

{ -- in response to *Intero* and *Canto Infinito* -- }

J.K.Randall

TO ASTONISH THE ROSES
7 e-mails to Walter Branchi

Roses #1

Dear Walter,

Since your last visit

{ – when you played us a CD of an *Intero* episode, in a bedroom chock-full of beds, desks, chairs, stacks of books and music, bookcases, LP's & CD's, LP-cases, CD-cases, TV and stereo systems, a filing cabinet, and (says Ruth) a certain amount of dirt; and featuring a picture window with a pleasant enough view out to vegetation of the season; -- and you left me a copy of your forthcoming book – }

I've been thinking and scribbling about more or less Everything, not excluding my 12+1 Liszt tone-poems, nor defunct Music Theory / History 101, nor why I Balk at your Systems-Theory superstructures.

{ – but not at your music (-- I'm always sure I'm with you. --), nor at your quirky experiences and inspiring visions, nor at seeing a patch of sky fully for the first time, nor at sonic integration with our environment, nor at your astonishing, perspicacious Sentence for the Ages : (born Immortal : don't fail to instruct your heirs, when they plant you in a deservedly green cemetery, to engrave this line on your principal monument) : "*I write music to astonish the roses.*" -- }

As a result, I think I have distilled some questions on which our attitudes run skew; so who better to inflict it all on than him who set me off. You've earned yourself e-mails!

But where to start?

Well, how about here?: From all the way back to our talk in Rome (late 70's?) about a Nono piece in a car on the way home after, I've gleaned that we have contrasting attitudes toward the Drift of History, and in particular the drift of Music history. I think you think that History is Going Somewhere (or at least flowing in some direction) and that we should create for, and in response to, our Location, or Moment, in that drift.

Say I: Bullshit.

The only thing that History ever did for me was put me in the middle of it. For this favor I owe it nothing in particular. I'm happy to cherish, or deplore, or ignore its leavings, and I enthusiastically do: but we call our own

shots. (In saying this, I feel very much the American Cowboy; but as Bob Sadin and Henry James both insisted, that's America vs. Europe for you.) Just as there is no God and he's my personal enemy, there is no Drift and it flows every which way. We even put Leonard Bernstein and Geo. W. Bush in charge of it for a while.

So what now? Sit tight. Roses #2 follows at my leisure.

Love, Jim

Roses #2

Dear Walter,

You asked me a striking question once -- I've forgotten what I was blathering about; something future-oriented I think -- namely: Was I talking about Music or about Sound? From almost anyone else, I would have assumed that the questioner valorized, as I habitually do, Music. But no, you were implying something unexpected: that it was desirable to speculate about Sound divested of "Musical". (You'll be able to judge how far I've progressed.)

Sound.

Intero originates in an initially uninterpreted set of Ratios which, in composing, you interpret into the domain of Frequency, and thence into (all?) domains of spatial and temporal interest. *Intero* (-- with all that crap in the room plus a bureau which I forgot to mention --) integrates us with our environment in a sonically driven healing to which nothing is external because everything (especially all that crap in my room) is embraced.

Cool!

But how is it with my Liszt tone-poems? (I've got the whole baker's dozen of them.) I imagine I'm noticing the difference between listening to (L t-p) and listening thru (*Int*); -- but pretty soon I balk.

It goes like this:

(I draw freely from *Canto Infinito*.)

My Liszt tone-poems (Haitink/A.Joo/Karajan/Halasz) are indeed oozing with thematic temporal processes: transformations of time-loaded cells, trajectories (I like that word used this way), and outcomes (logical? -- more often existential). We listen to, and to them: and of course we reject any environmental action as external, as interloper.

Roger.

So check out that place in *Heroide Funebre*/(Haitink) at

14'20"(Haitink), where

-- across a reverberant silence --

{ -- No doubt I have precedingly immersed my ear in a web of motivic transformations. But a motivic description, while knowledgeably "analytical", consigns what follows (a Great Moment in a great piece, by the way) to the wrong dimension at the wrong temperature; shies away from probing, or even 'fessing-up to, what it is we love about all this, and why it's on the program. As with *Intero*, we seem to be listening thru. -- }

we ease into a space we've been Waiting All Our Lives to enter.

(Sounds suspiciously like Heaven -- a sort of Tibetan Heaven -- a

Heaven of Desire Become Nostalgia.)

Socko so far.

We've All been there & back.

So what?

(Liszt went there all the time.)

!Hold it!

Q & A:

Can't we just say that the trajectory of transformed motifs, with whatever conventional penumbra, induces our private extramusical fantasies?

Sure.

So what are your scenarios supposed to do for us?

They go fishing in the waters of Your Psychic Whatnots; which is surely the dimension in which Music thrives.

Is such a scenario a Programme?

Depends who wrote it. The Composer? or not.

Do such scenarios name entities and define techniques?

No.

What, then?

They attempt to capture flavor, point, tone, bite, feel, drift, *raison d'etre*.

Of?

Intensely focused listenings.

In what sense of Focused?

At deepest attention fully absorbing, and absorbed by, and acoustically invested in, an ongoing piece-driven psychic integration..

Will your scenario tell us how the piece goes, what the piece does?

No. Not quite.

Sort of.

It will try, from Its angle, to induce in us, After The Fact, an appropriately conducive sensibility.

Conducive to what?

Conducive to absorbing, and being absorbed in, an intensely focused listening.

Shouldn't we absorb such a scenario in advance?

No.

Don't.

A scenario should blossom only in the garden of memory.

Why not just say how the piece goes, what the piece does?

Because only the piece can say what it does. Only the piece can do what only you can hear.

Aren't we talking about just Romantic music?

No. Get Off that.

Don't resist the dance/gesture/voice of Bach Suites & Partitas; the ingenious discourse of late Haydn Quartets; Beethoven's existential roil; the soul-to-soul of slow Chopin; Bruckner's exaltations; the Psych Wards of middle Schoenberg.

So are all the masterpieces of Standard Repertoire, then, Programme Music?

Sure.

-- With several conspicuous exceptions: *Le Sacre du Printemps* (Diaghilev & Disney notwithstanding), and the keyboard Sonatas (the fast ones) of Domenico Scarlatti.

