

Myth Ascendant: Issues of Culture, Media, and Identity in the Celebrity Career of Glenn Gould



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ABSTRACT

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This thesis applies a sociological framework to the North American celebrity career of Canadian pianist and broadcaster Glenn Gould (1932-1982) to account for Gould's iconic status as an artist in modern musical culture. Despite the persistent cultural fascination with Gould, as evidenced in the seemingly endless supply of biographies, films, novels, and fan texts which narrate and celebrate his life and work, modern Gould scholarship has consistently neglected issues relating to his artistic reception. This thesis proposes that the modern Gould phenomenon is productively analysed in terms of the contexts of its historical production in North America, where it first originated. Focusing on the circumstances of Gould's career during his lifetime, it identifies three areas of overlapping conceptual interest that provide the basis for an explanatory account of his modern mythology: i) Gould's relationship to the culture of his time, particularly in Canada; ii) Gould's relationship to the mass media; iii) Gould's relationship to his own artistic identity. This approach is refined through the application of Stuart Hall's 'Circuit of Culture' model, which yields an understanding of Gould's celebrity in terms of the processes of its representation, production, regulation, and consumption. Against this theoretical backdrop, and consistent with the premise of my thesis, I ask some key questions: what was Gould's relationship to Canadian cultural nationalism and, specifically, a nationalist discourse of public broadcasting? How did media institutions brand his image, and for what commercial purposes? How did Gould mobilise understandings of his genius and Canadian identity through his artistic discourse and experimental media self-representations as a 'Northerner' and a technologist? Based on this analysis, the thesis concludes that Gould continues to fascinate because of the unique ideological work performed by his cultural identities, and because of the highly mediated nature of his celebrity. The ubiquity of his image on video-sharing websites and social media platforms is a vindication of his radical belief in the validity of a musical career pursued primarily through the electronic media.

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INTRODUCTION

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ABBREVIATIONS

The following abbreviations are used throughout the introductory matter, main text, footnotes, and bibliography:

BBC: British Broadcasting Corporation

CBC: Canadian Broadcasting Corporation

CBS: Columbia Broadcasting System

GGA: Glenn Gould Archives

LAC: Library and Archives Canada

NFB: National Film Board of Canada

RCM: Royal Conservatory of Music

TCM: Toronto Conservatory of Music

NOTES ON FORMAT

I have used the Oxford citation style throughout my work. When a source appears for the first time, I give a full citation in the footnote, with exceptions made for longer lists of sources in a single citation. Subsequent entries of a source are given in short form, unless I feel a fuller citation is appropriate given the written context. In cases where more than one source is quoted in a sentence, the footnote reference mirrors the order of sources in the main text, and each source is separated by a semi-colon. I distinguish between first editions and later editions of important texts using the formula XXXX/XX in the citation (for example, 1956/85).

Wherever possible, I refer to original sources for Gould's writings. Here, page numbers refer to those of the original source. Readers will find many of these writings duplicated in the published collections mentioned in the bibliography. Interviews with Gould are cited under the name of the interviewer. I have chosen to italicise the titles of all of Gould's creative works, with the exception of his writings and broadcast scripts. The names of television- and radio series are also italicised, and I have attempted to clarify ambiguities this may cause by separating shows or episodes from their series using grammatical prepositions. 'North' has a special meaning in Gould's vocabulary, and it therefore usually appears in capitalised form in the text. Nicknames of musical works – e.g. 'Appassionata' – are given in quotation marks. For ease of reading, I use the terms 'America' and 'the United States' (or U.S.) interchangeably. I have provided a breakdown of primary sources by type in the bibliography for the benefit of researchers and the interested reader. Finally, to avoid cluttering the text, I have chosen to consign more detailed archival source information to the bibliography.

PREFACE

‘Glenn Gould has passed across the horizon of the twentieth century like a dazzling meteor’.

John P. L. Roberts’ tribute to the great pianist, delivered in October 1982 in a highly publicised and highly attended memorial service, invites some preliminary words on Gould’s cultural reception. While a meteor is colloquially referred to as a ‘falling star’, there are no signs that Gould’s star is falling, or indeed fading.

As I write these opening remarks in the last month of 2017, I am struck by the dazzling array of cultural projects undertaken in his name. The year has been a particularly fruitful one. It has seen the 150th year of Canadian Confederation, the fiftieth anniversary of Gould’s involvement with the events of the Canadian Centennial in 1967, and the eighty-fifth anniversary of Gould’s birth. In James Rhodes’ recent BBC radio documentary *Canada 150: Geeking Glenn Gould*, no less than the Prime Minister of Canada, Justin Trudeau, champions Gould as a model for Canada’s innovation agenda. ‘That idea of accepting and embracing disruption . . . is a great example of what we’re trying to do, and what we have to do, not just as a country but as a world, in terms of looking at new ways of doing things’. In a further sign of Gould’s political purchase, the municipal government of Toronto has recently designated September 25th ‘Glenn Gould Day’. Gould’s musical legacy has been celebrated in tribute concerts by the Marinsky Orchestra and the Toronto Symphony, and in Sony Classical’s new and definitive box-set release of his legendary 1955 recording of Bach’s Goldberg Variations (complete with studio outtakes). In the world of letters, Peter Goddard’s *The Great Gould* extends the long line of biographical studies, while the serious study of Gould’s ideas continues apace in Tokyo with the work of the ‘Glenn Gould Gathering’, a multimedia conference sponsored by Toronto’s Glenn Gould Foundation. Gould has even received recognition from the International Space Station. His achievements have, quite literally, reached beyond the stratosphere.

All this is to say that I remain deeply interested in Gould not only as a pianist but as a cultural worker, whose music, ideas, and representations have transcended the boundaries of high art to become of wider significance in the popular culture. This thesis is my attempt to grapple with the hows and whys of Gould's present-day significance, to trace the meteoric rise of a star who has exploded onto our scene and left a crater-sized impact on the public imagination.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This project has benefited from the time, patience, and insights of many people.

Special thanks go to those who helped me in connection with my 2014 fieldwork in Ottawa and Toronto. First and foremost, I am grateful both to Oxford's Faculty of Music and the Royal Musical Association for providing the necessary funding for the trip. At the Gould Archives in Library and Archives Canada (LAC), Ottawa, I benefited from the expertise of various staff and insiders, including Lynn Lafontaine, Richard Green, Richie Allen, Michel Brideau, Rebecca Murray, Maureen Nevins, and Philip Goldring. Philip and his wife Marianne were particularly generous with their time and hospitality. Not only did they assist me with logistical matters at the LAC, but also invited me back to their family home, and involved me in numerous extra-curricular activities which made my experiences in the city all the more enjoyable. As an Arctic historian, Philip also proved to be an erudite exponent of all things North. I must thank him for deepening my understanding of the importance of the North to Canadian history and culture, and for drawing my attention to the formidable body of scholarship on the subject. Thanks also to Andrew Rodger for opening my eyes to the rich musical culture of Montreal, and to the staff at 341 MacLaren Apartments for their hospitality in lodging me.

My work in Toronto was rather more free-wheeling, but all the more fun for it! I am grateful to Ron Davis, Brian Levine, Colin Eatock, David Jaeger, Linda Litwack, Ruth Pincoe, Lorne Tulk, and Sherry Lee for allowing me the opportunity to interview them about Gould. Each brought their own unique background and perspective to bear on the man, often leaving me with more questions than answers. Thanks also goes to Caryl Clark at Toronto's Faculty of Music for fielding my inquiries and sharing the details of her involvement with recent Gould projects. Caryl, like many others, has introduced me to much contemporary 'Gouldiana' which stands in testament to the vitality of the Gould legacy in Canada. I was also fortunate to

have spent time at the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation's Radio Archives in downtown Toronto. Here I discovered historical radio commentaries on Gould and scheduling information pertaining to his radio and television projects. I am grateful to the CBC's Lorne Shapiro and Allan Morris for helping me navigate this material. While in Toronto, Alison Mackay was my primary contact and impromptu tour guide. Special thanks to her, to her husband David Fallis, and to her sister Margaret Mackay for helping me find my bearings. I also thank the staff at Wycliffe College, where I resided for the duration of my stay in the city.

One name that has become synonymous with Gould research over the years is that of Kevin Bazzana, and his shadow certainly looms large over this project. Kevin has proven an indispensable email contact, providing a sounding board for my ideas, introducing me to newer scholarship and older scholars, and all the while showing a modesty and generosity of spirit which one does not necessarily expect from a man of his formidable reputation. Twenty years since its first publication, I still believe his original monograph, *Performer in the Work*, is the definitive critical study of Gould's performance aesthetic, and a high watermark of Gould scholarship. Its balance of readability and learning is one that this thesis has tried to emulate. I am also grateful to my supervisors Suzanne Aspden and Eric Clarke at the Faculty of Music, Oxford, for their feedback on my written drafts, and to the students and staff at various conferences and colloquia for their interesting insights into my work. Geography and time zones have got in the way of me meeting a number of Gouldians in the flesh, but their contributions are no less valued. These would include Bruno Monsaingeon, Arved Ashby, Paul Théberge, Graham Carr, Robin Elliott, Mark Kingwell, Lorna Rogers, and Liz Braun. I also extend my gratitude to Christine Schindler at the Stratford Festival Archives, Ontario, and to Faye Perkins, who manages the Glenn Gould Estate. Naturally, this work has also benefited from the wide-ranging scholarly contributions of musicologists, cultural historians and cultural theorists, biographers, philosophers, psychologists, sociologists, celebrity and

media theorists, moguls, managers, marketeers, arts journalists, social commentators, devotees, detractors. I thank them all.

Finally, I would like to extend my thanks to my close friends and family. As Gould outsiders, they have helped alert me to the biases and potential blind spots of my work. Special mention is owed to Matthew Lakin, Vladimir Zamdzhiev, SeWook Oh, Samuel Gallimore, Edward Barnes, Edward Foster, and David Sherwood. In a separate but not unrelated category, I am indebted to my parents and my brother, who have shown the love, patience, and moral support that a project of this magnitude demands.

