layers three musical tracks at once, including sound, voice, and music juxtaposed with environmental sound recordings and interviews. "Quiet" opens with a gradual fade-in of ambient sound: church bells signal the ecclesiastical setting of the program and its religious theme. An organ plays an introductory refrain to the English hymn "Just As I Am," and the congregation begins to sing (Figure 4.2).

Left Channel		Right Channel
	0:47, organ introduction to "Just As I Am"	
	1:05, Congregation sings: *Just as I am, without one plea,* *but that thy blood was shed for me,* *and that thou bidst me come to thee,* *O Lamb of God, I come (I come).*	
1:42, Rev. Aaron Toews' voice enters (L Channel)	[When Rev. Toews' voice enters, congregation singing also moves to L channel.]	

Figure 4.2 Transcription of "The Quiet in the Land" from 0:47 to 4:35

[106] Letter to Margaret Reimer from Glenn Gould, Item 1970-20 32-27-4, Microfilm Reel 25, Glenn Gould fonds, Library and Archives Canada.

Just as I am, and waiting not,
to rid my soul of one dark blot,
to thee whose blood can cleanse each spot,
O Lamb of God, I come (I come).

2:24, End of Toews' interview coincides with the end of second stanza

Just as I am, though tossed about,
with many a conflict, many a doubt,

2:24, Roy Vogt's voice enters (R Channel)

fightings and fears within, without,

2:45, Janis Joplin's voice enters: "I would like to do a song of great social and political import..." [R. Channel]

O Lamb of God, I come (I come).

2:53, Joplin begins to sing "Mercedes Benz"

Oh lord won't you buy me a Mercedes Benz.
My friends all drive Porsches, I must make amends.

3:04, Howard Dyck's voice enters [Center]

3:04, Vogt's interview ends, Joplin's voice continues...

Figure 4.2 (Continued)

	Just as I am, poor, wretched, blind;	*Worked hard all my lifetime, no help from my friends.* *So oh Lord won't you buy me a Mercedes Benz.*
	sight, riches, healing of the mind,	*Oh Lord won't you buy me a color TV. Dialing for Dollars is trying to find me.*
	yea, all I need in thee to find,	*I wait for delivery each day until three.* *So oh lord won't you buy me a color TV.*
	O Lamb of God, I come (I come).	*Oh Lord won't you buy me a night on the town. I'm counting on you Lord, please don't let me down.*
	3:50, Cello solo from Bach's Trio... begins [Center]	
	Just as I am, thou wilt receive,	*Prove that you love me and buy the next round.* [Joplin fade out.]
	4:00, End of Dyck interview. *wilt welcome, pardon, cleanse, [next few words edited out in the final program]* ~~*relieve;*~~ ~~*because thy promise*~~ *I believe,* *O Lamb of God, I come (I come).*[120]	
4:26, Sounds of congregation sitting [L Channel]	**4:25,** Cello solo ends.	**4:06,** Voice of Clarence Hiebert enters [R Channel] **4:35,** End of Hiebert interview excerpt.

Figure 4.2 (Continued)

Almost two hundred years old, the hymn "Just As I Am" has accumulated meaning as a song of invitation to the altar, suggesting a theme of spiritual submission.[107] The track of the

[107] Charlotte Elliott wrote the lyrics to this hymn in 1835 which grew in popularity in the United States during the Civil War. The hymn experienced a popular resurgence in the 1940s because of its use by the American evangelist Billy Sunday and later, Billy Graham. Further information can be found in John Brownlie, *The Hymns and Hymn Writers of The Church Hymnary*, (London and New York, NY: H. Frowde, 1911), 150-153 and Ace Collins, *Stories Behind the Hymns that Inspire America: Songs That Unite Our Nation* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2003), 120-126.

singing congregation stands on its own for the first stanza, emphasizing the lyrics as well as the congregational setting. Aaron Toews' interview begins at 1:42 in the left speaker and provides the thematic link to solitude through an overview of Mennonite religious convictions of the desire to remain socially and culturally isolated from non-religious neighbors:

> We believe in the teaching of the Lord, and in the teaching of the Apostles, and Paul said in his epistle to the Corinthians, "you have to separate."[108]

As he did in the previous two documentaries, Gould conducted all of the interviews individually, relying on post-production editing and careful positioning of statements, sounds, and music, to convey a sense of narrative drama. As soon as Toews' interview begins, the hymn becomes and important part of the dialogue between characters because Gould immediately pans the congregation's track to the L channel, setting the congregation and Toews together, grouping common themes of faith and submission.

In the unfolding audio sequence, Gould incorporates music and speech in the right channel, suggesting a dialogue between the content in the left and right speakers. At 2:24, the voice of Roy Vogt enters on the right, revealing that he has never identified with idea of separation among the Mennonite community. By pitting him against Toews' pious affirmation, Gould suggests a dialogue that is reinforced by the accompanying music. Gould's choice to literally invoke Janis Joplin's voice at Vogt's mention of her at 2:45 draws attention to itself while also commenting on the links between dialogue and music.

> I find that the rhythm of my being seems to move in rhythm with making things around me. I lie down on the floor in my living room listening to Janis Joplin singing and I could listen to that thing three or four times in a row. You know, my children come in - they're surprised to see their old man lying on the living-room floor listening to Janis Joplin, and I'm trying to figure it out myself.[109]

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[108] Gould, "The Quiet in the Land," CBC Records PSCD 2003-3.

[109] Transcribed from Gould, "The Quiet in the Land," CBC Records PSCD 2003-3.

Gould juxtaposes Vogt's interview with the original recording of Joplin's "Mercedes Benz," a song she recorded off-the-cuff and a cappella in the studio that brings together the themes of religion and materialism. Joplin sings to God, asking him in each verse to provide her with a different luxury item; a car, a television, a "night on the town." The irony of her lyrics, particularly against the earnestness of "Just As I Am," is perhaps Gould's effort at editorial commentary. Contrasting her voice against the congregational singing in the left channel reinforces the underlying disparity between Toews' explanation of his faith and devotion and Vogt's expressions of hesitation with respect to typical interpretations of Mennonite solitude. The physical separation between the two further reinforces their disconnect.

Notably, Gould introduces another interview and accompanying piece of music, situated in the center of the acoustic plane. An interview with Howard Dyck begins at 3:04 just as Vogt's ends (Toews' voice track ends at 2:24). Rather than play all three interviews simultaneously and risk losing the listener in the mix of three speech tracks however, Gould plays both the congregational singing and Joplin's vocals as Dyck begins to speak about increasingly modern Mennonite values:

> Certainly, the isolationist idea - that is, I, I lose myself in the group and I don't get out there, is a poor defense, and it's breaking down on every hand in our time, anyway. I think we need to learn to go our own way but I think we need to learn, really to get on in this world of ours without becoming tainted by it.[110]

While Dyck speaks, a cello solo begins to play, adding yet another soundtrack layer to the mix. Like Dyck's voice track, the cello solo is also situated on the center channel. Identified as "Bach Trio from fourth cello suite" in Gould's transcript, the music in the final program is actually an

[110] Gould, "The Quiet in the Land," CBC Records PSCD 2003-3.

original cello solo of unknown origin.[111] Included among Gould's production notes, scripts, and transcripts for the program however, is a handwritten score with the hymn transcribed and the cello solo written in underneath. Both are in E-flat major. The cello weaves around the slower-moving harmonies of the chorale, incorporating triplet and sixteenth-note runs.[112] Gould also made a special effort to align the music so that the cello and hymn cadence together, achieving the effect by editing a line out of the hymn's final stanza. The consonant harmonies of the cello solo and the singing congregation conveys a sense of compromise and unity, a reference to Dyck's statement that Mennonites should "get on in this world . . . without becoming tainted by it."

In his choice of music and his post-production editing decisions, Gould clearly sought out appropriate sound and musical examples to augment the broader issues raised in the interviews. Although Gould used musical performance as an auxiliary aspect of "The Idea of North," in "Quiet" it does more than just accompany - it serves as commentary itself. In this documentary Gould melded the expanding possibilities of multi-track recording with the spatial acoustic properties of stereo broadcasting. Using a more aggressive application of music and sound effects, Gould developed his contrapuntal radio documentary into a flexible genre. Evolving from its original iteration as a mono sound rumination on solitude in the north with only five voices and a limited series of sounds and music, Gould transformed contrapuntal radio to incorporate sound and music that served a narrative and dramatic purpose through the exploration of sound technology and acoustic space.

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[111] "The Quiet in the Land - draft script," Library and Archives Canada, 3.

[112] "The Quiet in the Land Cello Sequence - Prologue," Item 1970-20 11-103, Microfilm Reel 10, Glenn Gould fonds, Library and Archives Canada.

A Comment on Gould's Other Radio Documentaries

Solitude Trilogy accounts for only three of a dozen radio documentaries that Gould produced and created, not including his multi-part series for CBC radio entitled *The Art of Glenn Gould.*[113] As a radio producer and presenter, Gould was prolific throughout the 1960s and 70s, producing programs primarily on musical topics for the CBC including one on the life and work of Arnold Schoenberg (1961-1962), the influence of the conductor Leopold Stokowski, the cellist Pablo Casals, and the composer, Richard Strauss. [See appendix/figure] In these programs, Gould also made use of his contrapuntal radio technique, utilizing a range of material including interviews, commentary, and musical recordings. Given the more conventionally musical topics of these radio programs, they have generally not been included in scholarship about Gould's experimental radio documentaries. Very clearly influenced by Gould's artistic vision for *Solitude Trilogy* and their use of his trademark production techniques, these radio documentaries would be fertile ground for future research projects.

Conclusions

Gould made a significant change in his music career in 1964 when he retired from live performance and focused on the process of musical recording and radio broadcasting. That year he took the step that reached back to his first encounter with the microphone during CBC radio broadcast in 1950. The resonance Gould felt with the recording medium had ramifications beyond piano performance. In fact, the period immediately following his retirement was

[113] The programs from *The Art of Glenn Gould* consisted of a range of material, from discussions between Gould and his CBC colleague Ken Haslam, to Gould's commentary about musical and cultural points of interest, broadcasts of his commercial recordings, and interviews with musicians and artists such as Norman McLaren. Two seasons of the program aired from 1966 to 1969.

creatively fruitful not only with respect to his musical recordings, but also in his endeavors as a radio producer and presenter.