But what about *Intero*, our original psychic integrator?

(Perhaps it will resurface in Roses #3.)

And Sound?

Love, Jim

Roses #3

Dear Walter,

Let's back up to the Sound of all that crap in my room (ATCRIMR).

Clearly the locus of my psychic integration is my own idiosyncratic head, whatever may have accumulated in my room. But ATCRIMR is not merely an environment in which a CD got played, it's what *Intero* was processing and being processed by. (For *Heroide* I'm somewhere else. I'm off to

Siegfried's Funeral, on our way to Heaven. And you?)

In hearing the *ATCRIMR* manifestation of *Intero*, I'm with it: but what's the it that I'm with?

Better question: What am I doing?

I need some terms:

"crossover" will mean what it needs to mean (my model is Humpty Dumpty) to render insightful the sentence in which it appears, and will thus acquire Meaning on the fly.

-- To "click in" is to cross over.

For Plato's slaveboy, geometric talk suddenly clicks in as Proof.

Listening is Revelatory.

Anonymous road and driveway noise -- for Benji and Lacey too -- suddenly clicks in as Here Comes Ruth!

Listening is Triggered.

A puzzling birdcall, researched, clicks in as Cardinal.

Listening is Reasoned.

Is that warhorse by Sch? Sch? Mend? Dvor? Can't place it. Just doesn't click in. (-- as always, it's Grieg --) No crossover.

Listening is Competitive. Evidentiary. Reminiscent.

Emma and Beth tune the viola to the flute. Verdict: No, for a while, then Yes! Bango! (Almost a Composing-Out of crossover.) From jangling, we suddenly emerge In Tune. There blooms, in humble glory, in the doubled-back-upon domain of pitch, a Pitch.

Listening is Purposeful. Acquisitive. Conquers.

Doubling-back-upon, to vivify the sheer fact of pitch, is rampant in Scarlatti's keyboard Sonatas (the fast ones (say, K443, K1, K283)) which show off for us by juggling the crown jewels; by making glittering notes the whole show.

In their Procrustean Beds, *Sacre's* doubled-back-upon pitches -- in neon, under strobelights -- whine, cringe, stompdance, chatter, wiggle, seethe, scuffle, drag, strut, bump & grind, trudge, stutter, wriggle, proclaim, scamper, moan, twirl, scrape, riot, yowl, kibbitz, wheeze [pick 6] ;

should they speak, they address neither us nor any concern of ours.

(For Kierkegaard's Knight of Faith, the crossover to Sanctity likewise doubles back on itself. Returns to the same old world of Ordinary, of Everyday. But with the Difference that's Everything.)

Couldn't we say that All masterpieces of Standard Repertoire, having clicked in, enliven, even electrify, the sheer fact of Pitch? -- bearing whatever burdens. Sure.

Listenings all.

Composing is Listening.

Originating in a precompositional pitchclass-construction, an incipient Piece burgeons. I project & follow.

{By the way, do you remember your silent darkened-room shtick with a Flame, and Michela with a reflecting mirror (--Did you know that Michela refers to you as a magician? (To whom greetings, by the way. Congratulate her for her contributions to *Canto*, and ask her to tell you the plot of *Body Heat* (Wm. Hurt & K. Turner), which we saw in Trenton with Florence. (She'll give you a European recount.))--), and a darkened TV screen reflecting, and reflecting mirrored reflections?}

(A Classic, from the Old Days in the ATCRIMR-room -- but a classic of What?)}

To cross over is to happen.

Crossovers swing.

Diz & Bird on an old Folkways LP. Aborted takes on #'s 1 & 2: Just Notes, man. (What the hell are they trying to do?) Take #3!!!! They hit it and you know it.

Ensemble is Listening.

To listen Musically is Voluntary, Willful.

-- is to cross over afresh, even unto Bizarre or Unwanted.

(Tom Hajdu & Andy Milburn on late Beethoven Quartets: "They mess with your mind, man." JKR on a Moment in *Heroide*: "I've waited all my life for this.")

{In a sentimental vein, I remember a sensitive, very bright student, whose pianoplaying was practiceroom primitive. I tell her this & that, make intricate or sweeping gestures, hum & grunt, and take a few swipes at the keyboard myself. She earnestly makes no progress for about 20 minutes; until ****Eureka!****, she suddenly sounds like an Artiste. The class is justifiably astonished, as I am, and she is. She crosses over and never reverts. (Did you know that she is alive and well in Wisconsin, married to a preacher, and happily immersed in music?)}
Solo is Listening.

My best try so far for Intero:

ATCRIMR clicks in – absolved? -- as posed, angular, efflorescence; destabilized by that faintly insidious underground purr.

(Have we raised the obvious question?)

In our future: Freedom from What. Why I balk at Other People's Generalizations. Visual TimeShapes. Can *Intero* find a clean home? And much more.
So don't fret!

Love, Jim

Roses #4

Dear Walter,

Of Space & Time. And Ethics.
(Sound can wait.)

(It's back to the Old Days again.)

Even then, seeds & symptoms of diverging paths lurked. And a veritable gulf yawned between Princeton's early Sonic sessions and the sparkling improvisations of Rome's Nuova Consonanza on the LP which you gave me. Convincingly, your group had aimed explicitly at a Sonically Specified style and outcome (-- one of your favorites "ended in *forte*" --) and had achieved riveting concert pieces on the cutting edge of instrumental and compositional virtuosity.

But for us, as you understood, such outcomes were not merely unobtainable; (-- Nuova Consonanza was already in your rearview mirror, and you were

moving, by way of intermedia (not “mixed”, not “multi”: the distinction was important to you), into the computerized suburbs of *Intero* --) they were also unwanted. In fact, they were not just frowned upon; they were outlawed.

Why was that?

First of all, there was no Audience – only the small handful of participants: we weren’t Performing For anybody. (Quoth Dave Madole: We got together to make a tape which we could admire ourselves for having made.) And a participant need not be a Musician.