INTRODUCTION

Glenn

Gould has become the heroic icon to an increasingly widespread cult. This cult is based on the perfectly sound view that Gould was an extraordinary pianist, but it also extends considerably beyond that. [. . .] Gould [has] acquired a somehow superhuman persona, a spiritual power of the kind that would once have been attributed to martyred saints but now is more commonly ascribed to fallen movie stars.

Otto Friedrich, *Glenn Gould's Official Biographer*, 1989.¹

Fig. A and B



Addressing a theme of perennial concern, the Canadian media theorist Arthur Kroker once memorably defined Canadian identity in terms of ‘a great and dynamic polarity between technology and culture, between economy and landscape’.² Making the trip to downtown Toronto’s Front Street (one of the original streets of the original town of York), you are reminded of Kroker’s insight. To the far west, you notice the historic rail lines, providing transport to and from the old neoclassical edifice of Union Station. These lines also trace a path to the CN Tower, the city’s tallest and most famous monument to its telecommunications’ heritage and an apt metaphor for its sky-high modern technological ambitions. Further east, just beyond the Sony Centre for the Performing Arts, local parks jostle with chain supermarkets and specialty shops for command of the real estate along this major artery. More central, sandwiched between a pizzeria and another park, directly opposite

¹ Otto Friedrich, *Glenn Gould: A Life and Variations* (New York: Vintage Books, 1989), 4-5.

² Arthur Kroker, *Technology and the Canadian Mind: Innis/McLuhan/Grant* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1984), 8.

the CN Tower and Union Station, is the Canadian Broadcasting Centre, the headquarters of the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC), Canada's cultural and moral self-conscience. Just in front of the national broadcaster's large glass windows, between two of its vaulting stone pillars, you can find sculptor Ruth Abernethy's most famous monument to one of Canada's most famous musicians. Glenn Gould, cast in bronze, is depicted sitting alone on a bench. His distinctive clothing – thick woollen gloves, overcoat, flat cap, scarf – and solitary disposition gesture to his Northern identity, the chilly genius of Wawa, an archetype of his reception in death, as in life. At once appearing to look outward, in the direction of the CBC's recording studio which bears his name, and inward, as if channelling some creative urge, his gaze appears simultaneously to express Kroker's dialectic of technology and culture, and enact its resolution. A similar effect is created by the seeming incongruity between Gould's identity as a 'serious' performer and his visual presence outside Canada's foremost mass-entertainment hub. And the sculpture is itself a kind of dialectic: often fans sit next to it, converse with it, and have pictures taken with it, blurring the line between Gould's status as an isolated and inimitable genius, and a communicator who is something of a role model for those who will listen. Through these unlikely combinations, we are given a Krokerian lesson in Canadian culture: not only that this is a country in which the categories of the 'elite' and the 'popular' interact in interesting and perhaps surprising ways, but that the Canadian arts are distinctive precisely because of this unusual juxtaposition of high art, the technologies of mass communication, and mass culture. The story of Gould's celebrity career, like the story of the city to which it owed so much (and which now owes so much to it), was one of technology and culture, economy and landscape, and of a constant probing at their boundaries.

Abernethy's statue, *Glenn*, was unveiled in 1999, and is emblematic of Gould's special hold on the modern cultural imagination. Yet while biographers and cultural commentators have long sought to draw attention to the existence of a Gould 'mythology' and Gould 'cult', the

subject of Gould's celebrity and cultural reception has been neglected in the scholarly literature.³ This is a surprising oversight, given the nature of Gould's artistic significance and fame as a classical performer, and the clear appeal of the subject relative to the aims and concerns of a broadly defined cultural musicology. Filling this gap, my thesis seeks to account for the modern fascination with Gould by examining the role of culture, media, and identity in his historical formation as an artist and celebrity. These three categories provide a useful conceptual vantage-point for assessing the particularities of Gould's modern iconicity, given his special status as a figure whose career straddled the boundaries of serious and popular culture, who devoted his life and work to the electronic media, who was preoccupied with his self-image, and whose identity incarnated the concerns of Canadian nationalism in particularly revealing and forthright ways. Beyond my intent to understand why and how Gould appeals in the way he does, my broader aim is to shed light on the ideological work of musical celebrity, and the social, national, and institutional contexts of its twentieth-century production.

Background to the Thesis

The Canadian classical musician Glenn Gould (1932-1982) is one of the country's most celebrated cultural exports. According to the Massachusetts Institute of Technology's 'Pantheon' project, an ambitious attempt to evaluate the global significance of all famous figures of the past 6,000 years (based primarily on open-source online encyclopaedia data), Gould is the third-most-famous classical pianist of the twentieth century after Leonard Bernstein and Arthur Rubinstein.⁴ Of all Canadian musicians of any genre of all historical

³ Jacques Drillon, "Gould's Gould Cult" in *Glenn Gould*, Vol. 2, No. 2 (Fall, 1996); Mark Kingwell, *Glenn Gould* (Toronto: Penguin, 2009); Kevin Bazzana, *Wondrous Strange: The Life and Art of Glenn Gould* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2004); John Fraser, "Man of myth and music" in *Toronto Globe & Mail* (Oct. 5, 1982).

⁴ Data from Google's "Ngram Viewer" project indicates that Bernstein consistently leads over the other two pianists in terms of frequency of references in print publications. But, since 1979, Gould has always led over Rubinstein. Moreover, based on data trends up until 2008, it is likely that Gould, in 2018, has surpassed even Bernstein in terms of print visibility. See: <https://books.google.com/ngrams/graph?content=Leonard+Bernstein%2CGlenn+Gould%2CArthur+Rubinstein>

periods, he again ranks as the third most famous, eclipsed only by popular artists Leonard Cohen and Neil Young. In the field of music as a whole, Gould punches above his weight. The data suggests he is better known even than the composer Igor Stravinsky, the all-round jazzman Benny Goodman, and rock legend Kurt Cobain. One place ahead of the current king of Norway, Harald V, Gould is, apparently, the 2,750th most famous person who has ever lived!⁵

Unique among classical pianists of the twentieth century, Gould has become a cottage industry and international cult icon since his death.⁶ His rebellious take on the standard piano repertoire, compelling musical personality, unorthodox career trajectory, ubiquitous presence in the mass media, along with fortuitous cultural circumstance have all contributed to the enduring popular fascination with Gould in modern culture. Not many classical performers are afforded the honour of being referenced on the hit cartoon show *The Simpsons*, but Gould is one such case.⁷ His gravesite has become a shrine for tourists (particularly those from Japan), his likeness has featured on commemorative stamps, and the trade in Gould memorabilia is especially busy and lucrative.

Gould has a special significance to Canadians. He is one of Canada's most prominent cultural figures – the sixth-most-famous Canadian of all time, according to 'Pantheon'. A highly feted, national hero in life, his legacy endures to this day. His musical recordings have been honoured with three of the country's prestigious 'JUNO' awards. In 1983 he was inducted

https://pantheon.media.mit.edu/?year_start=1950&year_end=2018&corpus=15&smoothing=3&share=&direct_url=t1%3B%2CLEonard%20Bernstein%3B%2Cc0%3B.t1%3B%2CGlenn%20Gould%3B%2Cc0%3B.t1%3B%2CArthur%20Rubinstein%3B%2Cc0 (accessed Jan. 10, 2018).

⁵ The project is titled "Pantheon: Mapping Historical Cultural Production" (2012-) and an interactive model can be found at pantheon.media.mit.edu. Biographical data is drawn primarily from Wikipedia entries available in more than 25 different languages, but also the now-defunct online encyclopaedia Freebase, as well as Charles Murray's data sets in his book *Human Accomplishment* (2003) and other print resources. The authors have developed complex mathematical formulae to generate a "historical popularity index" which ranks individuals whose fame transcends "barriers of space, time and language". A full description of methodology, biases, limitations, and attempts at validation can be found at the aforementioned website, and in further detail in A. Z. Yu et al., "Pantheon 1.0, a manually verified dataset of globally famous biographies" in *Scientific Data*, Vol. 3 (2016).

⁶ Kevin Bazzana, *Wondrous Strange*, 9.

⁷ See the episode "ГОМЯ" (season twelve, episode nine).

into the Canadian Music Hall of Fame. In 1998 he received a star on the Canadian Walk of Fame, and in 2012 the Canadian government declared him a ‘Person of National Historic Significance’.⁸ He is particularly celebrated in Toronto, where he resided all of his life. In addition to Abernethy’s sculpture, there is the Glenn Gould Foundation, Glenn Gould Park, Glenn Gould Place, the CBC’s Glenn Gould Studio, and the Royal Conservatory’s Glenn Gould School. The city has formally recognised his birthday, September 25th, as ‘Glenn Gould Day’, and tourists are invited to visit key Gould sites with the aid of the Foundation’s ‘Guide to Glenn Gould’s Toronto’.⁹

In his lifetime, Gould shot to fame as a concert pianist, broadcaster, and recording artist. Between 1932 and 1955, he developed a local musical reputation in Canada. Cultivating a reputation as a specialist in Baroque and modern music, he performed in live concerts first in his hometown of Toronto, then around the country (from 1951), and also gave radio recitals on the CBC. Between 1955 and 1964 he exploded onto the world scene with his now-legendary debut recording of Bach’s Goldberg Variations for the American label Columbia Masterworks, began to tour internationally (including acclaimed visits to the Soviet Union and Israel), and started to produce more serious musical programming for television, radio, and film. From 1964 to 1982, Gould relinquished his concert duties and used his platform with the CBC to devote himself to experimental work in the Canadian mass media. He also produced almost fifty musical recordings for Columbia, an approximate three-fold increase on his pre-1964 output. He re-branded himself as a musical thinker and philosopher of recording, and over his lifetime published around eighty pieces of writing on mostly musical – but also some non-musical – topics.¹⁰ He died suddenly from a stroke in 1982, aged fifty. His second

⁸ Karen Bliss, “Primary Wave Acquires Glenn Gould Publishing and Master Royalties” (Aug. 14, 2017). See: <https://www.billboard.com/articles/business/7898247/primary-wave-glenn-gould-publishing-master-royalties-deal> (accessed Jan. 10, 2018).