Gould's approach to sound was inextricably linked to his philosophy of sound recording, specifically the new directions he saw in the ability to edit and splice his recordings, thereby altering the live recording and shaping the final outcome. His projects in both realms are evidence of the creative transference from musical performance to his projects in radio broadcasting. Nowhere is this intermingling of creative influence more apparent than in Gould's radio documentaries where this cross-fertilization of influences - of drama, of radio broadcasting, and musical performance and composition - bridge Gould's approach to his musical practice and his radio work. Anyssa Neumann alluded to this connection in her reading of the aesthetic of the sublime in "The Idea of North." Neumann argues that Gould's "barren, desolate" north represents a Hegelian "state of mind. . . an object whose positive body is just an embodiment of Nothing. . ." not unlike what Bazzana described in his observation that in Gould's approach to music, "the physical aspect of music [was] subservient to the conceptual."[114] Beyond his idea of north, however, these radio works allowed Gould to apply techniques and ideas inseparable from his concept of the musical work and his role as performer and composer. In conjunction with the first chapter of this dissertation on Gould's relationship with the recording studio from his piano stool, I posit that both genres of recorded sound were, in Gould's mind, very much connected.

Few musicologists or music critics took notice of "The Idea of North" immediately after its initial broadcast partially because it eluded conventional musical genre categories. The programs from *Solitude Trilogy* are neither a record of live performance nor are they intended as part of a live performed work. With regard to possible musical precedents, the programs are akin

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[114] Anyssa Neumann, "Ideas of North: Glenn Gould and the Aesthetic of the Sublime." *voiceXchange* 5 No. 1 (Fall 2011), 39.

to electronic musical works in which there exists no performance counterpart.[115] In Aron Edidin's proposed system of categorizing recorded sound, *Solitude Trilogy* is most like what he calls a "recorded artefact," a work in which "the principal aesthetic object in these musical domains, is the recording itself."[116] Theodor Gracyk and Linda Ferguson have both argued that some rock recordings are prime examples of the way that the recording apparatus has shaped the aesthetic of records that capture "objects not duplicable in performance," such as the Beatles' albums *Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band* and *Magical Mystery Tour.*[117]

In its original iteration as a radio broadcast, *Solitude Trilogy* was similar to a live performance in that its reception was temporally dependent and ephemeral. Deborah Weagel, in calling *Solitude Trilogy* an "edited performance" suggests that Gould's adoption of the editing process reshaped his relationship to musical performance. By developing techniques of record splicing, Gould also in turn created a method of creating his radio documentaries.[118] Once the radio broadcast was over it was not, unless the listener had somehow recorded it, subject to playback. Subsequently, Gould's *Solitude Trilogy* straddles an ontological conundrum that further questions Gould's role in its creation - as performer, or as composer? This intersection of recorded artefact/live performance; composer/performer is precisely where Gould's status as a virtuoso performer comes into play and where I propose, he innovated - by turning his role as musician on its head.

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[115] Stephen Davies, *Musical Works and Performances: A Philosophical Exploration* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1999), 7-8.

[116] Aron Edidin, "Three Kinds of Recording and the Metaphysics of Music," *British Journal of Aesthetics* 31 No. 1 (January 1999), 36.

[117] Linda Ferguson, "Tape Composition: An Art Form in Search of its Metaphysics," *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 42, No. 1 (Autumn 1983), 25.

[118] Deborah Weagel, *Words and Music: Camus, Beckett, Cage, Gould*, (New York: Peter Lang, 2010), 118-119.

Although not treated in-depth in this chapter, it bears mentioning that Gould's success as a public figure and radio and television producer should be attributed in part to the professional and social support he received at the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation. Michael Chanan, in his study of technology's impact on sound and music, contrasts the role of public service radio as it existed in Great Britain and Canada for instance, and the commercialized radio format, more characteristic of the system in the United States, since the 1920s. Using such composers as Paul Hindemith and Kurt Weill as exemplars of the success of public service radio, Chanan argues that it fostered a more liberal creative environment and even experimental approaches to sound.[119] The burgeoning of Canadian public national radio in the mid-twentieth century had a direct impact on his creative freedom and access to the public ear. Gould scholars including Geoffrey Payzant and Kevin Bazzana have shown that CBC radio was of paramount importance to the support of Gould's radio projects. Most obviously, it provided the technical, financial, and most of all, cultural and moral support for his radio and television work. Janet Somerville who, as producer of the CBC show *Ideas* commissioned the first two parts of *Solitude Trilogy*, described CBC radio in the 1960s as "a passionate, confident, left-wing, youthful time" that was open to Gould's experimental sound techniques. According to Somerville, the radio documentary was "an instrument of social struggle."[120] Gould's radio documentaries were regarded by his colleagues as pushing the boundaries of creative broadcasting, but as I have shown in this chapter, also expanded the role of the virtuoso in the studio as musician and radio composer.

The textual richness and musical aspects of Gould's "The Idea of North" have understandably held the imagination of listeners and scholars for almost forty years, but

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[119] Michael Chanan, *Repeated Takes: A Short History of Recording and its Effect on Music* (London: Verso, 1995), 63.

[120] "Aspects of Glenn Gould: Glenn Gould and the Radio Documentaries" *GlennGould* 6 No. 2 (Fall 2000), 65.

examining Gould's work within the realm of sound yields a new perspective on its significance as a composition and as an intellectual pursuit. Gould's interest in sound and his use of technology to execute this exploration moreover, was contemporaneous with similar concerns within Canada's artistic community including the World Soundscape Project and active discussions within the Toronto School of Communication. To stretch this argument further, this exploration of sound through technology could be regarded a form of frontier exploration, not unlike the northern frontier that Steffanson braved almost one hundred years ago - though, rather than physically pursuing the physical abyss, Gould ventured further into sound - to not only hear, but also to listen.

I can feel this landscape. I live with it...When I'm away, the first thing I think of is the landscape.
- Oscar Peterson[1]

Chapter 5

"The Iron Road in the Garden": Musical Hybridity and Dual Identity in Oscar Peterson's *Canadiana Suite*

On a hot September evening in 1949, Canadian virtuoso pianist Oscar Peterson burst onto the jazz scene in a surprise guest performance at Carnegie Hall with Jazz at the Philharmonic [JATP], a premiere group of jazz musicians.[2] At the age of 24, Peterson launched his career and became the first Canadian musician to achieve international fame and recognition among jazz audiences. Not long after his Carnegie Hall debut Norman Granz, the manager of JATP, invited Peterson to join an international tour but it did not take long for Peterson to make a name for himself. Within a few years, readers of the jazz magazine *Down Beat* voted him Best Pianist in the Readers Polls of 1958 to 1963, again in 1965 to 1967, and yet again in 1972. Peterson earned praise for his technical brilliance and became a fixture on the international jazz scene as house pianist for JATP and leader of the famed Oscar Peterson Trio. Little attention was paid to his "outsider" status when he quickly assimilated into the jazz community in the United States.

For most of Peterson's career, journalistic attention focused more on his piano-playing than on national identity. But when asked about his citizenship, Peterson openly expressed affection towards Canada and rejected rumors that he planned to leave his home country. In

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[1] *About Oscar,* Chris Brookes, narrator, Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, in association with Vocal Vision Productions and Sylvia Sweeney, Part 6, "About Canada," ISN 418016, Library and Archives Canada.

[2] Tad Hershorn, *Norman Granz: The Man Who Used Jazz for Justice* (Berkeley: University of California, 2011), 141-144. Hershorn tells the dramatic events of the evening of September 17 1949 in his biography of Norman Granz, manager of the JATP. Granz was also the manager and close friend to Peterson. A recording of performance - and Granz's announcement introducing Peterson to the stage - are also available on *The Complete Jazz at the Philharmonic on Verve, 1944-1949*, disc 9, tracks 8-12.

1950, a *Vancouver Sun* reporter wrote that "'no amount of money' will ever coax him to move permanently to the United States." Peterson explained further: "Canada is home to me and that's important. Money isn't everything."[3] As his career progressed, he insisted on his national loyalty. Peterson seemed eager to set himself apart in terms of nationality from a musical practice that had historically been identified with the U.S. Over twenty years later, he again stated his position unequivocally: "I prefer to be known as a Canadian. I guess I'm getting nationalistic, but that's the way I feel. ... I make sure that people know I'm Canadian, because it *should* be that way."[4] Upon first impression such a declaration might seem to have been unnecessary and even unwise within a community invested in staking claims to musical genre according to racially, regionally, and politically determined boundaries.[5] In this context, the release of Peterson's extended jazz composition *Canadiana Suite* in 1964 was a bold gesture, marking a pivotal moment in which Peterson simultaneously declared himself a composer and a Canadian.[6]

My analysis of Peterson's *Canadiana Suite* is a counterpart to the preceding examination of Gould's experimental radio documentaries. Together, these two chapters show that Gould and Peterson looked to modes of creative expression that could serve as a companion to their respective roles as musical interpreters at the keyboard. While Gould saw possibility in the role of

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[3] Clyde Gilmour, "Jazz Artist Won't Move To The States" *The Vancouver Sun,* 4 November 1950, D1, 1, "Press Clippings 1940-1959," Box 8, Oscar Peterson fonds, Library and Archives Canada.

[4] Ted O'Reilly, "Oscar Peterson's Got It All," *Sound,* November 1974, 17-19, Emphasis in Original, D1, 4, "Press Clippings 1970-1979," Box 8, Oscar Peterson fonds, Library and Archives Canada.

[5] Debates have raged over jazz's sub-genre designations and their overlap with geographical divisions, for instance, hard bop in the east versus cool jazz on the west coast, a debate examined in Ted Gioia's *West Coast Jazz: Modern Jazz in California 1945-1960* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992). Although there is little evidence of the active exclusion of non-American musicians from the jazz community in the United States, the critic and writer Imamu Amiri Baraka, for instance, has staunchly supported the argument that jazz is an "American Classical Music," firmly rooted in the lives and identities of the African American community and their experiences within the culture of the United States.

[6] Composed in 1963 and released in 1964 by Limelight records the album, named after the suite, was performed by Oscar Peterson (piano), Ray Brown (bass), and Ed Thigpen (drums).

creative producer in the radio broadcasting studio, Peterson challenged established jazz traditions by composing a work that expressed his multi-layered identity - national and racial. In his choice of musical form and the many converging themes within this musical work, Peterson's composition addresses, through the lens of landscape imagery, an alternative to the racial, social, and national identities traditionally associated with jazz composition and reveals a great deal about how he perceived himself within a community of primarily American jazz musicians.