Nor was any kind of sound either prescribed or proscribed. Conventional sounds, Unconventional, Musical, Nonmusical; Instruments, Voices, Devices; all were welcome. Our preliminary agreements were, in fact, neither Sonic nor Musicformal: they were Ethical and Social. Be Nice: contribute as needed -- invitingly. Listen to the Whole, not just yours, as Yours. No soloistic Takeovers -- which inject Their Own, not Your, inflection into the TimeFlow

{Krishnamurti: You didn't create the world, you're just responsible for it.}

As the number of participants increased, we began to envision our sessions as model interactions within an Anarchist Community (-- most of us were, of course, on the University dole --), with equal emphasis on Anarchist and Community. Our objective was to maintain and shape whatever was emerging -- with a bias toward enhanced presence, and away from crowding -- devoid of invidious virtuosity; dazzle-free.

II.

My maiden voyage into Extrasonic Space (by way of Pinecone-pushing on a bounded surface) was a direct outgrowth of Sonic sessions (solos & interactive duos, both yclept Meditations), whose Exclusivity of Sound had begun to seem arbitrary. Yet so centrally was TimeFlow my addiction, that I felt that pushing pinecones around was, in the peculiar sense in which we used them, not only Like music, it Was music. Sure, they were nonsonic, and sure, they formed Configurations in Space -- even little Dramas, when pushed by Michela or Elisabeth -- but for me each push was an inflection of, a stage in, a timeflow. And I realized then that Music for me was not so much timeflow in the particular domain of Sound, as a particular way of

shaping and apprehending TimeFlow.

the field of action is my desktop

we, two of us,

(but neither of us you: you're busy with Marc, tweaking the computer)
sit comfortably across from, and facing, each other

(we cooperate, not compete)
(no Object, no Win)

each of us has a concealed stash of small objects, somewhere off the desk (At birth in Rome, Pinecones, which proliferate on the Academy lawn; and a massive old desk, from some other century -- with 2-ended drawers which facilitate *subrosa* chicanery)

action consists of onputting, moving, offputting, faking -- in whatever sequences or combinations -- and includes whatever associated bodily movements or immobilities occur on or above the desktop

who does what, when, and with what intention (if any), follows the same paths as an interactive Sonic session -- namely, the Ethical and Social penchants of a model anarchist community -- except that the paths, albeit temporal, are visual, not sonic; but may accept sound

and since it was as a MusicTime Megalomaniac that I approached the extrasonic, our overarching aspiration was to create, shape, and maintain a (my) sense of TimeFlow in a Visual Field

(Some of our clearest, most dignified outcomes irresistibly suggested Hermann Hesse's unformulated Glass Bead Game. (Once, we actually invited a well-known Professor of German -- specialty: Hermann Hesse -- to sit in with us. (Fuhgeddaboutit. No sale.)))

We also very gradually, if but briefly, arrived at a way of incorporating our videotaper as an interacting participant, rather than as just a creative recorder whose result we would watch later. We placed the monitor where we all (including the videotaper) could focus on it, rather than on the desk, as our field of action: thereby, deskplay becomes the players' way of responding to, and inflecting, the videotape. We and the videotaper are enabled to focus continually on one and the same evolving visual field, most importantly when

the camera, though always pointing at the desk, moves its aim around or zooms.

III.

Then you showed up with a Flame.
A CandleShtick?
Or was it a MatchShtick? Or a Zippo?

Reflections, reflections of reflections -- there, elsewhere, nowhere -- destabilized any sense of location or direction. Space seemed not so much a dimension occupied by, as a fluid Quality Of.

TimeFlow? FlameFlow? Seize Time by the Forelock? Action in the FlameField? -- creating, inflecting, & sustaining the Flow of Time? Perhaps. Not likely. Time had no Footing, let alone Flow or Shape; in short, Hung Suspended. (Nonsonic I could handle; but my music-derived sense of TimeFlow as the Key to All got a Jolt. Perhaps the outreach of my musictime really did have inescapable limits, as when my attempted interactions with painters typically foundered on their unshakeable alternations of busy-busy Time-in vs. have-a-look Time-out, both shapeless.)

Or perhaps my formulation as Flow was off the mark. Indeed, in composing I am always aware of, and approve of, my bias against Perfunctory Propulsion, against “keeping it moving”, against reliable, automatic flow; and in favor of its earning its way. Musictime must above all be the shape of its own events: layered, often gnarled, or stuttering, or still, or violent. But Insubstantial? Evanescent? Perhaps.

As for time and space, CandleShtick suspended not just one or the other, but both.

(Must be what they mean by Disembodied Fantasy.)

(Or by Intermedia?)

Hard to say. Like any gripping “art”-work, it “crossed over” into, “clicked in” as, its own world. But what world was that?

[FOOTNOTE]

My own most convincing occupancy of Intermedia occurred when, in some contrived context or other, I hollered “Cow!” as I flipped the lightswitch into the OFF position. (Doesn't surreal always verge on inter?)

Inter because I amalgamated sound, light, gesture, whatever. Not *Mixed* or

Multi precisely because cleansed of Constituency or Plurality.
!!Cow!! Just a NewDimensional UniBlurt.

IV.

Consider *Intero*:

Forget all that Marxist noise from your painter friends.
Anarchist Community a la Kropotkin? -- not too close.
Interactive? Other People are (part of the) environment.

Like Buddhism, or any mysticism, it attunes you directly to a larger pre-existence -- although not to a Pre-existent All, or to some Higher Plane: to this Actual Environment.

Quietist? Clarifying, intensifying, accepting. Leaves you alone; needs no attention; has no designs. Leaves Time to you; seizes nothing by the Forelock. Will Travel.

Indifferent? Fosters a cleansed, refreshed, and renewed awareness of, and orientation within, real and present worlds.

[CODA]

A last twist on our favorite interactive Sonic sessions:

In listening to the 45-minute tapes thereof, what was, in the Doing, sensitively maintained and shaped TimeFlow becomes, in the Listening, Vast Space containing arrested sonic populations discernible only as they choose, in small bits like fireflies, to notice us. Having temporalized space, we have spatialized time, having meanwhile suspended both. Is it any wonder that I reverted to pushing pianokeys one at a time?

In which quagmire, let us adjourn to await Roses #5.
Love, Jim

P.S. *Intero* is color, tone, mood, texture, focus, illumination, subliminal, narcotic, self-immolating, transportable, all of the above, none of the above [pick 3]. As I will further show.