⁹ See: <http://www.glenn Gould.ca/about-glenn-gould/glenn-gould-toronto-guide/> (accessed Jan. 10, 2018).

¹⁰ A representative sample of his writings can be found in Tim Page’s *The Glenn Gould Reader* (New York: Vintage Books, 1984). All of Gould’s writings are catalogued in his digital archive at LAC, accessible at: <https://www.collectionscanada.gc.ca/glenn Gould/index-e.html>. The only other example of a prolific pianist-

recording of the Goldberg Variations, released a month before his death, became his musical epitaph, and gave his career a poetic circularity.

Gould's irreverent, strikingly modern approach to interpreting the standard keyboard repertoire (notably the works of Bach) and his countercultural disposition immediately earned him a legendary reputation and broad appeal. His later extended critical engagement with the theory and practice of music, technology, and music technology through his diverse media work also attracted the praise and attention of public intellectuals such as Edward Said, Roland Barthes, and Marshall McLuhan. Today, with the rise of digital communications and social media, his insights in these areas have acquired new cultural purchase, as reflected in the growing number of international conferences, journal papers, book-length studies, even university lecture courses devoted to Gould's career in the studio.¹¹ To the general public, he is probably known as much for his eccentric musical persona as he is for his pianism.¹² His physical mannerisms, bohemian dress sense, and psychological quirks have been memorialised, dramatised, and parodied in creative works by musicians, sculptors, painters, poets, choreographers, novelists, film writers, and playwrights.¹³ The story of his life and work, itself rather eccentric, has been narrated in at least five standard print biographies and a smattering of popular television and radio documentaries. These documentaries testify to the cultish tendencies in his reception, as fans are shown enacting the unusual social behaviours and cultural practices that define their sense of identification with him (as a thinker, musician, personality, and so on).¹⁴ Figures in the entertainment industry, such as Stephen Fry, and in

author of comparable fame is Charles Rosen. Others, such as Bernstein and Barenboim, have written extensively, but are, arguably, better known as conductors.

¹¹ A course titled "The Glenn Gould Legacy" was taught to undergraduates at Toronto's Faculty of Music in the autumn of 2012. Conferences have been held in Québec (1987), Amsterdam (1988), Toronto (1992, 1999, 2007), Tokyo (2017).

¹² "... a loose assemblage of odd traits and strange behaviours . . . were the signs of Gould's exchangeable identity . . . as [this identity] passed from hand to cultural hand" (Mark Kingwell, *Glenn Gould*, 187-8).

¹³ A sample of such works can be found at <http://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/glenn-gould/> (accessed Dec. 29, 2017).

¹⁴ Fans imitate his posture and vocalisations at the keyboard, get devotional tattoos, write devotional poetry and imaginary love letters (e.g. Susanne Hamel-Michaud, *Glenn Gould: Mon Bel et Tendre Amour* (Québec: Editions Petit Hublot, 1995)). See the bibliography for full citations of posthumous documentary work.

the world of politics, such as Justin Trudeau, have come out as fans of his music and ideas, and he has provided the inspiration for festivals, exhibitions, societies, and even school parades in his name. The Glenn Gould Prize, awarded by the Glenn Gould Foundation since 1987 to an international artist of outstanding creative achievement, has become one of the most prestigious of its kind, and has done much to define Gould's brand on the world stage as one synonymous with cultural excellence and innovation.

Gould famously retired from international concert performance at the height of his career, in 1964, aged just thirty-one, something unprecedented in the history of the industry. He continued to make studio recordings exclusively for the American label Columbia/CBS Masterworks, but now developed a career as a musical educator and public intellectual in Canada through documentary work and themed programmes for CBC radio, television, and film, as well as short essay pieces for newspapers, magazines, and journals. Among other reasons for his retirement, he felt that his artistic legacy was better served by the mass media. His mature studio recordings and large body of related media works were newly concerned with projecting a distinctive cultural identity. This work was largely addressed to a domestic market in Canada. In today's technological climate, and with the growth of institutions and networks dedicated to promoting Gould's legacy, his media work reaches a global audience. His most significant writings dealing with the arts and media are commercially available in a number of translations, and his discography is aggressively marketed by Sony Classical and its international affiliates. Online retailers such as Amazon stock a box-set edition of his CBC television broadcasts, and clips of his television and radio work can be found in the CBC Digital Archives on the CBC's official website.¹⁵ Online streaming platforms such as Spotify, Apple Music, iTunes, YouTube, and Facebook have democratised access to this material, as well as to more obscure fare, while also providing a forum for Gould fans to meet, discuss his

¹⁵ See <http://www.cbc.ca/archives/topic/glenn-gould-variations-on-an-artist> (accessed Dec. 29, 2017).

work, and show their support.¹⁶ Both the Glenn Gould Foundation and the Glenn Gould Estate are central nodes in the Gould network, using their social media presence to champion his work and promote cultural endeavours undertaken in his name.¹⁷

This web of activity has confirmed Gould's place in the traditional canon of great musical performers, and has allowed him a degree of crossover into today's popular sphere (particularly in Canada). Walter Homburger, Gould's concert manager throughout his career, once described his client as 'the world's most photographed, most written about . . . and most lauded young musical artist of our time'.¹⁸ Over fifty years later, *Toronto Star* critic John Terauds could echo these remarks, and add to them:

More has been said and written about Glenn Gould than about any other classical musician of the 20th century. The late pianist and broadcaster is classical music's Elvis, growing larger in death than he was in an already public life. [. . .] Instead of helping popularize a new kind of music, like Elvis with rock 'n' roll, Gould made an old kind of music sound new again.¹⁹

Culture, Media, Identity

Unlike much contemporary writing on Gould, this thesis is not a hagiography, but a study of Gould's modern iconic reputation from the perspective of its historical cultural production. It seeks answers to the question posed in 2009 by Gould scholar Mark Kingwell: 'how did a performer of other people's music, however brilliant . . . achieve a status of almost mythic dimensions?'.²⁰ I believe that Gould's high visibility and appeal within the wider culture of today, unusual for a classical musician and exceptional for a

¹⁶ As a crude metric of online popularity, at the time of writing, Glenn Gould's official Facebook page has 186,468 "likes". By comparison, Leonard Bernstein's has 387,933; Arthur Rubinstein's has 49,265.

¹⁷ The Estate runs the site glenn Gould.net, while Sony Classical runs the site GlennGould.com. The Glenn Gould Foundation's site is www.glenn Gould.ca. Another important site is glenn Gouldinterviews.com, which offers "new and unseen footage on Glenn Gould" (i.e. spoken reflections on Gould from prominent Gouldians) as part of a membership package. As of August 2017, the Glenn Gould Estate has sold the rights to Gould's name and image, including publishing and royalty privileges, to the U.S. company Primary Wave Music Publishing. It remains to be seen how this will affect Gould's future legacy.

¹⁸ Walter Homburger, press book for Glenn Gould (1956). See bibliography for full citation.

¹⁹ John Terauds, "Will there ever be another Glenn Gould?" in *Toronto Star* (Sep. 23, 2007).

²⁰ Mark Kingwell, *Glenn Gould*, 187.

classical pianist of the twentieth century, finds an explanation in the unusual circumstances of his celebrity career.²¹ Most obviously, he was the first classical performer to make a living exclusively from his work in the mass media. Like other famous musical artists such as Vladimir Horowitz, Leonard Bernstein, and Herbert von Karajan, Gould quickly recognised how the technological sophistication and cultural power of television, radio, and musical recording in the twentieth century created new opportunities for artistic self-expression and social engagement. Unlike these artists, however, he immersed himself in the technical challenges of editing and producing his own media work; cultivated a self-consciously radical discourse of media presentation that eschewed the artistic standards of live concert performance; conducted most of his media activity out of just one institution and one city (the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation; Toronto); and, to an unusual degree, became a locus of power and influence at this institution itself, regarding it as his personal and professional home base.

After 1964, Gould sought control over all aspects of his public image. He scripted almost all of his radio and television appearances. He wrote most of the liner notes for his records and was consulted on the visual design of his album covers. He limited his interactions with journalists and demanded editorial oversight over the few interviews he did agree to. He assisted in the research for the first book-length appraisal of his life and work by an ‘independent’ author – Geoffrey Payzant’s *Glenn Gould, Music & Mind* (1978) – and even reviewed the book in the press.²² Moreover, his media works reveal a man singularly obsessed with the meanings of his identity: he published mock ‘self-interviews’ in which two personae named ‘Glenn Gould’ discourse on the topic of ‘Glenn Gould’, and devised bizarre alter-egos for radio and television who deconstructed the official positions of the

²¹ By this I mean a performer who staked his/her career reputation on his/her pianism, thus discounting the only possible exception to my claim – Leonard Bernstein.

²² Glenn Gould, “Gould by Payzant/Payzant by Gould” in *Toronto Globe and Mail* (May 27, 1978).

official Glenn Gould.²³ His radical philosophy of media production – which read creative and moral significance into the interventionist application of technology to recorded sound – was centrally concerned with meaningful communication, and in particular the meaningful communication of his artistic identity, which he felt was poorly served by the concert experience. Exploiting the interpretative parameters of musical discourse, techniques of sound production, and the acoustic properties of sound itself, Gould used his media work to craft highly personalised and engaging artistic statements. Through this work, Gould created a new paradigm of artistic mediation, and gave new meaning to the idea of celebrity as an archetypal form of individualism and social identification.