In composing *Canadiana Suite* for the Oscar Peterson Trio, Peterson drew inspiration from Canadian regional landscapes and employed a hybrid musical aesthetic within a multi-movement jazz composition. Combining his performance style with landscape imagery, he became one in a long history of Canadian artists to compose works drawing on themes of Canadian landscape as an expression of national pride. Rather than simply portray it as a patriotic symbol however, Peterson shaped his imagery in relation to his family history and personal experience as a black Canadian. His allusion to urban settings sets his work apart from traditional landscape interpretations in Canadian art and music that focuses on images of open spaces, untouched wilderness, and the north. A train journey from the east to west coasts frames Peterson's composition, forming a link between nature and technology that characterizes so many artistic landscape interpretations. Peterson's connections to Canada's geography, depicted as a journey "seen" through a train window, are expressed as inseparable from his childhood experiences as the son of sleeping car porter.

At the junction of Canadian landscape music and the American jazz suite, Oscar Peterson's *Canadiana Suite* is both liminal and marginal - neither fully one nor the other, yet simultaneously both. This state of liminality allowed Peterson the freedom to navigate several identities: by composing a hybrid jazz suite that incorporated a jazz and classical musical

aesthetic, the extended jazz suite form, and landscape imagery, he expressed his aspirations as a jazz musician as well as his identity as a black Canadian. Its marginality, however, is evident in its absence from the respective areas of jazz and Canadian music scholarship even despite its widespread popularity among jazz audiences within and beyond Canada's borders. Gene Lees, in his biography of Peterson, makes brief mention of the personal themes that arise in *Canadiana Suite,* but much remains to be explored both historically and musically, in this work.[7]

Based on archival materials from the Oscar Peterson fonds at Library and Archives Canada and on the 1964 recording, I argue that Peterson's multi-movement jazz suite was more than just an attempt at composing an extended work. Rather, it became a musical framework to express aspects of his experience as a black Canadian by mapping his landscape-inspired composition onto a journey from east to west. Peterson's professional experiences in the United States were defined by a multi-layered hybrid identity; he was black Canadian, he performed music historically and socially associated with the African American experience, he was classically-trained and a jazz musician, and his urban upbringing contrasted with his attraction to natural landscape and its symbolic connections to his Canadian identity. Demonstrating hybridity in this composition in various ways, Peterson was influenced not only by his classical training, but also by African American musical traditions and landscape-inspired music. This musical hybridity in turn, opened up the potential for the jazz suite to express Peterson's personal life perspective, symbolized by the image of the train through Canada's regional landscapes, the iron road in the garden.[8]

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[7] Gene Lees, *Oscar Peterson: The Will to Swing* (Toronto: Lester and Orpen Dennys Limited,1991). Lees addresses the influence of Peterson's father on the suite (29); the influence of his hometown (26); he also refers to *Canadiana Suite* as a "landscape painting in sound" (276).

[8] The image of the "Iron road in the garden" is an allusion to Leo Marx's 1964 study *The Machine in the Garden: Technology and the Pastoral Ideal in America,* a landmark piece of literary criticism that identifies the prevalent theme of technology and nature in many American literary works of the late nineteenth century.

Scholarly and Popular Reception

Little scholarly attention has been paid to *Canadiana Suite* whether in the context of the Oscar Peterson Trio's discography, Canadian jazz literature, or in scholarship on third stream jazz and the jazz suite. Mention of the suite in contemporary jazz journals and historic black newspapers is also scant. Notably, Canada's only jazz magazine, *Coda,* did not publish a record review of *Canadiana Suite* in the year following its 1964 release. This relative lack of published response to the album may have been due, in part, to a lack of international marketing or simply a result of the album being drowned out by the considerable number of records that Peterson and the Trio recorded in the years leading up to its release.[9] Limelight Records issued *Canadiana Suite* after an especially prolific period in Peterson's recording career. The Oscar Peterson Trio (Ray Brown on bass and Herb Ellis on guitar) had released a large group of "songbook" recordings in 1959, several albums dedicated to songs from Broadway musicals in the late 1950s and early 1960s, and their highly acclaimed recording *Night Train* in 1962.[10] It is also possible that the album evoked neither particularly enthusiastic nor overly negative reaction from record reviewers. But there is a little archival evidence to support any of these conjectures.

From what exists of published reaction to the suite, *Canadiana Suite* received mixed responses. Many reviews indicate a superficial appreciation for Peterson's personal background and understanding of Canadian landscape and its artistic significance, focusing more on the

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[9] The Oscar Peterson Trio released five albums in 1964.

[10] At the time, Limelight was a subsidiary of Mercury Records and is currently part of Verve Records. In addition to his recordings with the Oscar Peterson Trio Peterson, Peterson also released a series of albums leading the trio with a special guest soloist such as Lester Young (1952), Fred Astaire (1952), Gene Krupa and Buddy Rich (1955), Anita O'Day (1957), Ben Webster (1959), Milt Jackson (1961), as well as duo albums with Peterson along with another artist such as Louis Armstrong (1957). Guitarist Herb Ellis left the group in 1958 and was replaced by drummer Ed Thigpen in 1959 who stayed with the band until 1965.

Trio's performance. John S. Wilson, critic and editor of *Down Beat* magazine, wrote a four-star (out of five) review of the album in 1965. Although positive overall, it opens with a now-familiar jab at Peterson's technical virtuosity, writing that *Canadiana Suite* was different from the "superficial glibness that he [Peterson] is likely to fall into when playing music written by others."[11] Wilson quickly turns the tone of his review however, describing the work as having a "refreshing individuality" and Peterson's playing as displaying a "really swinging zest." He is also highly complimentary of the Trio, drawing attention especially to Ray Brown, whose performance he describes as "consistently brilliant." With regards to Brown's ensemble playing, Wilson writes that he plays in "wonderfully close and resilient relationship to Peterson's piano lines, particularly on the up tempos and the waltz." Though it is obvious that Wilson had mixed feelings about Peterson as a performer, his assessment of the work is generally positive.

Two British jazz critics also wrote in praise of the suite, focusing on the Trio's live performances. Derek Jewell, critic for the British paper *Sunday Times,* reviewed the Trio's opening performance for an Ella Fitzgerald concert in March 1964 where they performed several movements from the suite. Jewell described the work as "superbly illustrat[ing] Peterson's gifts of cascading melody and technical infallibility...Such piano giants emerge perhaps once or twice each generation."[12] While no doubt aware of the debate over Peterson's virtuosic aesthetic, Jewell chose to treat it as a strength in his playing and of the musical work. John C. Gee, a British jazz critic for *Jazzbeat* also lauded the work in a review of a London performance as opener to another Ella Fitzgerald concert in June 1964. On the suite, Gee wrote "Oscar Peterson's own

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[11] John S. Wilson, *Down Beat,* June 3 1965, 30.

[12] Derek Jewell, "Such Sweet Thunder," *Sunday Times*, 29 March 1964.

composition "The Canadian Suite" [sic] was...to my mind a very successful attempt at sketching a musical scene of Peterson's homeland."[13]

Assessments of the work and the performance are difficult to untangle in these reviews. Part of the appeal of Peterson's suite is his ability to depict his homeland, but the reviewers provide little detail as to what geographical or musical features they refer to. What we might gather is that Peterson's work did not push the envelope for his own playing style or break new ground in terms of contemporary jazz trends. Rather, it seems that critics viewed Peterson's composition as appropriately aligned with the Trio's performing style.

Despite meager published evidence of *Canadiana Suite*'s Canadian reception, the suite has been popular among audiences and especially jazz arrangers in Canada. Particularly notable are three arrangements of the suite in the years since its release: one by jazz clarinetist Phil Nimmons, performed at the University of New Brunswick Summer Festival in 1970; a second by Rick Neilsen for jazz orchestra and strings and broadcast on CBC television in 1979; and a third by Ron Collier for the Ron Collier Jazz Orchestra in 1997.[14] Collier's arrangement has been performed in Vancouver, Ottawa, and Toronto.[15] The audience for *Canadiana Suite* has not been limited to Canadians, however. In a 1988 interview with Oscar Peterson, an Australian reporter reflected on *Canadiana Suite*: ". . .many of my first impressions of Canada, perceived 12, 000 miles away in Australia, were gained from Peterson's marvelous *Canadiana Suite*, a vivid jazz

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[13] John C. Gee, "Ella and Oscar review", *Jazzbeat* April 1964.

[14] A commercial recording by Nimmons n' Nine Plus Six was issued by the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, but has not been commercially released. The television broadcast is not commercially available, but is available with the permission of Oscar Peterson's family from the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation. A commercial recording of Collier's version is not available, but may be found as a live recording from the Ontario Science Center as part of the Toronto Jazz Festival on 19 November 2001. http://www.canadianjazzarchive.org/en/concerts/ron-collier-orchestra-2001-11-19.html?filename=ron_collier_osc_2001_11_19_track2.mp4&t=c. Accessed March 28 2014.

[15] Alex Barris, "Collier's Canadiana pleases Peterson," *50 Plus*, January 1 2006, http://www.50plus.com/lifestyle/colliers-canadiana-pleases-peterson/29667/ Accessed March 28 2014.

landscape. . ."[16] At his concerts overseas, Peterson received requests for movements from the suite, especially "Wheatland," which he also recorded several versions of.[17]

Ad mari usque ad mare: Peterson's Cross-Country Journey

If the representation of landscape is of central significance in this work, so too is way that the landscape is presented, from the east coast to the west coast. The country's physical sprawl, as well as other geographical characteristics, were an important part of the composition's early genesis. The initial idea for the composition came about through discussions among the members of the Oscar Peterson Trio. Ray Brown, longtime bassist for the Trio, thought that the suite would be the perfect model for original music. With Duke Ellington's famous jazz suites in mind, Brown prompted Peterson to compose *Canadiana Suite*. Peterson composed two movements, but Brown urged him to continue the collection, reasoning that "Two pieces is not a suite. Canada's a big, big country."[18] At Brown's urging, Peterson wrote several more and with the additional movements completed a musical narrative that outlined the route across Canada.

The expansive multi-movement suite was particularly well-suited to portraying the country's vastness and physical diversity. The contrasting themes of each movement reflect the characteristic atmosphere of each respective Canadian region and collectively, they portray a sense of the country's geographical and cultural differences. *Canadiana Suite* begins with the relaxed rubato of "A Ballad to the East." Progressing westward, Peterson portrays two regions in

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[16] Greg Quil, "Du Maurier Festival Previews with Jazz Great Oscar Peterson," *Toronto Star*, June 17 1988, E10, D1, 8, "Press Clippings 1988-1989," Box 16, Oscar Peterson fonds, Library and Archives Canada.

[17] Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, in association with Vocal Vision Productions and Sylvia Sweeney, "In the key of Oscar," 1992, Library and Archives Canada, Accession Number 2009-00172-9, Item Number ISN 418016, radio documentary (audio).