Roses #5

Dear Walter,

Having greatly sharpened my head in writing *Roses #4*, I was moved, almost immediately upon e-mailing, to ask myself what some of my older (but still post-session-era) compositions might have to say to me now (in 2010) about “TimeFlow”. Recall that *Roses #4*, as is my preference, exacerbates uncertainty; yields no stance or doctrine. So I exhumed GAP1-8, a series covering, I suppose, about 1.5 subsequent decades, and still close to my heart. (*GAP5* is your favorite; and I hope I gave you GAP7 (4 discs and a deer) -- which we’ll need when *Roses* arrives at the awaited topic of Ur-sound.) And?

So.

Here’s my report:

{2010 REPORT ON “TIMEFLOW” IN GAP1-8}

GAP -- 1st batch:

sarcastically nailed to the Clock; Kills Time, kills it dead; but does Nothing, especially when it tries; masticates its own locations.

GAP2 (excl. Pro. & Epi., *both of which I hereby expunge*):

nailed to the Clock, but simply, willingly; childlike; straightforwardly curious; eyes wide & straight forward.

GAP3 (the 2 prelims):

nailed to the Clock, taking Inventory; probing Required Investigatory Tedium.

GAP3 (3):

Bits of the Clock in cautious, tested Flotation.

GAP4:

Time awaits Occupancy, and is thrice gratified: 1st, with Space; 2nd, with Shape; and 3rd, with Nostalgia.

GAP5:

Time in Flotation; in HighArt Ga-Ga-Land; melds Now with Eternity; turns Stage into Altar, Auditorium into Cathedral; Breathes; Waxes & Wanes, Humanly.

GAP6:

public exploratory time; onstage; no holds barred; from rigor to tchaikovsky (also moussorgsky); a time had by all.

GAP7:

Ordinary, Everyday time; Private time; quite Unfamiliar; no Clock, but

no highart gagaland either; entry is a sweat, but unimpeded; continues, indecipherable, thru iron necessity -- unforced, but not revealed either; intimations of the Higher Plane; of time Beyond time; of time Within time. GAP8:

looks back; then vanishes.

(I discover that neither Western Man nor the Mysterious East has attained unequivocal display here.)

Which puts us on the verge of a New Feature!:

{ CAUTIONARY CRANKYTALES }

CCT No.1: Why Other People's Generalizations & Abstractions Piss Me Off

Let's hypothesize ourselves as sensitive, imaginative, thoughtful, creative, experienced, humans. And let's say that, aside from having occupied X years of it, our chief insights into Time derive from intimate involvement with ensemble improv, candleshtick, pinecones, GAP1-8, and *Intero* .

And we wish to put our insights onto a Solid Scientific Footing.

(-- because Science is the Real Thing.)

So how do we do that?

We ask the man who owns one: i.e., a physicist, a biologist, a psychologist, a historian, a mathematician, a mystic, whomever.

It goes without saying that our expert has formulated his all-embracing Theory of Whatnot in relative ignorance of our hardwon, composerly insights. In fact, we discover that he, like several of his eminent colleagues who think of themselves as musiclovers, is thoroughly in the grip of conventional, disastrously inadequate, pseudomusical apprehensions; and it is these to which he has applied his all-embracing theory.

So what do we do?

In the overweening hope that we, after diligent study, will grasp his theory well enough to apply it more appropriately than he did, we study and we devise new applications and we thus advance to the forefront, to the cutting edge.

We have put our hardwon insights on a Respectable Foundation. Yes?

Well, No.

Many of our insights didn't fit -- some of them were even in scientifically inadmissible dimensions -- and were ignored or dropped.

We achieved glossy solutions to problems not ours.

Our borrowed wisdom ejected the genuine and we feel no pain.

(-- CCT's are designed to burrow, not to fly. --)

My own opinion?

(-- In hassling an Issue, keep your nose close to the ground. --)

We need pregnant specifics, not exotic abstractions.

(-- Jean Shepherd, in his 4-hour midnight monologues on Old Time Radio, used to sign off with a piece of advice: "Keep your duff down and your knees loose; never give 'em that high silhouette." --)

Ensemble improv, candleshtick, pinecones, GAP1-8, *Intero*, and the reflections which these and their progeny generate, are themselves our most potent and far-seeing investigators.

And are more redolent of our talents and habits. Which leads to CCT No.2:

{ CAUTIONARY CRANKYTALES }

CCT No.2: Another Reason Why Other People's Generalizations & Abstractions Piss Me Off

Truth is Not Enough.

Sometimes it's no use at all.

Consider: Every note in the *Waldstein Sonata* is a transposition of the 1st.

In *Heroide* also.

In fact, every note in the former transposes the 1st of the latter; and the latter, of the former.

(If we pitch the snare.)

A Generalization embraces; and sheds light thru inclusion vs. exclusion.

We must of course have peeled away all special or unique attributes from each of our included individuals, which thereby become instances, examples of.

The Upside is knowledge, principles, truths, laws; interesting, sometimes

useful, handles on the world, inner and outer. (We can even scratch the itch that led Stephen Hawking to assert that soon we'll have explained everything.)

But the Downside claims its own when we seek Maximum Rapport with some single individual in all its fullness (-- say, a rose, or the *Waldstein*).

What must we do to listen to the *Waldstein Sonata* as instantiation, as a Sonata?

My late musicologist colleague, Harry Powers, favored listening to music this way – known as Intelligently. For me – and I hope for Harry -- we must not just notice what and where the second theme and development are, and snooze thru roughage and recap: we must really soak up and construe them as the vividly unique and specific flesh on this supportive, if previously owned, skeleton.

This is heavy, predetermined Spin.

Awkward but possible. Occasionally harmless. Even rewarding.

Okay. But why this spin? Where did this “as” come from?

We know wherefrom: from a peeling away of any and all things which weren't evinced by all members of the target population; and were peeled away for that very reason. So why should that denuded leftover govern our hearing of any individual piece? In the *Waldstein*, as in most pieces which engage me, the crosscurrents of the action are quite sufficient to vaporize any such thin articulant as Sonata Form; or at most to leave traces of it more as Conceit than as Structure, or Essence, or Seed, or Path.