The unique circumstances of Gould's media career have clear implications for the way he was able to mobilise his artistic identity in the wider culture. Here I refer not only to the wider culture of serious music in North America, but to Canada's national culture. Gould's retreat from the concert hall into the studio was obviously a landmark moment in twentieth-century performance culture because it permanently overturned traditional assumptions of what a classical performer is and does. It marked a shift away from live concert performance as the indispensable site of musical fame production. It also signalled Gould's partial retreat from the American sphere of musical influence, its huge arts markets and middle-class audiences, its community of authoritative music critics and journalists. The question of how Gould was able to generate and sustain his celebrity in the peripheral musical culture of North America, Canada, is a central one. It turns out that the CBC was formative not just of Gould's media career, but of his cultural career too, as Gould's ability to represent and promote himself successfully became intertwined with the policies and practices of the CBC in its role as the nation's public broadcaster.

²³ Glenn Gould, "Glenn Gould Interviews Glenn Gould about Glenn Gould" in *High Fidelity*, Vol. 24, No. 2 (Feb., 1974); also see *A Glenn Gould Fantasy* from *The Glenn Gould Silver Jubilee Album* (CBS Masterworks, 1980).

Gould was a national hero in Canada from the early 1950s onwards, and the construction of Gould's identity was inseparable from broader discourses of Canada's national identity, particularly as these were defined in opposition to those of the United States. Gould's representation as an artist 'of the North', the frequency of his appearances on the Canadian airwaves, and his ready access to CBC creative and financial resources, were all part of nationalist debates about what it meant to be a Canadian, what function the mass media and Canadian arts programming should play in national life, and how cultural institutions should be funded. Throughout the twentieth century, institutions such as the National Film Board of Canada (1939-) and the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (1936-) came to embrace the nationalist agenda in their policies and practices. The cultural findings of the landmark Massey Commission (1949-51) were a spur to the development of a more distinctively Canadian way of life. But a potent discourse of civic nationalism did not emerge until the mid-Sixties, when Canadians became aware of the extent of alleged American cultural, political, and economic overreach. In responding to the uncertainties of identity created by circumstances of geography, culture, and history, Canadians have constructed the 'imagined community' of Canada in terms of hegemonic discourses of landscape and technological communication.²⁴ By partaking of these discourses through the CBC, Gould was effectively contributing to a body of Canadian cultural criticism – intellectually codified by such writers as Northrop Frye and Margaret Atwood – which has read creative and moral significance into national characteristics of space and place, community and isolation.

Even before the beginning of Gould's involvement with the CBC in 1950, Gould was able to make a career in Canada. Most Canadian performers were thwarted by the parochialism of the country's musical scene and unfavourable cultural attitudes to fame and local talent,

²⁴ A term introduced by Benedict Anderson in his influential study of nationalism *Imagined Communities* (1983). Both Anderson and Homi Bhabha (in *Nation and Narration* (1990)) believe that a sense of national belonging is established through shared narratives codified in symbols and texts.

but Gould survived and thrived owing to a combination of his family's privileged economic and social background, local community networking, effective musical management and press promotion, and, of course, prodigious musical ability. At a time when the international concert circuit was dominated by European – and increasingly, American – pianists, Gould's Canadian identity marked him as an outsider. The question of how Gould coped with, resisted, embraced, and effaced this outsider status to market his credentials as an artist to different audiences at different moments in his career is an important consideration in the story of Gould's rising celebrity.

One of the most significant ways Gould negotiated his insider/outsider status as a Canadian and a musician was by discoursing on the role and nature of fame culture, image, and the promotional industries through the mass media. Throughout his concert career, Gould's colourful musical personality, high media visibility, and popular appeal risked undermining national ideals of Canadian cultural sobriety and self-effacement, and posed a challenge to the social and aesthetic discourses of serious music. By claiming in published interviews that his eccentricities were entirely unselfconscious; that he had 'never given any thought to the importance . . . of visual image [in performance]'; that he had 'never had any direct contact with people [in] . . . publicity'; that his public persona in the Fifties was a 'media concoction'; and that he favoured the 'reserved, quieter Canadian spirit' to the 'energetic American spirit', Gould was asserting his identity as an 'authentic' Canadian genius by claiming an indifference to his popularity and a hostility to market forces, the celebrity industry, and cultural attitudes of the United States.²⁵ (The reality was that he was an avid self-promoter who constantly sought public approval and recognition, and was heavily invested in his commercial success). The controversies engendered by the tension between Gould's colourful, trendy, and populist brand persona and his personal rhetoric of

²⁵ See Bernard Asbell "An Interview with Glenn Gould" in *Horizon*, Vol. 4, No. 3 (Jan., 1962); Alan Rich, "Gould in Conversation with Alan Rich", interview with KPFA Radio, California (Oct. 25, 1959); Norman Snider, "Glenn Gould at 45" in *Toronto Life* (May, 1978); Ulla Colgrass, "Glenn Gould" in *Music Magazine*, Vol. 4, No. 1 (Feb., 1981).

aesthetic disinterestedness were ones he exploited to mark his similarity to, and difference from, other performing artists, and diversify his cultural following. Known to journalists and audiences in the Fifties as the eccentric genius ‘who doesn’t want to play’, Gould appealed to the cultural fascination with both the personal and professional lives of star performers, and the ways celebrities squared their desire at once for fame and anonymity.²⁶ On leaving behind concert life, Gould pursued these tensions in his mature media works. In his recordings and broadcasts – always heavily promoted by his media handlers at the CBC and Columbia Records – he constructed monuments to an idealised self. He described them as ‘autobiographical’, as expressions of his individuality, and an attempt to give permanence to his identity.²⁷ At the same time, he used his media platform to rail against egotism and personal display, champion the alleged privacy and anonymity of collaborative studio work, and promote the reclusive lifestyle.²⁸ In the ultimate paradox, the idea of Gould as a ‘hermit’ and isolated artist became one of the most identifiable and well-known tropes of his public image during his lifetime.

Bringing a cultural dimension to bear on Gould’s celebrity identity as both concert performer and media artist underscores the contingent and relational nature of its construction. The signifier ‘Glenn Gould’ is meaningful because it is invested with ideological significance, representing a set of positions in relation to the discourses of classical music and mass culture of the age. Recent revelations about Gould’s private life, or critical re-evaluations of Gould’s radio work in the biographical literature, demonstrate how officially codified positions can be contested, reflecting the basic tension between Gould’s ideological self-representations, institutional meanings, and audience

²⁶ Gladys Shenner, “The genius who doesn’t want to play” in *Maclean’s*, Vol. 69, No. 9 (Apr. 28, 1956).

²⁷ See, for example, his comments in the CBC Television special *Radio as Music* (1975), and his letter to Helen Whitney (1971). John Roberts writes, “I know from my conversations with Gould that he hoped his performances would transcend time and address future generations” (John P.L. Roberts, *The Art of Glenn Gould* (Toronto: Malcolm Lester Books, 1999), 199).

²⁸ See, for example, Glenn Gould, “Let’s Ban Applause!” in *Musical America*, Vol. 82, No. 2 (Feb., 1962); the television promo “Glenn Gould on Recording” (Jul. 26, 1982). Promotional video for CBS Masterworks; and John McGreevy (dir.), *Glenn Gould’s Toronto*. CBC film. John McGreevy Productions, Nielsen-Ferns International (1979).

perceptions.²⁹ Some have argued that Gould structured this indeterminacy into his own rhetoric of self-presentation.³⁰ My analysis acknowledges the implications for Gould's identity of his uniquely privileged relationship to the mass media and his attempts to control his own life narratives through his creative work, while at the same time maintaining a critical stance towards notions of Gould's creative autonomy and myths of self-creation. I situate his celebrity identity in the play of social actors and discourses, and remain alert to how processes of cultural representation, production, consumption, and regulation impinge on its meanings.

Celebrity theorist P. David Marshall has employed Antonio Gramsci's notion of a 'working hegemony' to describe the temporary conventionalisation of a celebrity's identity.³¹ Using the examples of Marilyn Monroe and James Dean, he suggests that celebrity icons are 'nearly completely conventionalized celebrity sign[s]'; their personalities can be caricatured easily and their names are culturally ubiquitous.³² Gould can certainly be placed within this conceptual ambit. From Ruth Abernethy's rather solemn representation of Gould as hermit of the North, to cartoonist Duncan MacPherson's off-the-wall caricature of Gould as the nutty eccentric, to depict Gould is to draw on an instantly familiar stock of clichés and tropes about his genius.³³ In my analysis, I suggest that there are three archetypal narratives underpinning Gould's cultural reception: the 'theological' narrative, the 'rebellious' narrative, and the 'madman' narrative. All three respond to a need in the culture and society, are discursively constructed through the mass media, are heavily influenced by Gould's self-representations, and contribute to the 'meta-narrative' of Gould's identity as a unique artistic genius and Canadian icon. Underpinning

²⁹ Michael Clarkson *The Secret Life of Glenn Gould: A Genius in Love* (Toronto: ECW Press, 2010); Peter Ostwald, *Glenn Gould: The Ecstasy and Tragedy of Genius* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1997).

³⁰ Most notably Alana Bell in her dissertation on Gould (2012), considered later in this introduction.

³¹ P. David Marshall, *Celebrity and Power: Fame in Contemporary Culture* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997), 58.

³² *Ibid.*

³³ See <https://www.collectionscanada.gc.ca/obj/028010/f1/nlc003819-v5.jpg> for MacPherson's caricature "The musical genius is a nut" (in *Toronto Star*, Apr. 11, 1981).