[18] Marya Hornbacher, "Return of a Virtuoso," *Smithsonian Magazine*, January 2005, http://www.smithsonianmag.com/arts-culture/peterson.html?c=y&page=6. Accessed March 22 2013.

his home province of Québec: "Laurentide Waltz," an upbeat triple meter tune, contrasted with the driving syncopation of "Place St. Henri," a tribute to his hometown. The city of Toronto is characterized as a laid-back twelve-bar blues in "Hogtown Blues." The western provinces are depicted in four separate movements in "Blues of the Prairies," a twelve-bar blues with a country-and-western-tinged lilting bass riff on the piano, "Wheatland" a broad, spacious theme depicting the vast, sweeping skies of prairie wheat fields, "March Past" in a brisk duple-meter movement that recalls the opening parade of the Calgary Stampede, an annual rodeo festival, and finally, "Land of the Misty Giants," a ballad for Canada's west coast.

The significance of Peterson's imagery is not only in its depiction of Canada's regions but also in his landscape's latitudinal orientation. As Canadian writer and literary critic Northrop Frye observed, this lateral passage runs deep within Canada's identity. Quoting its national motto, he described it as both a geographical characteristic and historical construct: "The essential element in the national sense of unity is the east-west feeling, developed historically along the St. Lawrence-Great Lakes axis, and expressed in the national motto, *a mari usque ad mare* (from sea to sea)."[19] In describing Peterson's composition, his biographer Gene Lees pointed out that the

[19] Northrop Frye, *The Bush Garden: Essays on the Canadian Imagination,* 2nd ed. (Concord, ON: Anansi Press, 1995), xxii.

transit from east to west falls in line with "the way the country thinks."[20] A prominent cultural trope, it has also become a central metaphor within interpretations of Canadian landscape.[21]

As the thematic center of this suite, landscape connects to a broader network of experiences particular to Peterson's time in Canada. Peterson's insight into landscape was closely linked to his early family life and his father Daniel's regular trans-continental trips from Montréal to Vancouver - another east to west journey - as a sleeping car porter with the Canadian Pacific Railway [CPR]. Daniel Peterson figures largely in his son's life story. A looming authority figure, Daniel's responsibilities to inspire and discipline were undertaken with an iron fist, especially with regards to Peterson's musical education.[22] Daniel was from Tortola, the capital of the British Virgin Islands, and settled in Montréal in the 1920s where he met Peterson's mother, Kathleen John, also from the West Indies. Although Daniel frequently traveled for work, Peterson's memoir and biography describe his strong influence despite his physical absence, both as a supporter of Peterson's musical interests and as the figure who introduced him to jazz through the recordings of Art Tatum.[23]

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[20] Lees, *The Will to Swing,* 29.

[21] Much like the prominent theme characteristic of films and literature about the United States (in such books as Jack Keruoac's 1957 *On the road*, John Steinbeck's 1962 *Travels with Charley*; William Least Heat-Moon's 1982 *Blue highways,* for instance) the journey from one end of the country to another and the experience of physically traversing the land is a strong image that symbolizes national unity amidst diversity and regional difference. For instance, the 1965 National Film Board short film, "The railrodder" [sic] featuring Buster Keaton, the American silent film actor, on a trip across Canada from the east to west coast and the adventures he experiences on his trans-continental train ride; also "Helicopter Canada" from 1966 and the updated version, "Postcards from Canada" (2000) are similarly framed as travels across the country with images of sweeping vistas, prairies, ocean scenes and the like. Elizabeth Waterston identifies two particularly active periods of in Canadian literary history for accounts of Canadian travel and frontierism: 1799 to 1809 and the 1870s, in "Literature of Exploration: Canadian Travel Books of the 1870s," *Studies in Canadian Literature* 4 No. 2 (1979). The transcontinental train ride is often part of this series of artistic interpretations which I will address later in this chapter.

[22]Peterson, *A Jazz Odyssey,* 6-8; 17-18. Lees names Daniel Peterson and Norman Granz as the two most important people in Peterson's life, *The will to swing,*133.

[23] Peterson, *A Jazz Odyssey,,* 32-35.

Another node in this thematic network is Peterson's hometown, St. Henri, a multicultural community and the location of Windsor train station. Peterson fondly remembered the Montréal enclave as "a bustling community, a town of its own. It encompassed French families, Italian families, Jewish families, black families - yet, everyone seemed to have a dedication to that one geographical spot."[24] Because the train station was one of the few places that employed black men of working age, St. Henri was a major hub for black Canadian settlement. In the late 1920s when Peterson was a child, almost ninety percent of the township's working-age black men were employed by the national railroad companies as porters or cooks.[25] Peterson's early life, as Lees put it, was "shaped by the railways."[26]

Double Minority: Being Black in Canada

Peterson's perspective on Canadian landscape was inseparable from the train journey and in turn, it was strongly connected to the cultural forces he witnessed during his childhood. The 1930s were a turning point for African Canadians across the country. St. Henri was home to a large number of black Canadians who felt the ripples of this change. Robin Winks, in her landmark study of Canada's black community, describes the period from 1930 to 1970 as a "new awakening" when black Canadians became collectively conscious of the challenges they faced as a minority group. Brought about by years of systemic discrimination, Winks assesses this dilemma as follows:

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[24] Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, in association with Vocal Vision Productions and Sylvia Sweeney, "In the key of Oscar," 1992, Library and Archives Canada, Accession Number 2009-00172-9, Item Number ISN 418016, radio documentary (audio).

[25] Wilfred Emmerson Israel, "The Montréal Negro Community," Masters Thesis (Montréal: McGill University, 1928), 71.

[26] Lees, *The Will to Swing*,13.

> To find opportunity, he [the black Canadian] often had to go to the land of segregation [i.e. the United States]. To combat discrimination, he stood alone, without effective national organizations, social cohesion, dynamic church leadership, full education, protective legislation or a medium for making known achievements or grievances.[27]

In that face of such discrimination, Peterson often referred to himself as a double minority because of his identity as a native English-speaker and as a visible minority in a city of primarily white Canadians. As discussed in the second chapter of this dissertation, Peterson referred to the relationship between white and black Canadians in Québec during his childhood as "polite segregation."[28] Subsequently, members of the Peterson family sought community fellowship among the members of Montréal's black community, specifically with the Canadian Universal Negro Improvement Association (UNIA). Peterson recalled a visit from Civil Rights activist Marcus Garvey, who empowered black Canadians to build and support black-owned businesses and industries to send a political message to the rest of the country. [29] Garvey's activism had little by way of long-lasting effects on the Montréal black community, but the spirit of community activism during Peterson's childhood years made an impression on him. Peterson remembered the Canadian UNIA

> as a place of spiritual sustenance and personal reconstruction. It made believers and proud standard-bearers out of oppressed workers who now walked with their heads high, no longer weary and oppressed, and no longer prepared to be bent under a perverse racial system and the yoke of bigotry.[30]

One of the few professional opportunities for black men in St. Henri was to work as a sleeping car porter for one of the Canadian railway companies (Figure 5.1). The experience of

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[27] Robin Winks, *The Blacks in Canada: A History,* 2nd ed. (Montréal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1997), 414.

[28] Library and Archives Canada, Oscar Peterson fonds, Mus 199, D1, 2, "Press Clippings" Series, Press Clippings - 1960-1965, Box 8, Sid Adilman, "Quiet color bar Canada's peril: Oscar Peterson" *The Telegram*, June 12 1963.

[29] Peterson also recalled performing for the group upon Garvey's entrance to the meeting hall. Peterson, *A Jazz Odyssey,* 26-27.

[30] Peterson, *A Jazz Odyssey,* 28-29.



Figure 5.1: Image of Sleeping Car Porter, Canadian Pacific Railways Archive

sleeping car porters in Canada was similar in many ways to the experiences of porters in the United States. In his oral history of the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters in the U.S., Jack Santino notes that the profession became the primary basis for many porters' personal identities because the position required such significant personal commitment.[31]

Within the black community, railway porters earned a reputation as being sophisticated and cosmopolitan as a result of their extensive travels. Regarded as agents of culture, railways porters were responsible for the distribution of black newspapers and for the dissemination of music and dance in their home communities.[32] Outside of these communities however, perception was different. Only African American men were hired to the position of sleeping car porter because of their perceived "natural inclination" towards servile tasks.[33] Although they received employment with a living wage, their rights and working conditions were controlled by

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[31] Jack Santino, *Miles of Smiles, Years of Struggle*, (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1989), 138.

[32] Beth Tompkins Bates, *Pullman Porters and the Rise of Protest Politics in Black America, 1925-1945*, (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2001), 24.

[33] Santino, *Miles of Smiles, Years of Struggle*, 115-116.

exclusively white management. Through various personal and political means, management ensured that black porters were limited in their responsibilities and subsequently, their upward mobility within the organization. Porters were often referred to by the generic name "George" after the inventor of the Pullman railway cars George Pullman, and subjected to less than ideal working conditions especially compared to their white colleagues.[34] With few opportunities for upward mobility within the railway companies, sleeping car porters fought to unionize, although much like the situation in the United States, Canadian unions were slow to be established.

Sleeping car porters were among the most well-respected residents of St. Henri, yet they faced - both directly and indirectly - the struggles of their community at large: segregation, discrimination, and poor institutional support. In his memoir, Stanley Grizzle, a community leader of Daniel Peterson's generation, wrote of racially segregated conditions for rail workers during mealtimes and within their overnight accommodations.[35] He perceived his interactions with his customers, especially his reliance on tips, as "dehumanizing, demoralizing, degrading."[36] Daniel also faced these conditions on his regular trip from Montréal to Vancouver and back. The route, referred to as the "Vancouver run" was considered the most physically challenging of all the railroad journeys, requiring the porter to be away for ten days with very little time to recuperate between runs.[37] Peterson recalled his father's attitude towards the profession:

> I can remember watching those trains passing by my house...and at different times, I would often go down and help my dad make up his car. I think that's when dad, in his own mind, decided that this wasn't the profession he wanted us

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[34] This was true in Canada was well, evident in the name of the Canadian sleeping car porter Stanley Grizzle's memoir, *My Name's Not George.*

[35] Stanley Grizzle, *My Name's Not George* (Toronto: Umbrella Press, 1997), 40-41.

[36] Grizzle, *My Name's Not George,* 42.

[37] Harold Herbert Potter, "The Occupational Adjustments of Montréal Negroes, 1941-1948" Masters Thesis (Montréal: McGill University, 1949), 152. Peterson refers to the Vancouver trip as the "Vancouver run" in his memoir, *A Jazz Odyssey,* 6.

> to follow in. We could do other things...piano was a way to earn a living, a way out for us.[38]

A study of black Canadians in Montréal in the 1940s reveals that sleeping car porters had an "advantage over nearly all other male employees in amount of income and rate of employment."[39] But this statement overlooks the porters' daily challenges and the broader social implications of such an inequitable profession. In his desire for his children to have greater opportunities than he did, Daniel Peterson's experience represents the societal and social weaknesses inherent in the system.