So it's not the mere fact of Generalizing that I balk at: It's the return to, the doubling-back-upon, the embraced, denuded individual. In performing this retro-maneuver, generalizing enables us to assert Less & Less about More & More.

A Degree Is Awarded.

Imagine that maligned, legendary Ph.D. thesis entitled “*Misspellings in Old Southern Cookbooks*”. (I would have supported it.) Surely such skewed angles and busted windows on language, custom, and culture might serve up the Old South as intricately, as informatively, and as opulently as many an imaginable agricultural/sociological tract.

So go ahead: delve in far enough, through a narrow enough window,
to find out More & More about Less & Less;
to smoke out the Seed of Everything.
From which All will Follow.

Does this sound like Hawking too?

To me, it sounds like Penetrating. -- Like Incising.

What an individual piece of music does for me is sharpen or extend my sense
of the possible.

I emerge not with forms or styles or truths, but with stretched awareness,
with clarified attention.

{ A LAST CATECHISM }

Is it the case that for any statement, *be it e'er so unlikely*, some context, *be it
e'er so hokey*, can be devised, *within whose confines* it will **float**?

Is it the case that for any statement, *be it e'er so likely*, some context, *be it e'er so
hokey*, can be devised, *within whose confines* it will **sink like a stone**?

In short, cannot your *hokey* be my **swimming pool**?

Yo ! **Truths**: OWN YOUR CONFINEMENTS. – *Your Purposes*. **Your
Ranges of Applicability**.

Yo ! **Falsies**: DITTO. – *Your Purposes*. **Your Available Loci of
Disagreement**.

Intraculturally. >check< **Crossculturally**. >check<

{A \$Reward\$ is posted for the 1st Scintillatingly Negative response.)

\$Disqualification\$ awaits

- a) statements about statements about statements about
statements.
- b) barbers who shave themselves.
- c) any reference to Helmut Lachenmann.

Love, Jim

P.S.: Can Ur-sound wait much longer?

Roses #6

Dear Walter,

A question arises.

A question which must be addressed, sooner or later:

(I prefer later.)

(Or perhaps, by indirection, sooner.)

Is *Intero* sublime?

Regrettably, I've long since forgotten the drift of Jim Webster's informed discussion of The Sublime in the liner notes to a volume of Hogwood's aborted series of Haydn Symphony recordings. (For our convenience, it's translated into several languages none of which is Italian.)

Let's put the question more sharply:
Is *Intero* transcendent?

(Sorry, Jim W., if I'm way off.)
There's an obvious answer:
The answer is No.

No, because *Intero* is avowedly designed for Realworld settings.
(This answer will be ignored.)

I.

Piano sound is a ping, resonated; not actively sustained like flute or viola by human propulsion, just resonated.

A ping won't maintain or direct, or even have much, energy.

At the core of individual pinged notes, we've got the reverse of urge -- we've got instant nostalgia, decay, loss.

Some external force must initiate each next ping.

Successive pings must of course be timed and delivered just so: the next note always constitutes a rescue mission, an attempt to save and shape resonance.

Melody is like a pinball route -- ping.....pingPING...ping -- and so on. Since there is no flow of breath or lifeblood, continuity is an illusion -- to be faked by the performer.

But by what means?

Without pedal, the forging of continuity relies even more heavily on timing and weighting and overhang into what's next.

With pedal, the flow of an accumulating resonance doubles back on the pings, creating a forward-pushing urge, or confirming a fade-out, or refreshing an opened space.

Pianists all groove on the shapes and shifts of this resonance, but none so gaudily, so inwardly, as Leonskaja.

A New Feature

{ CHOPIN COMES TO TOWN }

(If pianists “rush” more congenitally than string or wind players, it’s because they’re trying to ride that forward-pushing resonance -- to catch up with it in order to keep it alive and pushing.

So it pushes.)

CCT No.1: *Nocturnes op.9* / Leonskaja

In the actual polyphonic thing, the forward push of accumulating pedaled resonance washes over pings like water over pebbles --

large pebbles, tiny pebbles, strings of pearls -- multicolored, varicolored --

(washedover pebbles, strings of pearls, whose undulations have created the overwash)

which emerge upfront as You -- as Your (its) voice in the world,

as upfront melody seeking Just You in the anonymous resonance;

your grammar deliciously overridden by the ebb & flow, by the billow & surge, of the Worldvoice which singles you out, and is you --

worldvoice of resonance which roars or caresses or whispers or tussles with you at your command.

It is You -- Recognized -- who has transcended.

(David Lewin used to complain about people who thought that if you flogged a dead horse long enough you’d get a horse of a different color.)

***Intero* transcends as Sanctity transcends**

didn’t begin, has no end, favors no order, enhances all environments (question: is the Pantheon episode of *Intero* exportable?), is your life’s work

but not Yours (and not an It), doesn't assert or make demands, doesn't announce itself or exhibit itself or proclaim itself or solicit attention.

Nocturnes transcribed for strings is a horse of a different color. Notes become waystations of inner-directed pseudo-vocal curvatures, whose ping-free individual integrity neither owes much to, nor creates, any overwash of global resonance.

a cutely compounded twist

CCT

The contrast between Brahms/Handel on piano and the Rubbra orchestration thereof is quite other. Ever since Michael conducted Shostakovich's Sym 10 and the Brahms Double on the same Princeton concert, I've hoped that an orchestration of the latter by the former would surface some day. But the Rubbra arrangement of B/H, an expert sorting-out and colorizing of motifs and phrases, showed me my misconception. The frequently deplored dullness and monotony of Brahms' orchestration seems essential as a voice for the degree and style of his differentiations. Rubbra puts Marilyn's gown on Jackie. (ATCRIMR is OK for *Intero* though.)

SOME SWEET SOPHISTRY

SSS

Pings, because there is no active propulsion by a performer's breath or bow, are the foundation most amenable to a description of composition as Composition With (-- as external to, as an arrangement of --) Pre-existent Sounds.