Gould's self-representations as a Northerner and technologist, and ideologically structured around Gould's creative and moral discourse of art, I argue that these narratives function like discursive templates, around which the debates around Gould's modern significance as an artist and Canadian citizen have been conducted. Drawing together recent analysis of Gould's 'autobiographical' radio documentaries and theoretical insights into the social function of celebrity, I also advance the theory that, at its most basic level, Gould's celebrity articulates a dialectical tension between the individual and the collective, between isolation and community. It is this dynamic contradiction that gives Gould's celebrity a certain malleability within the narrative constraints imposed on it by his creative and moral discourse, and underpins what Arved Ashby has termed 'a certain hermeneutic necessity and a craving for renewed currency and recontextualisation' in the Gould cultural afterlife.³⁴ Thus, with the twin concepts of narrative and dialectic, my analysis seeks to arrive at an integrated theory of Gould's celebrity which bridges the gap between monolithic or essentialist interpretations of his cultural identity and the 'empty signifier'-type interpretations which tend to portray Gould's cultural identity as an endless play of meaning with no real affective centre.

Aims, Methodology, Literature Review

By examining the cultural construction of Gould's celebrity during his lifetime, I am ultimately seeking answers to the question of how and why Gould matters to the extent that he does in our own times. What cultural needs does he fulfil? How has his celebrity shaped the identities of those who respond to him? What role does his special use of the mass media play in mobilising and circulating opinions about him? To these ends my work involves applying a socio-historical hermeneutic to the formative events of Gould's professional career, addressing how his fame and reputation were nurtured, established,

³⁴ Arved Ashby, "Digital Mythologies" in *Absolute Music, Mechanical Reproduction* (London: University of California Press, 2010), 134.

and disseminated during his lifetime. In more general terms, my study contributes to an understanding of the interrelationship between musical and social identity, the cross-affinities between high art and popular culture, and the interaction between musical celebrity and its social, institutional, and national contexts of production.

Throughout, my focus is on Gould's North American celebrity, for the obvious reason that this is the primary context in which Gould's iconic fame and identity was established and continues to hold the greatest influence. While I draw broader conclusions about Gould's national identity from my knowledge of the general conditions of celebrity production in Canada and the United States, I also consider the importance of regional articulations of Gould's fame in cultural centres such as New York and Toronto. The issue of regionalism is particularly problematic from a Canadian perspective, given how the Anglophone-Francophone cultural divide bifurcates issues of culture, fame, and identity. The Québécois star system reflects the presence of what Amelia Kalant has termed 'an internal cultural-national boundary'.³⁵ Compared to English-Canadians, French-Canadians are more likely to find fame within Canada, given that they are isolated from the dominant North American paradigm of Hollywood celebrity by way of language and culture. To avoid complication, I have restricted myself to the study of Gould's fame within English-Canada, the context with which he was most familiar and which was most formative on his career.

My work draws on the insights and perspectives of scholars working in a variety of fields and disciplines, including sociology, philosophy, cultural and historical musicology, the wider domain of cultural and historical criticism, cultural studies, performance studies, celebrity studies, and media studies. This approach is necessary given the complexity of musical celebrity as a cultural phenomenon, and especially given the idiosyncratic nature of Gould's interactions with issues of culture, media, and identity. The modern tendency to

³⁵ Amelia Kalant, *National Identity and the Conflict at Oka: Native Belonging and Myths of Postcolonial Nationhood in Canada* (New York: Routledge, 2004), 33.

favour interdisciplinary approaches to the study of culture has resulted in analyses which more adequately address its contingent and relational properties. Musicology has participated in these trends. Joseph Horowitz' *Understanding Toscanini: How He Became an American Culture-God* (1987), Tia DeNora's *Beethoven and the Construction of Genius* (1995), and Gregory L. Reece's *Elvis Religion: The Cult of the King* (2006) are representative, book-length examples of broad-based deconstructive analyses of musical celebrity. Gould's radical commitment to the mass media, his peripheral status as a Canadian celebrity within a cultural paradigm of American stardom, and his obsessive determination to stage-manage his public image through his later works make Gould an interesting case-study from the perspective of celebrity research. Yet Gould's celebrity has received little attention from scholars. As I will now begin to show, however, a few works do exist that treat Gould's cultural life and afterlife as a subject worthy of serious intellectual consideration.

The work of sociologists and cultural theorists has exerted the greatest influence on my theoretical approach to the thesis. Roland Barthes' classic text *Mythologies* (1957) was an obvious starting point for thinking about the taken-for-granted assumptions underlying Gould's identity as a 'unique genius', and his semiotic studies in the collection *Image, Music, Text* (1977) have orientated my analytical approach to Gould's representations. The work of Pierre Bourdieu and Stuart Hall was formative on my approach to Gould's celebrity at the macro-level of cultural production. Bourdieu's understanding of cultural production as the interaction between the broader network of social relations (the 'field') and individual psychology (the 'habitus') has helped me avoid deterministic readings of Gould's celebrity as a mere social effect, on the one hand, and as a simplistic expression of Gould's charismatic authority, on the other.³⁶ Hall's notion of the 'Circuit of Culture' has helped me think of Gould's celebrity in terms of a number of sites and modalities of

³⁶ I have consulted his monograph *Distinction* (1979/10), and particularly his essays in *The Field of Cultural Production* (1993).

cultural meaning which constitute it. Defining cultural objects in the interplay of processes of production, consumption, representation, regulation, and identity, Hall has clarified my thinking on, for example, the commercial stakes of Gould's branding by institutions, the importance of fan sub-cultures and the way they have appropriated aspects of Gould's identity for subversive ends, the ideological work of Gould's visual iconography, and the significance of Gould's interaction with protectionist discourses of culture and broadcasting.³⁷

Unsurprisingly, celebrity theorists have used the insights of these writers to construct new critical frameworks for thinking about their subject. P. David Marshall's *Celebrity and Power: Fame in Contemporary Culture* (1997), for example, has combined Foucault's discourse theory with Weber's theories of rationality and charismatic authority to locate the 'cultural power' of celebrity in its social function: namely, in its ability to contain and negotiate 'the sphere of the irrational, emotional, personal, and affective . . . in contemporary culture'.³⁸ Like these authors, I have attempted to draw on aspects of discourse analysis, semiotic analysis, institutional analysis, and reception analysis in my own work to think productively about the commercial and social uses of Gould's celebrity, and the ways Gould is authenticated as both an individual personality and a social type. My approach to analysing Gould's Canadian fame and identity has benefited considerably from Samita Nandy's recent study *Fame in Hollywood North: A Theoretical Guide to Celebrity Cultures in Canada* (2015). Her theory that 'Canadian media construct national identity through representations of celebrities in popular culture' has encouraged me to re-evaluate the ideological function of Gould's celebrity to account for the ways Gould's media career and presentational rhetoric have historically interacted with wider discourses

³⁷ I have been influenced by his books *Doing Cultural Studies* (1997), *Representation* (1997), and *Questions of Cultural Identity* (1996).

³⁸ See particularly the chapter "Tools for the Analysis of Celebrity as a Form of Cultural Power" in this work.

of Canadian nationality.³⁹ Her view that Canadian media technologies and nature symbolism have been used to form a bulwark of national defence against a perceived American cultural imperialism foregrounds issues of regulation and representation as they are implicated in Gould's interactions with the CBC and his iconic depiction as a 'Northerner'.

Many authors, Nandy included, have considered there to be something distinctive about the way Canadians have thought about and made use of communication technologies.⁴⁰ A large body of work has been devoted to the subject of 'technological nationalism' in Canada, a term first coined by Canadian communication theorist Maurice Charland in 1986.⁴¹ This term describes the discourse around the special role of Canada's communications infrastructure and media content provisions in asserting national unity and identity in a country divided by geography, demographics, and the cultural ambitions of its powerful southern neighbour.⁴² The works of Harold Innis, George Grant, and Marshall McLuhan form the theoretical backbone of a twentieth-century Canadian discourse of technology and communications.⁴³ By far the most famous of the three was McLuhan, whose theories concerning the social and psychological effects of the new media – captured in his famous dictum 'the medium is the message' – exerted a decisive influence on Gould's mature approach to his studio work.⁴⁴ I have cross-compared McLuhan's theories of aural perception and of the 'participant consumer' in the electronic age, Gould's use of sonic perspective and listener-centered philosophy of recording, and Canadian

³⁹ Samita Nandy, *Fame in Hollywood North: A Theoretical Guide to Celebrity Cultures in Canada* (Toronto: WaterHill Publishing, 2015), 18.

⁴⁰ E.g. Arthur Kroker, *Technology and the Canadian Mind*; Robert E. Babe, *Canadian Communication Thought: Ten Foundational Writers* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2000); Jennifer Reid, *Louis Riel and the Creation of Modern Canada* (USA: University of New Mexico Press, 2008).

⁴¹ Maurice Charland, "Technological Nationalism" in *Canadian Journal of Political and Social Theory*, Vol. 10, No. 1-2 (1986); Arthur Kroker, *Technology and the Canadian Mind*; Nandy, *Fame in Hollywood North*; Reid, *Louis Riel*.

⁴² "Technological nationalism . . . has always been the essence of the Canadian state and, most certainly, the locus of the Canadian identity" (Kroker, 10).

⁴³ See bibliography for works by these authors I have consulted.