The Extended Jazz Suite and the Sensory Experience

Although Peterson's suite differed from Ellington's in that they wrote for small and large ensembles, respectively, Peterson's musical aspirations followed directly from Ellington's extended jazz suites. Peterson admired Ellington even before they met on the evening of Peterson's Carnegie Hall debut in 1949.[40] They quickly became friends and Ellington affectionately coined Peterson's nickname of "maharajah of the piano."[41] Although they shared a common career path as pianists and composers, Peterson respected him especially for his work as a composer. In his memoir, Peterson praised Ellington's compositions and his "facility for turning past impressions into musical evocations both durable and unique."[42]

For Ellington, extended works played an integral role in bringing jazz into the concert hall and conveyed, through music, the sights and sounds of his memories. This sentiment emerged

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[38] *Oscar Peterson: Music in the Key of Oscar*, DVD. Directed by Sylvia Sweeney (Toronto: View, Inc., 2004).

[39] Potter, "The Occupational Adjustments," 50.

[40] Peterson, *A Jazz Odyssey*, 262.

[41] Lees, *The Will To Swing*, 67.

[42] Peterson, *A Jazz Odyssey*, 263.

from Ellington's goal to build an African American cultural legacy by preserving history and recording memories of his personal experiences. In his jazz suites, Ellington documented aspects of the African American experience - as he did in *Black and Tan Fantasy* (1927), *Reminiscing in Tempo* (1935), and *Black, Brown, and Beige* (1935-1943) - and elicited memories from his international journeys - as in his *Far East Suite* (1966) and his *Latin American Suite* (1968).

Ellington expanded the expressive limits of jazz to include the narrative by capturing images of memories and places. On the subject of his early composition *Reminiscing in Tempo,* Ellington revealed the importance of personal perspective, writing that "to the jazz musician, the memory of things past is important."[43] Mark Tucker noted the multi-sensorial attributes of Ellington's compositions, particularly the way that Ellington "wanted to paint pictures with sounds," often reflecting "something Ellington or one of his musicians had felt or seen" by capturing an emotional state or experience.[44] David Schiff reiterated Tucker's point, arguing that Ellington's jazz suites portray places and experiences that are as visual as they are auditory.[45]

Peterson aspired towards Ellington's ability to capture sensory experience and endeavored to do the same in his panoramic view of Canada's landscape. *Canadiana Suite* expresses a longing for place, a reflection on spaces and settings from Peterson's memory, falling within the realm of Svetlana Boym's concept of "reflective nostalgia," a personal and emotional longing for home.[46] This work, a romanticized version of Canada's scenery, should be read as an account of Peterson's personal experience, mediated not only by his nostalgia for Canada's landscape, but

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[43] Library and Archives Canada, Oscar Peterson fonds, Mus 199, B1, 23, "Concerts" Series, Concert Programs and Promotional Material, Box 12, Jazz at the Philharmonic Program, date unknown.

[44] Mark Tucker, *Duke Ellington: The Early Years* (Chicago: Illinois University Press, 1991), 231.

[45] David Schiff, *The Ellington Century*. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2012), 12-13.

[46] Svetlana Boym, *The Future of Nostalgia* (New York: Basic Books, 2001), xviii. Boym sets this category of nostalgia apart from restorative nostalgia, a form of longing that brings together an imagined community of people through collective experience and loss.

also as an account of a railway porter's experience. *Canadiana Suite* pays tribute to Daniel Peterson's years of labor on the CPR, giving voice to the memory of his weekly cross-country train trips. The east to west journey gains increased significance in this work, acknowledging Peterson's familial connection to the land and, in the same sentiment as Ellington's jazz suites, as a documentation of African Canadian history.

Ellington's suites were part of an effort, beginning in the 1930s, to elevate jazz to the status of "serious" music. By adopting extended musical forms and more complex arrangements, Ellington led a movement of cultural uplift among African Americans. Twenty years later, Peterson had a stake in the same struggle through his association with JATP. In its name, venues, and management, the members of JATP sought to renew the public image of jazz towards a "politics of respectability."[47] This issue was unpopular among certain black jazz musicians whose idea of "legitimate" jazz relied on a public image that turned away from the classical music establishment, which was coded as white. Like the stage presence cultivated by members of JATP, the members of the Oscar Peterson Trio made an effort towards maintaining a certain standard of professional decorum, wearing suits to their performances and bowing before and after their shows. Peterson was outspoken on this issue and publicly denigrated jazz musicians who undermined their mission in a 1954 *Down Beat* article.

> The fun has gone out of performing music; They (the musicians) have slumped into the kind of low mental state that helps account for the high narcotic rate among the so-called intelligentsia of modern music. And it's reflected not only in the attitude on the stand, but also in the unpressed clothes, the unkempt appearance - and the worried relatives. A person like that can contribute nothing to music of any sort.[48]

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[47] Hershorn, *Norman Granz*, 6.

[48] "O. Peterson Lashes Musicians; B. Eckstine Hails Britons" *Pittsburgh Courier*, 11 September 1954, 18.

To Peterson, performance carried a social responsibility on a personal level and to the wider public.

Musical Hybridity and Dual Identity

Peterson's efforts towards performing jazz in the concert hall surfaced in part because of his musical roots in the classical Western music tradition. *Canadiana Suite* was not only an homage to the jazz suite, but also allowed Peterson to blend the compositional form with his hybrid performance style. Musical hybridity, defined here as the incorporation of musical characteristics from both jazz and classical practices, is key to understanding how Peterson depicted Canadian landscape in a musical genre associated with the urban United States. Hybridity has been a central concept in jazz scholarship owing to the genre's origins in both African and European musical practices.[49] I argued previously that Peterson's hybrid style of performance may have undermined his public image as a legitimate jazz artist. *Canadiana Suite* demonstrates how that same style played an integral part in his voice as a composer.

Although Peterson was widely recognized for a pianistic style adapted from the swing-era jazz tradition, Lees has suggested that Peterson's trademark sound was equally shaped by his classical pedigree. Citing Peterson's musical instruction from the age of fourteen by the Hungarian pianist Paul de Marky, himself a former pupil of a Franz Liszt student, Lees suggested that Peterson inherited his virtuosic style indirectly from the nineteenth-century

[49] In his study of New Orleans jazz Charles Hersch argues that musical hybridity was a response to selective pressure to adapt to changing cultural circumstances. "...it came out of the struggles of musicians to negotiate changing kinds of musicians and musical genres and in the process alter their identity. Out of these encounters, there emerged a new, hybrid music that refused to stay within the confines of a binary, hierarchical racial system." *Subversive Sounds* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007), 117-122.

master.[50] Possessing an intimate knowledge of harmonic and melodic material shared between genres, Peterson demonstrated a talent for interpolating popular classical themes into his jazz performances.[51] When he described his classically-influenced brand of jazz he referred to it as "swing with finer harmonics." Critics noted these features in *Canadiana Suite* as well. The British critic Derek Jewell's described "Wheatland" as "a Beethoven sonata with swing," referring to Peterson's live performance that combined richly textured chords, intricate finger technique, and blues harmonies.[52]

The origins of the jazz suite were a similar hybrid mix of jazz and classical elements. As John Howland argues, Ellington's "extended jazz" was strongly influenced by the mix of concert music and popular forms in Paul Whiteman's symphonic jazz.[53] What eventually developed into the multimovement jazz suite, "an ordered collection of largely [musically] unrelated instrumental movements," grew out of the idea of "extended jazz" a term that critics used as early as 1932 to refer to Ellington's expanded musical compositions.[54] Peterson used Ellington's multimovement model, incorporating shared musical and formal elements into his suite. For Peterson, musical hybridity was a form of musical adaptation, providing an avenue not previously available to him as a performer to express aspects of his Canadian identity.

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[50] De Marky's piano instructor Stefan Thomán studied with Liszt (Lees, 8). Peterson refers to de Marky as "a descendant" of Liszt's" (Peterson, *A jazz odyssey,* 47). Peterson also studied for a short time from the age of eleven with the jazz pianist Lou Hooper (Lees, *The Will to Swing,* 34-37; Peterson, *A Jazz Odyssey,*12-14).

[51] In the same article, the journalist describes Peterson's performances:

> One of his particular fancies is to blend in phrases from a completely different piece -- such as snatches of Beethoven's *Moonlight Sonata* in the middle of "My Funny Valentine."
> "I like to venture out," he says. "Like with 'Funny Valentine', it came to me that there was a similarity between those chords and Beethoven's. I ventured out."

[52] Jewell, "Such Sweet Thunder," 32.

[53] John Howland, *Ellington Uptown,* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2009), 151.

[54] Howland, *Ellington Uptown,*179-181.

Peterson adapted aspects of the extended jazz composition, underscoring musical elements present in earlier examples of the genre. He also incorporated formal elements such as those in Ferde Grofé's arrangements for the Whiteman orchestra, identified by Howland as motivic cross-references and features including introductions, interludes, and coda material.[55] *Canadiana Suite* is melody-driven, each movement distinguished by a distinctive theme. Almost every movement is based either on twelve-bar blues or AABA form (Figure 5.2). Peterson also

Movement	Song Form	Quality of Rhythm
Ballad to the East	Intro +AABA	Both straight and swing; - first refrain performed on piano "ad lib" with bass - second repetition in ballad style with drums and bass
Laurentide Waltz	AABA	Both straight and swing; - first refrain performed in straight eighth rhythm with piano and bowed double bass - subsequent repetitions of the refrain performed in swing rhythm
Place St. Henri	Strophic	Strongly syncopated theme
Hogtown Blues	twelve-bar blues	Swing throughout
Blues of the Prairies	twelve-bar blues	Swing throughout
Wheatland	Strophic	Both straight and swing; - switch between straight and swung is integral to the theme - improvisations performed in swing rhythm
March Past	AABA	Swing throughout
Land of the Misty Giants	Intro + AABA	Both straight and swing; AA (Straight) BA (Swung)

Figure 5.2: Canadiana Suite movements

[55] Howland, *Ellington Uptown,* 151.

adapted the extended jazz work to the Oscar Peterson Trio's bop-influenced small ensemble format. Each movement unfolds as a head-chorus-head out performance of the tune and features extended improvisation sections. Borrowing characteristics from the extended jazz suite, standard popular song forms, and small ensemble jazz traditions, Peterson further shaped *Canadiana Suite* with his hybrid sound.