GOTCHA!! (Cf. *Canto Infinito*)

But for breath and bow, a composer is specifying only some ground rules within which the performers -- like the computer -- must generate, in real time, every aspect of every microsecond of sound. The sharp contrast is with composition for keyboard, where the specifications leave microseconds to a higher power.

A New Feature

{ THE COMPLETE COURSE IN THEOLOGY }

Art of the Fugue is notoriously ungrateful to performers.

CCT No.1: Bach: *Contrapunktus XI* / Kocsis

Contrapunktus XI, on my CD's, is available for harpsichord, for organ, or for various ensembles of winds or strings, or for some mixture. None have the least idea what this piece might become in actual sound -- in which fix, much

praise is accorded the composer as a master of pure mathematics. (That just ain't it: in the electronic age we've been able to explore, as sound, many ingenious mathematical paths, none of which lead to J.S.Bach.) Of my CD's, some feature a jiggy bounce; some, a heartfelt *innigkeit*; some, solid old-fashioned musicianship with well-formed phrases and highlighted entrances of subjects (3 I think); and all make silly or deadly music, either on their own, or in comparison to the performance on (of all things) solo piano by Zoltan Kocsis.

Kocsis plays at an unflinching granite pace in an unvarying *mezzo* dynamic; there is no curvature of motif or phrase; there is no overhang of one note onto the next; no accumulating resonance (I hear no pedal, ever); no forward impulse, no articulation, no entrances, no distinctions between voices -- in short, no yielding to any human preference of thought or grasp or feeling. It terminates by grinding to a halt.

{ HOW ABOUT WE FOLLOW FROM MUSIC AND GO PAST
HOLLOWED-OUT SOUND & THE INTEGRITY OF DRAINED
PITCH DOWN TO URSOUND? }

That a mere human could bring this all off is astounding when you consider how awkwardly 4-voice fugues lie under the hand. But this is inside skinny, extraneous to what actually transpires: there is no sweat, no such thing as difficulty, and no concession to exigency or virtuosity which might reveal the existence of, even draw attention to, an executant. There is just the inexorable passage of suprahumanly inevitable necessity.

Contrapunktus XI transcends gloriously. And in rising above human concern, it surely surpasseth understanding. There is something Beyond, something Larger Than. And this is the Window.

Notice that the all-too-human impulses of blowing and bowing would seem to remove them from contention here. But might something similar be achieved on harpsichord? No:

The transcendent cannot cluck like a chicken.
Nietzsche to the contrary notwithstanding.

(It's OK with me that only computer or piano can serve.)

(Cf. *Canto Infinito*)

why are we hung up on transcendence in the first place

ENVIRONMENTAL PROSPECTUS:

Bach heeds the resonance it has
created.
Beethoven rides the resonance it's
creating.
Chopin bathes, luxuriates, in
Resonance.
Intero Is a resonance.
Bruckner doesn't need any

So what's left?

{ NEVER WAS ANGUISH SO FAMILIAR OR CONTINUANCE SO
STEADFAST OR ANTICIPATION SO ACCOMMODATED, SO
GLOWING }

CCT No.2: Bruckner: *Symphony #6, II. Adagio* / Celibidache
But could what it asserts be True?

It's especially the bowed strings -- sure, a lockerful of brass enjoys the occasional Wagnerian sidestep; sure, the flutes flutter -- but it's the massed bowed strings which stretch out your breathing and mess with your pulse rate.

(It is in this inmost, moment-by-moment, sense -- not in elapsed clocktime -- that Bruckner runs long. And it's thru his devoted care in the shaping of the interior of each note that Celibidache makes even Jochum sound cautious, and the rest of 'em, as he himself has conceded, like slobs.)

These forever overreaching strings evade the stricture -- ("*Generalization tells us Less & Less about More & More*") -- by embracing so aggressively, and penetrating so mercilessly, a Core of Human. They Up the Dose to *The Same Thing* about *More & More*.

They smoke out the Seeds of Everything for microscopic empathization.
All Follows.

Every tremor is sought and undergone.
Every guilt is massaged.
Every confession is ratified.
Every joy is finessed.

Rapport trumps power &

power Subserves.

Music Asserts and Is.
Asserts what it Is, and Is what it Asserts.
Welcomes no such contentious kicker,
no such thin articulant,
as *Is True*.

(How could it *Not* be?)

Bruckner *Adagios* are an ultimate in Transcendence. But it's a different transcendence. Far from dissolving you into your surroundings; far from raising You up, Endorsed & Reinforced; and far from rising Above the Human by expunging all traces; they rise by investing in every available Unease and coming up Roses.
More of Jesus Transfigured.
Less of God.

Yo ! Jim W.

I'd better stick with *Transcendent*. *Sublime* is too Enlightened, or Old Roman.
not Atheist or Christian enough.

sidebar: *On Aspiration*

Every composer is in the grip of two intertwining aspirations:

1. to be God
2. to be Everyman

You create God in your own image.

You imagine that everybody is just like you.

You know that there is nobody quite like you.

The hard thing is to create yourself in your own image.

To be "Different"?

That's not the point.

Say What?

There is an Otherwise that things should be.

So Transcend.

Edification will be had by all.

it's quite premature.

Why Sound rather than Music?

NOW LET'S GENERALIZE ABOUT ALL THOSE LATE BEETHOVEN STRING QUARTETS AND PIANO SONATAS!!

Imagination
has no boundaries
that cannot be
Forced.
Abrupted.
Transgressed.

Imagination
is willful
(like Keith Hernandez).
(He was in Game 6.)
(Also on *Seinfeld*.)
It can do what it wants.

Ries was here
(Ferdinand:
Beethoven's
acolyte
&
amanuensis)
never there.

You can't get there from here.

(That's half the charm
and most of the message.)

A New Feature

{ CAPSULE COMPREHENSION TESTERS }

CCT Quiz 1: *to You from Them*

Intero: you are your location
Chopin: baby it's you
Bruckner: where you can hope to get
Beethoven: where you can't get
Bach: you wouldn't know

CCT Quiz 2: *In View*

Chopin looks at You
Bruckner looks Up
Bach looks Beyond
Intero looks around, looks everywhere

Beethoven looks where he wants

Beethoven: *Late* / Rangell or Gould

“messes with your mind, man”

Arietta: Within the resonance of Now, no time passes. But much happens.