⁴⁴ The phrase was introduced in McLuhan's most famous book *Understanding Media* (1964).

discourses of nationality to arrive at a fresh understanding of how Gould uses his media work to build new bonds of identification with his Canadian audiences. I also reference the work of Philip Auslander. His theories of ‘liveness’ and of performative identity in the context of mediatised performance point to the importance of Gould’s recorded vocalisations and other extra-musical sounds as one way the pianist recovers the sense of immediacy and presence – i.e. the personal authenticity – of the live concert experience.⁴⁵

The web of primary and secondary literature on Gould himself has obviously driven my research forward. Among commercially available materials, I have consulted Gould’s media work, descriptive catalogues of the Gould archival holdings at Library and Archives Canada (LAC) and an annotated discography, specialist Gould journals published by the Glenn Gould Society and the Glenn Gould Foundation, book-length thematic studies, collections of interviews and reminiscences, biographies and hagiographies (in film and in print), and coffee-table books of Gould photography. Among archival and other non-commercial materials, I have consulted unpublished writings by Gould (including scripts for his media projects), his concert programmes and other promotional items (such as his press books, concert flyers, and CBC and Columbia print adverts and press releases), his extant letter correspondence, a digital catalogue of Gould’s CBC radio broadcasts, press reviews of his concerts and media work, press interviews, profile pieces, tributes, broadcast listings information, conference proceedings, Gould websites, my own interview data drawn from a research visit to Toronto and Ottawa in 2014, and the large body of journal scholarship devoted to his study.⁴⁶

Gould’s idiosyncratic performance practices and mannerisms at the keyboard; his wide-ranging theories of music, technology and society; and his intellectual debts to key thinkers of his time have all formed a cornerstone of the modern discourse around what Gould

⁴⁵ Particularly influential was his essay “Musical Personae” (2006) and his book *Liveness: Performance in a Mediatized Culture* (1999).

⁴⁶ A complete list of interview subjects is provided in the Acknowledgments, x.

signifies as an artist and cultural figure. Yet only a handful of studies have applied a sociological perspective to Gould's cultural career itself, despite the persistent fascination with Gould's modern cultural significance, and calls for research in this field to be developed.⁴⁷ The few studies that have been conducted have given only partial accounts and are of limited historical or theoretical scope (see below). By applying Stuart Hall's 'Circuit of Culture' model to the study of Gould's celebrity, I have arrived at what I believe is a more systematic and rigorous understanding of its historical construction, as viewed through the lens of the key cultural sites and modalities which constitute it. I will now briefly address those works which have been most formative for my thinking and critical approach.

Like myself, Alana Bell conceives of her doctoral research as an attempt 'to understand what it is about [Gould] that continues to fascinate'.⁴⁸ As a literary scholar, however, she engages with the question through a study of the life-writing by and about Gould. She notes the recurrence of thematic representations of Gould as genius, as Canadian icon, and as performer in the literature about him, linking the fascination in Gould to the special role of his celebrity in negotiating issues around musical identity, narrative, and selfhood. She assigns a central role to Gould's 'public deployment of self' through his writings, images, music, and 'speech acts', arguing that his various highly original forms of 'auto/biographical intervention' have 'profoundly influenced' his modern representation, establishing a link between his own life narratives and particular areas of thematic concern.⁴⁹ Nevertheless, Bell suggests that Gould's auto/biographical texts and ideas 'bear

⁴⁷ As early as 1997, Kevin Bazzana could write that "Gould's posthumous impact has been remarkable, perhaps unprecedented for a recently deceased performing musician. (Indeed, the Gould reception history would itself make a fascinating study)". See *Glenn Gould: The Performer in the Work* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 6. The posthumous Gould phenomenon has been noted, for example, by Otto Friedrich (*A Life and Variations*), Peter Ostwald (*The Ecstasy and Tragedy of Genius*), Rhona Bergman (*The Idea of Gould*), Mark Kingwell (*Glenn Gould*), Colin Eatock (*Remembering Glenn Gould*), and Peter Goddard (*The Great Gould*).

⁴⁸ Alana Bell, "The Lives of Glenn Gould: The Limits of Musical Auto/Biography". PhD Dissertation. University of Hawaii (May, 2012), 3. The dissertation can be consulted at:

https://scholarspace.manoa.hawaii.edu/bitstream/10125/101339/1/Bell_Alana_r.pdf (accessed Mar. 10, 2018).

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 12, 25, iv.

the mark of the trickster'.⁵⁰ Modern writers have inherited a multiple, fragmentary subject 'who must be constructed rather than re-presented'.⁵¹ Writers must 'invest their own meanings into him, whether ideas about genius and eccentricity, about a sense of national history, or about musical performance and the performance of self'.⁵² Gould fascinates because he is the riddle that must be solved, but also because his identity can be co-opted to the task of negotiating other identity narratives within the wider culture.

Claiming that Gould's modern representations are characterised by semiotic ambiguity, Bell's work amounts to a sophisticated elaboration of a thesis advanced by earlier Gould scholars, albeit she differs from them by placing singular emphasis on Gould's own role in constructing his modern mystique.⁵³ I agree with Bell that part of Gould's appeal derives from the important work performed by his cultural identities, and that Gould's self-representations have established a set of basic discursive parameters that organise and invite speculative interest in his merits as an artist and Canadian citizen. Nevertheless, although she does make some attempt to frame Gould's modern identity politics in terms of discursive archetypes of Romantic genius, her work generally neglects the broader reception narratives that have helped mobilise Gould's iconic image. I therefore suggest that the primary significance of Gould's self-representations has been in contributing three narrative templates around which the speculative discourse of his identity has been clustered.⁵⁴ Second, in spite of her desire to emphasise the role of Gould as an agent in his own celebrity formation, Bell prefers to ascribe the contradictory tendencies in his reception to the differing cultural attitudes of Gould commentators, rather than suggest that these too were in some way guided by the nature of his self-representations. In this respect, my work more fully embraces the implications of Bell's original theory, suggesting that a

⁵⁰ Ibid., 26.

⁵¹ Ibid., iv.

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ Robin Elliott, "Constructions of Identity in the Life Stories of Emma Albani and Glenn Gould", *Journal of Canadian Studies*, Vol. 39, No. 2 (Spr., 2005); Mark Kingwell, *Glenn Gould*; Arved Ashby, *Absolute Music*.

⁵⁴ See Chapter I.

dynamic tension between the individual and the collective, isolation and community, underlies Gould's performances of self in his creative and moral discourse. Finally, Bell's work is necessarily limited by its scope: she is interested in Gould's celebrity as a discourse of identity in life writing about him, and in Gould as an influential cultural agent, and takes Gould's genius as a historical given. My work incorporates Bell's insights, but goes further by examining the historical origins of Gould's modern celebrity, and shifts the attention to discourses of production and regulation underpinning the commercial and cultural branding of Gould by his record label and Canadian nationalist institutions such as the CBC.

Differing in approach from Bell, Graham Carr is one of the only Gould scholars to have given a contextualised analysis of the pianist's lifetime celebrity.⁵⁵ Drawing on his understanding of the promotional cultures of mid-Fifties' corporate America, he considers the ideological work of photography and film in this period in constructing Gould's visual identity as a Columbia recording artist and cultural icon. He argues that Gould's crossover into the mainstream was a function of socially-conscious marketing strategies that looked to transform Gould 'from a young and talented musician into a cultural worker'.⁵⁶ He also claims that the ubiquity of Gould's image in print publications of varying cultural stripes helped construct his stardom by supplying 'the vital lifeblood of recognition in the public domain'.⁵⁷ Carr's interest in the social construction and dissemination of Gould's celebrity via the media is one I share. It has framed my approach to Chapter IV, particularly, where I examine the role of three types of promotional intermediaries in mediating and disseminating Gould's significance as an artist and celebrity in the U.S. print press. I also share with Carr a concern for how Gould's media handlers negotiated the rifts between Romantic and modern visual typographies in the selling of his artistic genius. Carr's

⁵⁵ Graham Carr, "Visualizing 'The Sound of Genius': Glenn Gould and the Culture of Celebrity in the 1950s" in *Journal of Canadian Studies*, Vol. 40, No. 3 (Fall, 2006).

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 18.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 9.

broader focus on the way musical and cultural institutions of this era squared their responsibilities as purveyors of elite culture and as commercial entities serving the entertainment needs of the wider public has also framed my inquiry into Gould's celebrity at the CBC, and the role of a hegemonic middlebrow discourse of broadcasting. Of course, by limiting his research to a study of Gould's visual representations and the role of his institutional handlers, and by applying his semiotic techniques only to a small sample of Gould's images in a short span of his career, Carr offers an incomplete analysis of Gould's cultural construction as an artist and celebrity. My analysis thus builds on Carr's insights by engaging with forms of textual criticism, highlighting the special role of Gould's self-representations, and applying a broader range of methodologies to a greater span of his cultural life and afterlife.

Structure of the Thesis

Each of the following six chapters examines an aspect of Gould's celebrity career in North America through the lenses of culture, media, and identity. My task is to explain how these three categories have historically functioned in constructing and entrenching Gould's iconic fame and reputation as an artist and public personality. The thesis adopts a three-part structure. The first pair of chapters maps out a theoretical framework for thinking about Gould's celebrity as a set of cultural representations, processes, and practices. The second pair situates the circumstances of Gould's upbringing and concert career in North America within this framework (1932-1964). The third pair takes a similar approach to Gould's mature media career in Canada (1964-1982). It makes sense to think of 1964 as a watershed moment in Gould's career as a professional and a celebrity. This is not only because of the new terms of his engagement with the electronic media and his own public identity, but because the mid-Sixties marked the arrival of a new era of 'pan-Canadian nationalism' and 'Canadianization', defined by the call for 'fellow citizens to be placed in

important sites of identity construction’, and the reassertion of nationhood through forms of domestic cultural expression.⁵⁸

Chapter I, ‘Gould Ascendant: Three Variations on the Idea of Genius’, examines Gould’s celebrity from the perspective of the cultural work performed by his identities. Developing Bell’s work, it introduces the notion of Gould’s modern mythology as a set of narrative archetypes influenced by Gould’s media self-representations during his lifetime. I argue that Gould’s reception as a quasi-religious figure, as a rebellious figure, and as a madman has been guided by Gould’s creative and moral thought, which the pianist self-identified with through his writings, broadcasts, and recordings. Gould allied his thought to Northern and technological rhetorics and iconographies, and these have helped frame Gould’s identities in terms of their relevance to aesthetic and cultural discourses of genius and nationality. I propose that a dialectical tension at the heart of Gould’s self-representations, between expressions of the individual and the collective, isolation and community, is responsible for the diverse responses to Gould as genius and as Canadian. This hermeneutic flexibility has also contributed to the breadth of his appeal, as Gould becomes a figure easily assimilated to wider projects of identity.