Among the formal elements that Peterson uses in *Canadiana Suite* are solo piano introductions in the first and last movements. Both movements, ballads to Canada's east and west coasts respectively, together lend a symmetry to the suite's musical form. The introductions open with similar melodic contours in the piano's upper register - a rising interval followed by a stepwise descent - that become the basis for the rest of the introductory material. The introduction to "Ballad to the East," for example, leads with a rising major sixth and a tone descent. After a response from a rising chord progression (A[flat] dominant seventh to a D[flat] [flat three][dominant seventh]), the melodic fragment of leap-step is restated - this time, a rising perfect fifth followed by a tone descent. The final statement of that thematic fragment expands into an upward leap of an octave and a minor third fall (end of m. 4, Figure 5.3). The "upward leap, downward step" melodic contour is the source material for the introduction of "Land of the

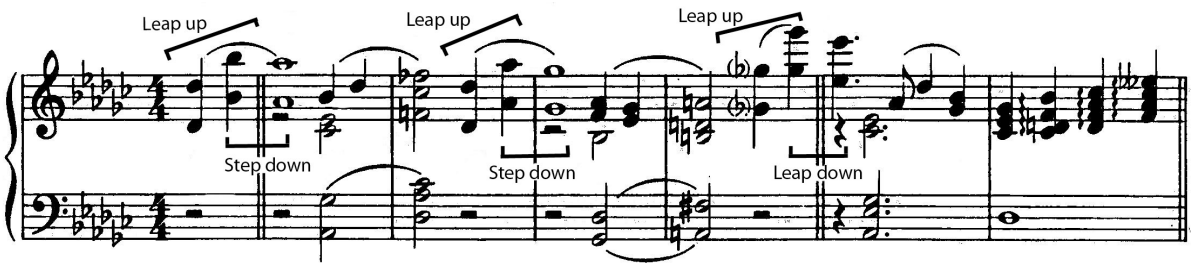


Figure 5.3: "Ballad to the East," mm. 1-6

Misty Giants" as well. There, the introduction begins with an ascending perfect fifth followed by a descending perfect fourth interval. The melody is transposed and stated in sequence (Figure 5.4). This introduction, slightly longer than the first, further develops the simple leap-step motive.

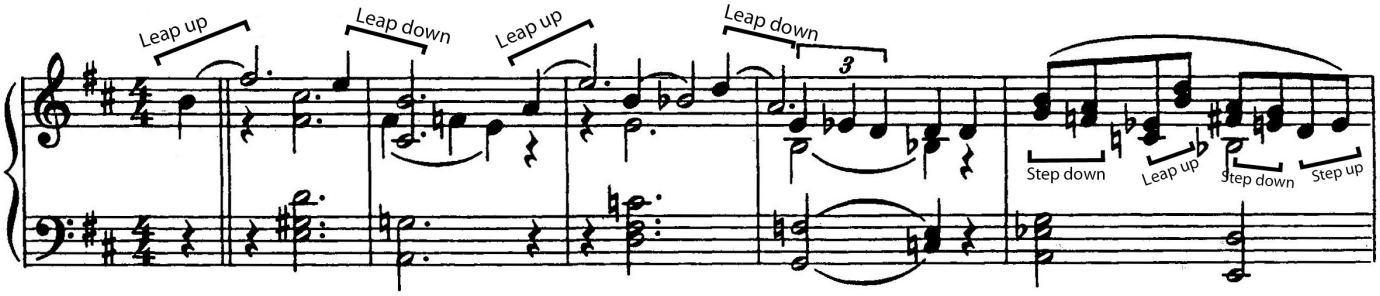


Figure 5.4: "Land of the Misty Giants," mm. 1-5

The transitional material in m. 5, for instance, builds on the contrary motion and stepwise melodic movement of the earlier musical material. Peterson inverts the leap-step motive, using a descending step-upward leap before launching into a stepwise melody that meanders over a prolonged dominant pedal. Peterson's two introductory sections exemplify a musical continuity, attesting to the arranging tradition inherent in the jazz suite genre.

Peterson balanced the jazz suite's formal elements with the Peterson Trio's performance aesthetic, specifically their well-known style of interpreting rhythm. Despite the Oscar Peterson Trio's many personnel changes, the ensemble was consistently known for its outstanding ability to swing - to establish and maintain a rhythmic groove with a consistent verve of driving rhythm.[56] It seems appropriate that Peterson, remaining faithful to the jazz suite's hybrid origins, performed parts of *Canadiana Suite* "straight" and other parts swung. In five of the eight movements, the Oscar Peterson Trio highlights its famous talent for swinging by playing the line between straight

[56] Mention of Peterson's driving rhythm seem to always find their way into article headlines and also feature prominently within the reviews themselves. For instance, "That Swinging Mr. Peterson in Town on Sunday," "It's the Same, Sweet, Swinging Style," "Peterson Swings Easily through Full Jazz Range," "Oscar Swings with Solo Abandon," and the 1990 German review headlined simply, "Peterswing." All located in Library and Archives Canada, Oscar Peterson fonds, Mus 199, D1, 4, 5, "Pressing Clippings Concerning Oscar Peterson" Series, Box 8.

and swung eighths, seamlessly switching from one rhythmic style to another. Depending on the movement, the Peterson Trio employs this characteristic switch either within the refrain or upon its repetition (Figure 5.5).

There are two main effects of this encounter between straight and swing rhythm. The first is an increased rhythmic energy within movements. For instance, in the main theme of



Figure 5.5: "Wheatland," mm. 10-18

"Wheatland," by interjecting swing rhythm and maintaining its momentum throughout the improvised sections on piano, Peterson avoids the potential monotony of the slow-moving melody, providing melodic and rhythmic variety to the movement. The second is that Peterson achieves a musical connectedness throughout the suite by employing a hybrid sound. In "Ballad," Peterson takes his time in the first statement of the theme, playing it with the push and pull of a

relaxed rubato, recalling his affinity with Romantic classical repertoire. At the transition into the repetition of the theme, Thigpen enters on drums and they settle into a swing groove. In "Laurentide" Peterson performs the A theme straight the first time joined by Brown at the repetition. As Peterson and Brown transition to a restatement of the AABA refrain, Thigpen joins them, leading a swing rhythm on ride cymbal and encouraging Peterson to push his attacks to the off-beat. The Trio swings the repetition of the refrain and maintains the rhythmic style until the end of the movement. A persistent feature throughout the suite, the switch from straight to swing meter unifies all eight movements and also draws attention to the Trio's trademark swinging style.

Peterson's combination of straight and swing rhythms takes on additional significance in the context of discourse on African American musical traditions. Invoking Henry Louis Gates Jr.'s notion of signifying, Samuel A. Floyd Jr. argues that the act of swinging, the elusive rhythmic drive associated with many African American musics, originated with the practice of the ring shout. Swing, Floyd argues, emerges from the musical process of troping and that,"When sound-events Signify on the time-line, against the flow of its pulse, making the pulse itself lilt freely - swing has been effected."[57] The importance of the Peterson Trio's performance of swing in the context of *Canadiana Suite* is highlighted by their deliberate placement of the attack *with* the pulse of time (straight) *and* against it (swing). For the members of the Oscar Peterson Trio, their frequent switches from straight to swing rhythm demonstrates rhythmic control of individual sound events and as a collective music-making entity. In effect, Peterson, Brown, and Thigpen dance circles around the concept of bounded musical genre, declaring that irrespective of genre or national categories, they "swing."

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[57] Samuel A. Floyd, "Ring Shout! Literary Studies, Historical Studies, and Black Music Inquiry," *Black Music Research Journal*, Vol. 11, No. 2 (Autumn, 1991), 273.

Trained in both classical and jazz styles, Peterson maintained a keen ear for hearing links between genres. Traditionally, the jazz suite bridged the classical-jazz divide, combining formal elements associated with concert music with jazz harmonies, making it particularly well-suited to Peterson's musical aesthetic. But composing a jazz suite had other historically-determined political and social implications as well. Peterson's performance aesthetic, as much as it encompassed his musical background and preferences, also commented on his political views about the jazz community and its social responsibilities.

The Garden: A Renewed Canadian Nationalism

Peterson spent much of his career abroad, but in the years immediately preceding the composition of *Canadiana Suite* his relationship to Canada became particularly significant. In 1958, Peterson relocated his family to the metropolis of Toronto from Montréal - five years before the Peterson Trio recorded the suite.[58] In Toronto, Peterson fulfilled his ambition to establish a school of jazz instruction (the Advanced School of Contemporary Music [ASCM]), a community-based school that offered a range of courses taught by the founding members.[59] When asked why he wanted to teach in addition to his already busy performance schedule, Peterson revealed an altruistic motivation connected to national culture: "Canada needs something like this."[60] Wanting to "give back" by fostering a jazz community in Toronto,

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[58] Lees, *A Will to Swing,*155. Toronto, Ontario is located approximately five hundred kilometers west of Montréal.

[59] See Chapter 2 for more commentary about Peterson and the Advanced School of Contemporary Music. Library and Archives Canada, Oscar Peterson fonds, Mus 199 G1, "Miscellaneous" Series, Scrapbook, Box 11, Advanced School for Contemporary Music Brochure, 1960-1961.

[60] Library and Archives Canada, Oscar Peterson fonds, Mus 199 G1, "Miscellaneous" Series, Scrapbook, Box 11, Maria Fusco, "Jazz Sextet Teaches School," September 10 1960.

Peterson's dedication to the project may have also been encouraged by an increased awareness of how his career factored into a burgeoning sense of Canadian culture.

Peterson's concerns coincided with the country's centennial year in 1967 when general interest in national culture spread across the country. During this time, the Canadian government engaged with the public in discussions of national identity, setting up such organizations as The Centennial Commission, an agency that commissioned approximately 140 new musical works to be performed at various events for the occasion.[61] Government efforts fostered artistic interest in national themes and symbols while they also primed public reception for art that reflected a heightened patriotic spirit. Peterson, having already spent several years immersed in the increased celebratory atmosphere in the country, composed *Canadiana Suite* in this felicitous spirit.

The counterpart to Peterson's closeness with Canada is that while touring internationally he expressed a longing for home through memories of familiar Canadian landscapes.[62] He revealed the immediacy and importance of these images in a 1992 CBC radio documentary, stating "I can feel this landscape. I live with it...When I'm away, the first thing I think of is the landscape."[63] The narrative potential of the jazz suite provided one musical basis for *Canadiana Suite*, but its patriotic spirit flowed from the influence of artistic landscape representations in Canadian visual art, literature and concert music. Peterson's openness to being identified with Canada and Canadian images increased as he gained confidence as a public figure. Referring to Peterson as a "deeply Canadian artist," Lees linked Peterson's suite with a tradition of Canadian

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[61] George Proctor, *Canadian Music of the Twentieth Century* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1980), 105.