Hush: stretch up there almost beyond the reach of gravity. Quietly contemplate the vast space that buoys you up and separates you from your support. Now very slowly stretch even higher, pulling gently away from your support, even as your support withdraws deeper, farther away, from you. Float on, in the treacherously thin air, into the calm. Never has vacancy been so empty, or so charged.

Is *Intero* a philosophy of History?

forget about Being Something

forget about Getting Somewhere

sharpen up where you are

(wherever you are)

sharpen up on Is

And Then ?

Essence

is All.

Beethoven: *Late* / Tokyo or Vermeer

if you're

Quick.

Breathe.

Stop.

Show it.

Clobber it.

then

Ram it

tightfisted(

into the

Wall

&

leave

it

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lay.

some Angels
Screech.

or a Nasty
Drops.

Plummets
in fact

)*scherzo*

And Then ?

forget about Then
when it Was, it was Is
what it May Yet Be, will be Is

The only thing that History ever did for you
was put you in the middle of it.

For this favor you owe it everything.

NOT#7DRAINEDPITCHGAP7

Love, Jim

Roses #7

Dear Walter,

So here it is already!!

Why Sound, Not Music

Ur-speak

I used to claim, 1/2 seriously, that Atheism comes naturally to me because my religion is Music. (By now I'm well past the 50% mark.) I asked a Mennonite friend – a reformed trumpeter -- whether several of my blurbs in Birds (-- the early ones, about Ravel, Haydn, Bruckner --) don't resemble her treatment of Bible Stories when she's "Teaching Bible". She e-mails me that they are "exactly like" what she does.

(Elated over this confirmation, I'm changing my card to *Exegete & Gapman.*)

Freedom from What

Back in the Old Days, Mike Dellaira (who's back in touch) once claimed that us Princeton folks were like religious fanatics in our reverent preoccupation with German Classics. He figured that Beethoven, observing us obsessing over his scores, would think we were crazy. I was very struck with the remark at the time, and could see its justice. I still am, and do.

Except that now I look at Beethoven as a supreme touchstone not just for all things musical, but for all things period.

So what does that mean?

Nothing musicstylistical; no one's chords, tunes, time-signatures, forms, clefs, motivic procedures, barlines, genres, have become mandatory for something.

Instead, an intensity of focus, a totality of commitment, an infinitude of inner human possibility, as music, has been made flesh; -- specified by stringently heard music, manifested by the music heard.

Exegesis

What that music is, when stringently heard, is why, for the hearer, it's a touchstone for all things period; and is why, for the hearer who would report, it's a text for exegesis.

So Why Sound, Not Music

-- Could be to slough off suffocation by German Masterpieces.

-- Could be to clear out notions best seen as the presumptions of a particular style or era. As in "sonata form". Or "Quietly contemplate the vast space that buoys you up and separates you from your support."

-- Could be a rejection of stuff like *Heroide*; a call for hard-assed, Objective new music. (Sounds very 1st-half-of-the-20th-cent.) As in Stravinsky's *Symphonies of Wind Instruments*. Or Copland's early *Piano Variations*.

-- Could be a protest, more extremely Anti-Romantic (or more extremely Romantic), against the Exclusion of Noise. As in Varese's *Ionisation*.

-- Could be a rejection of all traces of the pre-WW2 bourgeoisie: Helmut Lachenmann, if I understand him (and I do), not only objects to Musical sound, but actively cultivates the Sound of Trashing All Such in the very belly of the misbegotten bourgeois beast (concert halls, musiclovers, awards, commissions, symphony orchestras, universities, usw.) The Pol Pot approach

to Progress.

-- Could be a more fundamental rejection from a quite different direction: Giacinto Scelsi (whose work you and Michela brought to my attention) was fed up with all that ego, all that overemotional fuss & feathers -- and Went Eastern. He mobilized Michiko's voice to move toward Asian traditions of meditative, private, music-making; music as a religious obligation. (Like the purple monks of San Miniato.) (His music, his example, and his encouragement meant a lot to me. To you, too?)

{ -- *Could be* -- }

Actually, it's None of the Above
and All of the Above.

We're after Root & Seed.
A return to, a rediscovery of, Origin.

Let Sound step forth
(like matter, like energy)
as a Universal Substratum
from which All musics emerge.

(This is major if *Intero* is to embrace the emergent ATCRIMR chastely.)

(*GAP7* doesn't get that far; doesn't make the cut; doesn't attain Ur status.)
(As Sound.)

(As Music?)

Pink Elephant

There's a pink elephant in my pianoroom.

Martin Goldray has observed that my *GAP* pieces -- or *GAP sonatas*, as Brad Bassler calls them: I sort of like that -- are mostly devoid of busywork and familiar musical gestures. Certainly for me, such Doing Without is an Asserted Quality of Doing. Not just an absence, but an absence of X and of Y and of Z. To an Uzbek observer my bowl may be clean, but to me it's cleaned.

What then might a clean Ur-sound be like?

Were we There?

Preferably impossible to hear.

You feel its vibes first.

IT DOESN'T EVEN NEED AN ORIFICE

Principal Apprehensible contender:

!OM!

pronounced A-U-M

but as a monosyllable.

The 8-minute-or-so episode of *Intero* which embraced ATCRIMR was similarly deep, soft, just barely undulating.

Rethinking *Intero* and *GAP7* together has shown me something:

(Yes, I know. You told me. *Canto Infinito* told me. But I like to figure it out myself.)

Intero is a single drawn-out syllable.

a candidate

We can, as with A-U-M, spot phases.

But, as with A-U-M, it's its smoothly prolonged Oneness that's the upshot.

I've heard one other episode of *Intero*, years ago. Also slowly and softly undulating, perhaps not so low. (Low is why my little CD-player on the breezeway delivered zilch and chased us upstairs. Thus was *ATCRIMR* born!) Also a monosyllable.

Also, and here's the rub, a phase of the Same monosyllable -- the same indefinitely prolonged, boundless, monosyllable.

So *Intero* makes the cut:

-- but could yet face denigration as technological, as too blatantly Western.