Chapter II, ‘The Political Economy of Myth: Gould and the Circuit of Culture’ amounts to the first macro-theory of Gould’s celebrity. It uses the work of cultural theorist Stuart Hall to map out the sites and modalities of cultural meaning which are implicated in the formation of Gould’s celebrity. Gould’s celebrity is thus considered: i) as a form of representation, i.e. a system of signs; ii) as a form of production, i.e. a brand commodity; iii) as a form of consumption, i.e. a model of fan identification; and iv) as a form of regulation, i.e. a mediating and mediated structure.

⁵⁸ Ryan Edwardson, *Canadian Content: Culture and the Quest for Nationhood* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2008), 161.

Chapter III, “Hitch your Wagon to a Star”: Gould the Toronto Prodigy, 1932-1954’, inaugurates the study proper. The traditional view holds that Gould became a celebrity following his ‘overnight success’ in the United States in 1955, a view reinforced by studies such as Carr’s, which associate notions of his celebrity with his American reception. This chapter seeks to challenge this view, arguing that Gould’s celebrity was rooted in the Canadian context of his early career: in the psychological, promotional, and material resources made available to him by his family, by Canadian musical and cultural institutions, and by influential figures in the Canadian arts. Providing the first situated study of Gould’s pre-American fame, I suggest that Gould’s cultural ascendancy was specially informed by the growing national debate around questions of Canadian cultural and political sovereignty and self-determination. A central concern was the role of European (particularly British) and American influence in Canadian life. Following the war, Gould was the beneficiary of new protectionist policies and funding initiatives for Canadian music, culture, and broadcasting which cemented his position in the public eye.

Chapter IV, ‘Gould’s Celebrity in the U.S. Print Media, 1955-1964’ develops Carr’s work by examining the role of the corporate, journalistic, and managerial press in structuring and disseminating the ideological content of Gould’s celebrity during the years of his international breakthrough as a musician and artistic personality. Addressing the specific social and promotional contexts in which Gould’s record label, the wider critical community, and his manager Walter Homburger operated, I suggest how Gould’s transformation from ‘altar boy of high culture’ to ‘classical music’s apostle to the masses’ was affected by the pragmatic concerns, power plays, and distribution mechanisms of his cultural intermediaries.⁵⁹ My analysis is also the first to consider how the marketing of Gould was bound up with the organisational and commercial demands of his record

⁵⁹ Graham Carr, “Visualizing ‘The Sound of Genius’”, 33.

company, Columbia Records. I also model Gould's cultural diffusion across the U.S. with the aid of mass data drawn from magazine and newspaper archives.

Chapter V, 'The Sounds of Genius: Listening to Gould's Celebrity, 1964-1982' begins to consider the significance of Gould's self-representations in the electronic media following his concert retirement. I approach his experimental work for radio and recording via McLuhan's theories of aural perception to consider how his sophisticated personal philosophy of creativity and morality was mediated in ways conducive to its successful decoding by listeners. Developing some of the premises established in Chapter I, I ask how such technologically mediated discourses of creativity and morality are expressed in Gould's aural self-representations both as a 'Northern' artist and as a studio technologist, taking as case-study his 'contrapuntal' radio documentary *The Idea of North*. Gould's mobilisation of 'Northern' and technological rhetoric through his manipulation of recorded sound situated his identity in relation to broader trends in Canadian nationalist discourse of the mid-Sixties, and allowed him to model his authenticity as an artist and Canadian citizen.

Chapter VI, "'Infotainment": The CBC, *Telescope*, and Gould's Audio-Visual Celebrity, 1964-1982' considers how Gould's meanings as an artist and cultural figure were mobilised through visual rhetorics of 'North' and technology in the CBC television half-hour portrait *Variations on Glenn Gould* (1969). In the first half of the chapter, I flesh out some of the economic, institutional, cultural, and technical constraints on Gould's interaction with television to argue for the complex, relational nature of celebrity production, and to re-articulate the debate around the nature and extent of Gould's mature contributions to his own cultural reception. In the second half, I apply the insights of film theorists, visual theorists, and musical semioticians to deconstruct how the cinematography of the television show – its mise-en-scène, its techniques of montage, its marriage of sight

and sound – works to define the aesthetic and social codes of Gould’s iconic representations.

CHAPTER I

GOULD ASCENDANT: THREE VARIATIONS ON THE IDEA OF GENIUS

One of these times I'll write my autobiography, which will certainly be fiction.

Glenn Gould.¹

The great entertainer, the great performer, does not project himself at an audience; he puts on the audience. He takes the basic components of its attitudes, assembles them in a unified image and wears it.

Marshall McLuhan.²

The Cultural Work of Gould's Identities

Writing seven years after Glenn Gould's death in 1982, biographer Otto Friedrich was one of the first to notice a trend in the posthumous cultural reception of the famed Canadian pianist and broadcaster. Struck by the 'rituals of ceremonial worship' and 'institutional enthusiasm' for Gould in North America and around the world at the time, Friedrich claimed that Gould had become 'the heroic icon to an increasingly widespread cult'.³ In 2018, Gould is a figure of wider significance in popular culture, particularly in Canada. 'He has new listeners, ones lacking any standard order classical music training or any shared history with Gould', argues his latest biographer, Peter Goddard. 'They hear his playing differently, understand his history differently, and respond differently to him and his music'.⁴

Goddard's comment focuses attention on issues of identity as they pertain to Gould's cultural reception. Gould's identity and the identities of his fans are, it seems, interacting in new ways.

The category of 'identity' is a high-profile concern in my thesis. At the most basic level, I am

¹ Vincent Tovell, "At Home with Glenn Gould" in *Project 60*. CBC Radio. Nov. 17, 1959.

² Quoted from Glenn Gould, *Dialogues on the Prospects of Recording* on *CBC Sunday Night*. CBC Radio. Jan. 10, 1965.

³ Otto Friedrich, *Glenn Gould: A Life and Variations*, 4.

⁴ Peter Goddard, *The Great Gould* (Toronto: Dundurn, 2017), 22.

interested in the role of individual- and institutional identities in enabling and shaping Gould's celebrity career. In this regard, I focus particularly on the role of his media handlers: his concert manager Walter Homburger (in Chapter IV), Columbia Records (in Chapter IV), and the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (in Chapters III and VI). In the context of my discussion of theories of cultural consumption, Chapter II broaches the issue of audience and fan identity. However, I take the greatest interest in Gould's celebrity identities, and this chapter attends most to this interest. My work evinces some of the central themes of sociological writing on identity and identification. In the vein of such writers as Homi Bhabha, Anthony Giddens, and Benedict Anderson, I understand Gould's identities as forms of fictionalised representation codified in and through narrative.⁵ Like Stuart Hall, I read them as 'fragmented and fractured' and 'constructed across different, often intersecting and antagonistic, discourses, practices and positions'.⁶

Developing the theories of scholar Alana Bell, this chapter locates an explanatory account of Gould's iconic fame and reputation in the cultural work performed by his media identities.⁷ Seen through the lens of Gould's self-representations, institutional handling, and wider reception, his celebrity can be said to provide an original commentary on the debate around artistic genius and its relationship to madness and eccentricity, and the nature of Canadian identity. My analysis attends to the special influence of Gould's professional thinking on his cultural formation. Throughout his career, his wide-ranging personal and artistic philosophy was communicated across a range of media outlets, in interviews, lecture-recitals, and personality profiles. The nature and extent of his involvement with the electronic media was unprecedented for a classical artist. Though ostensibly a discourse on the creative and moral status of the modern artist, Gould's philosophy also articulated broader social concerns: for

⁵ Homi Bhabha, *Nation and Narration* (London: Routledge, 1990); Anthony Giddens, *Modernity and Self-Identity* (California: Stanford University Press, 1991); Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 1983).

⁶ Stuart Hall, "Who Needs 'Identity'?" in Stuart Hall (ed.), *Questions of Cultural Identity* (London: SAGE Publications, 1996), 4.

⁷ Alana Bell, "The Lives of Glenn Gould".

example, the role and nature of ordinary versus extraordinary individuals and achievements, the merits and costs of isolation and community, and the demands of privacy and fame. In this way, Gould's identities were amenable to broader narratives of social identity in the wider culture, fuelling his appeal. Throughout, my analysis foregrounds the significance of 'Northern' and technological rhetorics and iconographies as the primary sites at which Gould forms his eclectic intellectual vision and self-identities.

Approaching Gould's celebrity from a literary studies perspective, Alana Bell sees the cultural fascination in the pianist reflected in the proliferation of biographies about him which offer ever-more diverse interpretations of his life and work. Her study of the Gould biographical literature informs her central thesis that Gould is a 'musical auto/biography "limit case"' whose forms of textual representation mark a departure from 'the conservative history of musical biography as a genre'.⁸ She links Gould's appeal to the flexibility of his identity, which finds a basis in Gould's own radical forms of self-representation through music and the media during his life. Embracing the unprecedented opportunities for artistic expression and outreach opened up by the new media of the time, Gould engaged in highly original forms of 'autobiographical play' through his media works and interviews.⁹ While attempting to cloak his image in the guise of personal spontaneity and authenticity, Gould increasingly conveyed his identities through scripted media appearances. He also developed and showcased numerous outlandish alter egos as a vehicle for self-parody.¹⁰ Towards the end of his life, he favourably reviewed the first biography written about him.¹¹ In his musical recordings and radio documentaries, particularly, but also in some of his television shows,

⁸ Alana Bell, "The Lives of Glenn Gould", iv.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 79.