[62] Peterson cited the Peterson Trio's busy touring schedule as the reason behind the closing of the ASCM in 1963.

[63] Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, in association with Vocal Vision Productions and Sylvia Sweeney, "In the Key of Oscar," 1992, Library and Archives Canada, Accession Number 2009-00172-9, Item Number ISN 418016, radio documentary (audio).

nationalist art, equating Peterson's use of sound with "the way A.Y. Jackson used paint."[64] Jackson, along with his fellow members of the circle of artists known as the Group of Seven, famously painted images from the arctic, Northern Ontario, and the Canadian Shield that have since become iconic images of the country, laying the groundwork for a new form of nationalist art. Glenn Gould recalled that the Group of Seven's "romanticized, art-nouveau-tinged" works "in my day adorned virtually every second schoolroom."[65] For Gould, these evocative representations shaped his connection to the country and impacted on his creative output - Peterson's visions of the country were undoubtedly molded by some of these same images.[66]

The Group of Seven is merely one example of landscape's broader significance to Canada's artistic and literary psyche, a subject of much discussion by writers and critics alike. Northrop Frye summed up the prevailing argument that Canadian literary landscapes frequently express ambivalence toward the land, when he described the tension "between opposed tendencies, one romantic, exploratory and idealistic, the other reflective, observant and pastoral."[67] Perhaps this is one area in which Canadians differ from their neighbors to the south: their willingness to be influenced by a European pastoral tradition which has addressed the idea of landscape as both sublime and picturesque.[68] In his thesis on landscape representations in Canadian-composed concert music, David Parsons identifies an uncertainty towards landscape

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[64] Lees, *A Will to Swing*, 277.

[65] Tim Page, ed, *The Glenn Gould Reader* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1984), 391. Also quoted in Peter F. Ostwald, *Glenn Gould: The Ecstasy and Tragedy of Genius* (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 1997), 232.

[66] This rumination on the Group of Seven's influence is part of Gould's introduction to his 1967 experimental radio documentary "Idea of North," a worked deeply influenced by Gould's relationship to Canada's landscape vis a vis the north. His meditation on the north is juxtaposed with the theme of isolation; both ideas converge in a series of interviews and sound recordings, manipulated and configured in a technique he called *contrapuntal radio*.

[67] Frye, *The Bush Garden,* xxvi.

[68] Marcia Kline differentiated Canadians' attraction to the land to its comparable manifestations in the United States as driven by a desire to seek continuity with the old world. Marcia Kline, *Beyond the Land Itself: Views of Nature in Canada and the United States* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1970), 39.

akin to this European outlook, characterized by both reverence and anxiety. Most of these composers, as Parsons observes, avoid portraying Canada's urban places and instead focus on the land as untouched and wild.[69] As a result, these musical interpretations often characterize nature as hostile and human response as fearful.[70]

Devoid of the ambivalence that plays a central role in other forms of Canadian landscape art, Peterson's suite disrupts this cultural trope. Peterson embraces nature as well as Canada's urban regions; people are as central to his suite as is the terrain. "Place St. Henri," "Hogtown Blues," and "March Past," in particular, depict the character and culture of the densely populated urban centers of Montréal, Toronto, and Calgary (in reference to the Calgary Stampede) respectively, and human interaction with the land are at the thematic forefront. Moreover, Peterson's perspective on landscape is mediated by human perception: seen by a sleeping car porter through the window of a moving train.

The View from the Iron Road: Connections to the Past

Just as Mark Tucker observed Ellington's desire to memorialize experiences in his jazz suites, Gene Lees remarked on Peterson's *Canadiana Suite* as musical documentation of Peterson's memories, connecting musical scenes to his father's routine as a sleeping car porter.[71] Yet Peterson refrained from explicit mention of a train in the suite's title. In stark contrast to such

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[69] Parsons mentions only one musical work in his 1987 study inspired by the landscape as urban setting: George Fiala's 1967 orchestral suite, *Montréal.* David Parsons, "Landscape Imagery in Canadian Music," Masters Thesis (Ottawa: Carleton University, 1987), 74.

[70] For instance, themes have ranged from "man's conflict with the hard unyielding grimness of ice and rock" for instance, in John Weinzweig's 1946 orchestral work *Edge of the World* to a "fascination with [the themes of] night and darkness." Parsons, "Landscape Imagery," 40.

[71] *Canadiana Suite* was not Peterson's first work inspired by railway travel and his father's life. Only a year before, the Oscar Peterson Trio released its breakthrough album *Night Train*, which has also been thought to suggest a connection to his father's cross-country travels.

train-inspired works as Arthur Honegger's *Pacific 231,* Steve Reich's *Different Trains,* and Duke Ellington's "A Train," Peterson does not recreate the audible cacophony of a locomotive journey. Lees wrote the original album's liner notes in which he explained Peterson's intention in the suite to represent "a journey from the Atlantic coast westwards to British Columbia, where the Rocky Mountains plunge into the Pacific. That's five days by train, by the way."[72] Lees described the progression of movements as

> views from a train window; or perhaps memories of a father's descriptions of the land when he would come home from his journeys and supervise his son's piano lessons.[73]

Peterson's connection to train travel was a departure from that of so many other artists and writers. Scholars have frequently commented on the train's historical significance as a transformational cultural force; its sheer size, strength, and speed held irresistible allure for the creative imagination. Wolfgang Schivelbusch noted the powerful effect of the railway journey on human perception. Quoting Dolf Sternberger on the effect of widespread rail travel on the passenger's view of panoramic landscape, he wrote that "the depth perception of pre-industrial consciousness was, literally, lost...he [Sternberger] saw himself as part of the foreground, and that perception *joined* him to the landscape, included him in it."[74] In U.S. literature, Leo Marx argued that the railroad transformed literary interpretations of nature into "a new mechanized landscape."[75] Narratives of Canada's railroad history, such as those of Pierre Berton and Harold Innis, have addressed the locomotive as representative of the country's industrial and economic

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[72] Oscar Peterson Trio, *Canadiana Suite*, Liner Notes (Toronto: Limelight Records, 1964).

[73] Lees, *A Will to Swing,* 29.

[74] Wolfgang Schivelbusch, *The Railway Journey,* 2nd ed. (New York: Berg Publishers, 1986), 63. Emphasis in original.

[75] Leo Marx, *The Machine in the Garden* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1964), 195.

progress.[76] As a chronicle of the closely-linked histories of Canadian rail travel and Canada's black community, Peterson's suite follows in that tradition; in his musical narrative, the railway plays a powerful role in shaping his family and their community.

Peterson's perspective of Canada's railroad expresses patriotism by situating the locomotive, symbol of national progress, against Canada's landscape, also a source of national pride. But given the discrimination Peterson and other black Canadians faced in Montréal, his patriotism seems an incongruous response. Contemporaneous jazz suites in the United States addressed issues relevant to the Civil Rights Movement, expressing frustration and even violence against racism and inequality. Notably, *Canadiana Suite* is not an activist composition along those lines. This work is a far cry from Sonny Rollins' "The Freedom Suite" (1958) and Max Roach and Abbey Lincoln's *We Insist! Freedom Now!* (1961), both works in which Ingrid Monson identifies an activist impulse.[77] As Monson notes, both works offer social commentary, aligning artistic liberty with a message in support of racial equality and civil rights.

One possible explanation is that while Peterson experienced racism in Canada, he was also conscious of the greater hurdles that black Americans faced in the 1960s. Peterson recalled his first experience - what he called his "real 'education'" - in the southern United States with JATP. Peterson's account of segregated accommodations and meals on the 1950 tour conveys his anger, making his experience of racism in Canada seem, in his words, "milder."[78] If musicians in

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[76] The building of Canada's first trans-continental railway marked a momentous economic and national achievement; the country, from east to west, was continuously connected for the first time. See Pierre Berton's two volumes on the subject, *The National Dream: The Great Railway, 1871-1881* (Toronto: McLelland and Stewart, 1970) and *The Last Spike: The Great Railway 1881-1885* (Toronto: McLelland and Stewart, 1971); as well as Harold Innis' *History of the Canadian Pacific Railway* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1970).

[77] Ingrid Monson, *Freedom Sounds* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), 172. For an analysis of these two works, 175-182.

[78] It took several years for Granz to negotiate hotel rooms for all of the JATP members together in the southern United States. Peterson, *A Jazz Odyssey*, 108-109. Lees' biography also contains accounts of Peterson's experiences in the southern United States in his early years on tour with JATP. Lees, *The will to swing,* 103-104.

the United States called for freedom from oppression by composing and performing their activism, Peterson found comfort in depicting his memories of home and its accompanying landscape images. Reflecting forty years into his career, Peterson provided commentary on this issue and the motivation behind his expressions of Canadian pride:

> . . . I was playing an "American" jazz form - I was playing jazz. And I started wondering, since they're making this distinction about - he's Canadian, we're American - I started wondering what was I bringing to it? And it finally dawned on me at one point that I was bringing to it, perhaps, my Canadian background. I was bringing a lot of the naiveté. I was bringing a lot of, then, curiosity. I was bringing a lot of the comfort that I had in knowing that my domicile or my home city was not being ravaged by some of the riots and what have you. And so all of that, I'm sure, was being reflected in my personality and certainly my musical personality. There was a comfort in what I was playing.[79]

Turning to landscape and his Canadian identity, Peterson's *Canadiana Suite* is leisurely, adhering to an established form and consonant harmonies suggesting a subdued approach compared to Rollins', Roach and Lincoln's brazen activism. But Peterson's political statement is nevertheless present in *Canadiana Suite* by connecting music to an underrepresented aspect of Canada's history. As a subjective shift from mainstream train narratives, his composition documents the history of Canada's railway from the perspective of its black community. Peterson's locomotive is neither a romanticized vision of man's dominance over nature, nor a raucous journey of industrial grandeur. Rather, it is part of the musical scenery and a means to narrate his own journey.

Conclusions

Shaped by Peterson's memories of the Canadian landscape and his jazz aesthetic, *Canadiana Suite* is evidence of what Elaine Keillor has described as an emerging characteristic of

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[79] Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, in association with Vocal Vision Productions and Sylvia Sweeney, "In the Key of Oscar," 1992, Library and Archives Canada, Accession Number 2009-00172-9, Item Number ISN 418016, radio documentary (audio).