Hollowed-Out Sound & Drained Pitch

I remember, back in the days of *GAP2*, sitting at my upright piano and grooving on the sound of midregister tones, played singly *mp*, and respectfully allowed to decay without pedal, unmolested. Everyday. Ordinary. Normal. More or less clear of my musical biases. (Or more or less glorifying my musical biases.) Candidates for Ur?

At least

Come Clean.

Re-conceive what Music might be!

Yes

Disavow Entertainment, Exhibition.

Re-instate Intimacy.

Of course

Re-engage Respect for Sound.

Flash Forward!

By the time of *GAP7*, I had come to feel that *GAP5*'s flotation in ga-ga time was stagey, artsy.

(I do still love *GAP5* -- and especially your revelatory appreciation of its measured silences. And I do remember my special delight, then and now, in how you Really Listened!!)

(Actually, my precision of time-measurement had crested a few years earlier in a lather over whether a silence of 47 metronome clicks was prematurely interrupted, but at 49 too drawn out. I always felt schizoid in having to secure free-floating fluidity with metroclicks: but I wanted it just so, and I wanted my notation to enforce it.)

GAP7 was still supposed to aim high -- Beyond, in fact.

But to Transcend Without Ga-ga!

To see what else is out there.

-- or in there.

How's this?

So stay within Haydn/Mozart keyboard range:

Let a few licks evoke humanoid; but for reference, not as commitment.

Let everything happen transparently, up front; no dazzle, no amazing, no

How did he get That.

Inhibit familiar all-too-human grabbers.

Don't spurn metrical snippets, but don't allow energy internal to a snippet to overflow & build up: let metrical be a quality of the snippet, not a universal connector.

Succession, Yes. Accumulation, No.

! a dark horse !

Let Iron PitchLaw, felt but unseen, Rule.

Are we aiming for a multiphoned OM?
a multiphonetic Ur thru the Ear?
a multisyllabic Musical One?
music Thru its Sound -- and Beyond?

?HAVE WE LISTENED
?ALERTLY, ?MEDITATIVELY, ?INVASIVELY,
?ANAESTHETICALLY, ?HOMEOPATHICALLY,
?MUSICALLY, ?THERAPEUTICALLY. [pick 4]

-- Can I imagine A-U-M embraced as, & as, *INTERO*?
Easy. OM in velvet.

-- Can I imagine A-U-M embraced as, & as, *ATCRIMR*?
(*ATCRIMR: I JKR am Accidental Accessory, Ephemeral Core; You WB & Ruth
are among, are, Furniture.*)
(Are other environments for *Intero* anything to me now?)

-- Can I imagine A-U-M embraced as, & as, some web, some coexistent
stasis, not of furniture, but of consonants: hss, spt, clck, cgh, zhxcdgr, pq\$\$?/
qM?

(*These as's are about as tricky as about's*)

-- Can I imagine this very web, this coexistent stasis, flickering, undulating,
oscillating, running Scree?

even so:
also:
seek and ye shall find
#4 in Intermezzo in Midi

(TimeFlow has become a Space in which TimeFlow becomes a Space.
Oneness, when attained, is as multicolored as, Is the multicolor of, the
temporal path of becoming: the Blue Path to Blue Heaven as if, & as,
heaven.) (or Green/Green; or Yellow/Yellow; or)

(Do You Hear It Coming, Coming?)

-- Can I imagine A-U-M embraced as, & as, *GAP7* -- slowly, slowly,
walking: running Velvetine scree? (*Is a Work, in its Oneness, its Retained &*
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*Retainable oneness, its Temporalized Multiphonic & Multiphonetic oneness,
functionally an OM?)*

++ perhaps not ++

OHNO

Who cares

Hey Friend, the conceptual difference between your ratio-system and my
pitch-systems *is not* the Time-Free thing.

-- MAY WE HAVE MAYBE SOME MORE MASTERPIECES WITH
MUSICALLY ENHANCED UNDERSTANDING NOW --

#1. It's *Continuous* vs. *Discrete*.

(-- vibes per?)

*IF WE WERE SO INTERESTED IN MARBLES
PITCHES WOULD BE MARBLES*

Easy now, Easy

#2. *You want Ptolemaic contortions? intersecting orbits? ratios of interval-ratios?
no vibes per?*

messes with your mind, man

[Pick #1]

Says Who?

And when you claim *innovation* for the Time-Free Essence of your ratio-
system

%%You overlook the familiar Uninterpreted Set.%%

SPEAKING FOUNDATIONALLY

-- *And I balk.*

{A PICKED BONE}

-- CANTO INFINITO --

If you flog a dead horse long enough

You bring Coals to Newcastle

You build Straw Men to shoot Clay Pigeons

you get stem-cell research

WITH PITCHBABIES STILL BOUNCING IN THAT PITCHWATER

~~* Red Herring *~*~*

and a Pale Rider

-**bestrides** the Chimera of Musical and Historical Necessity. *{start next}*

--**Intero ill-**

Dear Walter: The clear, and unprecedented, bite of your work is Spiritual &
Ethical & Social & (-- *don't mind if I use the word!* --) Musical. But as much

as your marvelous “short lyrics” lift up the *Verbalizing-Musicthinker-in-me*, so much is the *Academic-Lifer-in-me* displeased and let down by your borrowed (and not needed) *Philoscientifical Summae*; which tell us L & L about M & M, by celebrating the Vanishing Points where Everything is the Something—matter, energy, sound, whatever. Do my *OM-fantasies* seem that way to you? (Or do your “*Summae*” do for you what my *OM-fantasies* do for me??)

Love, Jim. Gapman.
Exegete.

(2010; 2012)

P.S.

{ CONSUBSTANTIAL CATECHISMIC TAGALONG }

Oeness:

Depleted to Ultimate (Unitary) Same

(out there)

remote, inferential

universal, neutral

matter / energy / sound

sonata form, instantiated

L & L about M & M

basis for, substratum

[**Pick One, Please**]

Oeness:

Enriched to Maximum (Unique) Specificity

(in here)

intimate, familiar

concentrated, intense

a Multiformed OM

Waldstein, the Work

M & M about L & L

as if, as