Canadian music: a compositional practice that is "personal rather than a national art modeled on schools or great masters."[80] Peterson's *Canadiana Suite* is a prime example of this compositional model in that he adapted established Canadian cultural tropes to the jazz aesthetic and forms. As a patriotic statement and a landscape work, Peterson's suite goes against the grain of "mainstream" jazz expectations by presenting a musical work from the perspective of the African Canadian experience. When Lees wrote that *Canadiana Suite* "puzzles some people," he may have been referring to the incongruity between Peterson's lived experience as black Canadian and the assumption that Peterson was from the United States.[81]

There were advantages and challenges to being a black Canadian jazz musician. Peterson could easily pass within a musical community based in the United States, but there were few opportunities to express his difference. He was not alone. Peterson's experience parallels that of the black Canadian scholar and writer George Elliott Clark, who in the 1990s recalled being mistaken for African American at a train station in Kingston, Ontario. He discussed his erroneous attribution as a symptom of polyconsciousness, extending W.E.B. DuBois' concept of double consciousness. Whereas double consciousness describes the conflict between the black American's self-concept and external perceptions of the self, Clarke posits that the black Canadian grapples with a similar self-awareness. For black Canadians however, their internal conflict is one of a multitudinous identity complicating the view that they are a homogeneous group who share the same experience as African Americans. Clarke speaks to the contrary: "For as our blackness ranges from ivory to indigo hues, our heritages, ethnic allegiances, religions, and

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[80] Elaine Keillor, *Music in Canada: Capturing Landscape and Diversity* (Montréal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2006), 252.

[81] Lees, *A Will to Swing,* 277.

languages are also varied."[82] As he argues, even within Canada's cultural "mosaic," black Canadians bring to the table a complex and multi-layered identity of their own.

In *Canadiana Suite* Peterson's polyconsciousness is an underlying theme, drawing from his memories while it also resists assumptions that his experience was the same as his fellow musicians from the United States. Although this composition is among few jazz works that speak directly to a Canadian experience, musicians of diverse ethnicities and nationalities have adapted and transformed the genre, sounding new perspectives from different life experiences.[83] Rather than barricade *Canadiana Suite* behind the category of "Canadian jazz work," this composition might most effectively be considered an exemplar of the genre's malleability, further evidence for why jazz continues to flourish as a medium for musicians to explore diverse subjectivities through adaptation, innovation, and reinvention.

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[82] George Elliott Clarke, "The Complex Face of Black Canada," Winger 1997, *McGill News Alumni Quarterly*, http://news-archive.mcgill.ca/w97/black.htm Accessed 11 March 2013.

[83] A recent collection, *Jazz/Not Jazz,* edited by David Ake, Charles Hiroshi Garrett, and Daniel Goldmark (2012) explores the phenomenon of jazz's acceptance among an expanding variety of cultures and ethnic groups. Jazz's various cross-cultural and trans-national adoptions and adaptations have been documented in such volumes as E. Taylor Atkins, *Blue Nippon: Authenticating Jazz in Japan* (Raleigh: Duke University Press, 2001) and Fred Ho, *Wicked Theory/Naked Practice* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2009), for instance.

Conclusion

At first glance, Gould and Peterson defy comparison, with their careers and musical perspectives initially appearing to be at odds. Gould emerged from Toronto, a conservative city in the 1930 and '40s. In his passion for the recording studio, Gould sought ultimate control of his musical output and because of his provocative views, made a name as enfant terrible of classical music in the 1960s and beyond. He explored new techniques for musical interpretation and in doing so redefined the role of the virtuoso in the twentieth century. Peterson was from a vibrant and diverse immigrant community in Montréal. He made his name as a jazz collaborator and improviser who thrived on the live concert stage, touring the globe well into the later years of his life. Some have viewed Peterson as entrenched in a performance style long past its prime. Yet as I have argued, he broke from the limitations placed on him as a virtuoso by remaining connected to his Canadian identity and defying racial stereotypes often associated with black American musicians. In other words, Peterson embodied an alternative virtuosity within the jazz world.

As I show in this study, virtuosity and Canadian identity are the common elements that bring Gould and Peterson together, factoring into their reception as performers and creative artists. As twentieth-century virtuosos, the two men confronted the yoke of expectation, each in different ways. To conclude my study, I return to the idea of boundaries and the value of confronting them in the context of twentieth-century performance. As a final point of comparison, I consider another common experience between the two when Gould's and Peterson's recordings traversed earthly limits and took their virtuosic performances into outer space.

On September 5 1977, NASA launched the space probe Voyager 1 on a research mission of Jupiter and Saturn.[1] After its expedition of the outer planets, the probe sailed beyond our solar system and into interstellar space. In addition to its exploratory role, the probe has a communicative mission. Voyager 1's musical connections relate to an item in the probe's cargo - a gold-plated copper audio disc known as the Voyager Golden Record, with a message from earth. When played with the enclosed playback equipment, its extraterrestrial recipient will hear greetings in many languages, earthly sounds, and music.[2] One writer referred to the Voyager's Golden Record as a collection of "humanity's greatest hits."[3] Scientist Carl Sagan led an international committee that curated and collected sound recordings from around the world, calling the disc a "bottle in the cosmic ocean."[4]

In addition to a recording of Chuck Berry's "Johnny B. Goode," a Peruvian wedding song, and recordings of various nature and animal sounds, the disc includes Glenn Gould's recording of Prelude and Fugue in C Major from the second book of J. S. Bach's *Well-Tempered Clavier*. On August 25 2012, Voyager 1 reached interstellar space and scientists estimate that it will take another 40, 000 years before the disc reaches any extraterrestrial beings. Like the space probe itself, the disc's final destination remains unknown. But the hope is that its recipient - if there is one - will be able to decipher something about its senders from the recorded information.

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[1] For more information about the mission, see NASA Jet Propulsion Laboratory, "The Mission," *Voyager,* http://voyager.jpl.nasa.gov/mission/index.html, last accessed August 30 2014.

[2] For more information about the Golden Record, see the official NASA website. NASA Jet Propulsion Laboratory, "The Golden Record," *Voyager,* http://voyager.jpl.nasa.gov/spacecraft/goldenrec.html, last accessed August 30 2014.

[3] Megan Gambino, "What is on Voyager's golden record?," *Smithsonian.com,* http://www.smithsonianmag.com/science-nature/what-is-on-voyagers-golden-record-73063839/?no-ist, last accessed August 30 2014.

[4] More information about the process of selecting the items on the disc is published in Carl Sagan, *Murmurs of Earth: The Voyager Interstellar Record* (New York: Random House, 1978).

Almost twenty years after the launch of Voyager 1, Oscar Peterson's recordings also took a journey in outer space. Over a period of seventeen days in June 1996, Canadian astronaut Robert Thirsk traveled aboard the Space Shuttle *Columbia* as part of an international crew that conducted microgravity experiments while in orbit around the earth.[5] Thirsk brought several of Peterson's albums aboard with him and relayed his experience to Peterson in a letter:

> I flew your "History of an Artist," "Canadiana Suite" and "Live at the Blue Note" CDs with me aboard the shuttle. You are my favourite jazz pianist and these are some of my favourite CDs. I listened to them when I went to bed at night hanging in my sleeping bag from the ceiling! I am enclosing a photo of your CDs to prove that they were in space. They have orbited the Earth 271 times and traveled eleven million kilometers. Give me a call if you would like to have the actual CDs. I would be pleased to send them to you. I wish you all the best in your career and hope that our paths will cross someday.[6]

Peterson's response expressed gratitude "as a Canadian, of your [Thirsk's] successes within the Space Program."[7]

These cosmic journeys can be read as the ultimate metaphor for setting new limits for musical performance, and bring new meaning to the term "New World Virtuosity." Together, Gould's and Peterson's musical forays into outer space exemplify virtuosity's role in an age of space exploration as representative of nations and of humankind. While Peterson's music provided a connection to home for one astronaut, Gould's recording was chosen as symbolic of humankind's greatest musical achievements that stands the test of time (and space) in a most extreme situation. In that context, both space journeys raise the question of virtuosity's value.

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[5] Canadian Space Agency, "Mission STS-078" http://www.asc-csa.gc.ca/eng/missions/sts-078.asp, last accessed August 30 2014.

[6] Letter from Robert Thirsk to Oscar Peterson, June 6 1997, Series A, 29, "Correspondence - 1997," Box 30 Folder 29, Oscar Peterson fonds, Library and Archives Canada.

[7] Letter from Oscar Peterson to Robert Thirsk, August 20 1997, Series A, 29, "Correspondence - 1997," Box 30 Folder 29, Oscar Peterson fonds, Library and Archives Canada.

What is the role and meaning of virtuosity when it is chosen to represent the utmost human achievement? What purpose can performance and virtuosity serve?

The interstellar forays of Gould's and Peterson's recordings indicates that virtuosity continues to evolve, and in the recent past has provided comfort to those who are far away from home. These episodes confirm that musical performance still defines an important element of the human experience. Stephanie Nelson and Larry Polansky speculated about the role of music on the Voyager record from the perspective of applied communication research. They inquired into the linguistic properties of musical performance and the possible revelations that another intelligent species might have about us based on the curated collection of musical samples.[8] Concluding their analysis, they suggested that the musical selections reveal more about the people on the committee than they do about humankind in general. The value of such a collection is thus less about the objects themselves, but lies in the preservation of an historical moment and the political negotiation of aesthetic preferences.

According to NASA, music is an important aspect of human life in space. Historically, they have found that playing music increases crew morale by providing a daily diversion from their work tasks while it also reminds them of home.[9] Gould's and Peterson's cosmic contact provides added dimension to the argument by suggesting that virtuosity plays a role beyond that of entertainment. While listeners and critics might decry virtuosic performance for "superficiality" and a "lack of substance," this dissertation has explored virtuosity as a musical concept that, in its malleability to different cultural settings and historical contexts, can incite

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[8] Stephanie Nelson and Larry Polansky, "The Music of the Voyager Interstellar Record," *Journal of Applied Communication Research* 21 Issue 4 (November 1993), 359-360.

[9] "Making music in microgravity," *NASA website* http://www.nasa.gov/missions/shuttle/space_music.html, Last accessed September 1 2014.

debate, provide avenues of non-musical creative exploration, and express sentiment and nostalgia.

At the outset of this study I presented the idea of virtuosity at the boundaries. Bringing together the Canadian virtuoso pianists Gould and Peterson, I drew connections that illustrated challenges and opportunities resonating across boundaries of musical genre, race, and national affiliation. I examined Gould's and Peterson's experiments at the outer limits of virtuosity and in relation to technology, musical genre, music and film, and as a site of musical creation. In doing so, the concept of virtuosity became entwined with landscape, technology, and African Canadian history. A great deal of world history has been constructed around the narrative of discovery. In that context, virtuosity should be regarded as a microcosm of that exploratory impulse, making Gould and Peterson vanguards at the edge of the musical frontier.

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