¹⁰ Appearing in his writings, radio projects, and even in promotional skits for CBC Television, Gould's cast of satirical characters was a jamboree of regional stereotypes. Among them were the metaphysically minded German composer and musicologist Professor Karlheinz Klopweisser, the stuffy English conductor Sir Nigel Twitt-Thornwaite, the street-wise New York cab driver Theodore Slutz, "BBC-type pedagogue" Sir Humphrey Price-Davies, and the arrogant psychiatrist Wolfgang von Krankmeister.

¹¹ Gould reviewed Geoffrey Payzant's *Glenn Gould, Music & Mind*. His review first appeared as "Gould by Payzant/Payzant by Gould" in *Toronto Globe and Mail* (May 27, 1978) and has subsequently been republished in Tim Page's *The Glenn Gould Reader*.

Gould developed radical new approaches to media presentation to communicate the terms of his artistic philosophy in ways more engaging and accessible to his audiences.¹² By necessity, this philosophy assumed a personal character, as Gould's championing of the creative and moral virtues of isolated studio work provided intellectual rationale for his shock decision to retire from concert performance at the height of his career in 1964. For Bell, then, Gould's dissemination of his artistic thought via the media was the primary way Gould exerted 'agency and control over his own life narratives'.¹³

Gould used his arguments in favour of artistic non-conformity, solitude, and introspection to build a mythologised image of himself as an autodidact, hermit, puritan, and eccentric. Gould's knack for self-promotion through the media has been much commented on by critics and biographers, some even suggesting that it formed another dimension of his genius, and one which distinguished him from other artists.¹⁴ Appealing to notions of Gould's transformative agency, critic Edward Strickland summarises what he sees as the link between Gould's self-identity and his wider cultural identity:

[T]he Gould persona was one of his most successful interpretations. More than an eccentric, he transformed himself into an archetype, a figure not merely eliciting curiosity but deeper psychological responses, particularly in an era coercing one to ever more constricting forms of conventionality. He provided an image of freedom from the 'tremendously tyrannical force' of the *Zeitgeist*, first as a kind of Tarot Fool in his be-mittened and be-muffled appearances amid the factitious ritualism of the concert, and after his retirement as a contemporary, though highly articulate, Bartleby the Scrivener.¹⁵

¹² What Geoffrey Payzant first termed Gould's "New Philosophy" of the recording media is discussed in Chapter V.

¹³ Alana Bell, "The Lives of Glenn Gould", 33.

¹⁴ For example, Otto Friedrich, *A Life and Variations*, 297; Jacques Drillon, "Gould's Gould Cult" in *Glenn Gould*, Vol. 2, No. 2 (Fall, 1996), 79. Gould's editor at the magazine *Piano Quarterly*, Robert Silverman, has commented that "Glenn definitely decided . . . that he was going to become a persona. In order to be noticed" (Rhona Bergman, *The Idea of Gould* (Philadelphia: Lev Publishing, 1999), 116). Bell claims that Bazzana's biography *Wondrous Strange* "portray[s] Gould's manipulation of his public image as another aspect of his genius" (Alana Bell, "The Lives of Glenn Gould", 80).

¹⁵ Edward Strickland, "Glenn Gould in Retrospect: In Memoriam" in *Fanfare*, Vol. 6, No. 3 (Jan., 1983), 62. Bartleby the Scrivener is an isolated, peculiar, and rebellious legal clerk in Herman Melville's influential short story "Bartleby, the Scrivener: A Story of Wall Street" (1853).

Encouraged by the pianist's approach to his self-promotion, newspapers delighted in describing Gould as the genius who came out of nowhere, spurned society, and sacrificed worldly pleasures to devote himself to the higher cause of art.¹⁶ The aura of mystery that Gould surrounded himself with, and which made him a figure of endless curiosity to contemporary audiences, has set the scene for 'an elusive [biographical] subject who must be constructed rather than represented'.¹⁷ For Bell and others, he is 'an empty signifier, both confounding biographers, and allowing them to invest their own meanings into him'.¹⁸ Gould's apparent lack of a private life, for example – the canonical myth which gained a veneer of scholarly legitimacy owing to its restatement in Geoffrey Payzant's original biography of the pianist – has fuelled speculation that he was asexual or gay.¹⁹ Gould's eccentricities, too, have invited various posthumous diagnoses of his mental and physical health.²⁰ Still, these examples show that, despite the lack of a biographical consensus on the precise meaning of Gould's identities, his self-representations have generated a number of areas of thematic interest for writers. Bell has suggested that Gould's critical engagement with the creative and moral dimensions of art has focused biographical attention on the idea of Gould's genius, given the importance of creative and moral discourses to historical

¹⁶ For example, Mary Lawrey Ross, "The self-directed artist" in *Saturday Night*, Vol. 71, No. 20 (Dec. 8, 1956). Journalist William Littler described Gould as "devoted to the recording studio as a hermit to a cave – and usually without shoes" ("Retired' pianist Glenn Gould is busier than ever" in *Toronto Star* (Dec. 8, 1973)).

¹⁷ Alana Bell, "The Lives of Glenn Gould", iv.

¹⁸ Ibid. As noted in the Introduction, the "empty signifier" theory has also been championed by Mark Kingwell in *Glenn Gould* (2009) and Arved Ashby in *Absolute Music* (2010). Friedrich uses the analogy of "Chinese boxes" to describe what Bell has termed "the multiple, fragmentary Gould" (Otto Friedrich, *Life and Variations*, 9).

¹⁹ Payzant famously reflected that "Perhaps the author of the second book on Glenn Gould will attempt a 'conventional' biography. He will fail . . . [Gould's] private life is in fact austere and unremarkable". (Preface to the first edition of *Music & Mind*, 1978). Kevin Kopelson has cited Gould as an example of "queer pianism" (*Beethoven's Kiss: Pianism, Perversion, and the Mastery of Desire* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1996, p. 14, 26)). Ostwald wrote that "[Gould's] sexuality seems to have been suppressed" (*Ecstasy and Tragedy of Genius*, 66).

²⁰ Peter Ostwald, Tim Page, and S. Timothy Maloney have proposed that Gould was on the autistic spectrum. See Peter Ostwald, *Glenn Gould: The Ecstasy and Tragedy of Genius*; Tim Page, "How Glenn Gould and I Became Friends" on 21cm.org (2017); S. Timothy Maloney, "Glenn Gould, autistic savant" in Neil Lerner and Joseph N. Straus (eds.), *Sounding Off: Theorizing Disability in Music* (New York: Routledge, 2006). Gould made much of his hypochondria – manifested as pill dependency – in life, and Peter Ostwald devotes a chapter to Gould's "Strange Illnesses" (*Ecstasy and Tragedy of Genius*, 159-170). Recent scholarship has explored the possibility that Gould suffered from the debilitating neurological condition focal hand dystonia. See e.g. Frank R. Wilson, "Glenn Gould's Hand" in Raoul Tubiana and Peter Amadio (eds.), *Medical Problems of the Instrumentalist Musician* (London: Martin Dunitz Ltd., 2000).

conceptions of artistic exceptionalism.²¹ Gould's professional interest in the Canadian North and enduring media relationship with the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation has located the pianist's posthumous identity within a politics of nationhood. Gould's deeper philosophical interest in the role of isolation/individualism and community/conformism has articulated concerns around fame culture and social belonging which has led to Gould being cast as a social type in novels such as Thomas Bernhard's *The Loser* (1991), as well as in fan hagiography.²² While Bell would recognise Robin Elliott's assertion that the life represented in biography is always, by necessity, 'a literary construct rather than a historical given', and that the biographer cannot help but be ideologically invested in the stories he or she tells, Gould's 'auto/biographical play' complicates the storytelling process by adding a further layer of (highly self-interested) mediation through which the biographer must travel.²³ It is in the way that Gould's radical forms of media self-representation inspire new approaches to musical life writing at various levels of mediation that Bell locates his exceptionalism; in his own writings and those of critics, journalists, biographers, and fans, Gould is creatively envisioned as a musical subject in his own right, but also as a hermeneutic window onto a community, nation, or even another life. 'Gould biographies have repeatedly travelled to the limits and back again', Bell writes.²⁴ In so doing, biographers have interpreted Gould's identities and achievements to the wider culture, and legitimised him as a figure worthy of serious, and popular, attention.

²¹ Alana Bell, "The Lives of Glenn Gould", 33.

²² Thomas Bernhard, *The Loser* (New York: Knopf, 1991). Originally published as *Der Untergeher* (Austria: Knopf, 1983).

²³ Robin Elliott, "Constructions of Identity", 106.

²⁴ Alana Bell, "The Lives of Glenn Gould", 142.

Narrative I: Gould the Good

Fig. C



In the final paragraph of her book on Gould, Rhona Bergman articulates a central narrative of the pianist's modern cultural reception, writing that:

The image of Glenn Gould most manifest is that of musician, of visionary, of prophet. Uncomfortable in the physical world, he strove to transcend it. He was a man whose spirit is somehow yet alive, infused throughout his work. A being not to be worshipped but to be cherished. Not all recognise this. But for those who do, for those who will listen, though he cannot properly offer them Grace, Glenn Gould . . . yes, Glenn Gould can teach them to live.²⁵

Bergman's text is one of many that constructs Gould as a spiritual force capable of improving the lives of his listeners through the power of his thought and music.²⁶ In Bell's account, this narrative inscribes the view that 'Gould's existence in his hereafter, our present, depends upon the interaction of his audience and his music'.²⁷ The idea of communication and community 'becomes entwined with the notion of eternal life', not only because Gould's fans have been seen to assure him of his own immortality, but because of the perceived spiritual

²⁵ Rhona Bergman, *The Idea of Gould*, 221.

²⁶ E.g. Bruno Monsaingeon (dir.), *Glenn Gould: Hereafter*. Film. Canada: Rhombus Media, 2006; Otto Friedrich, *A Life and Variations*.

²⁷ Alana Bell, "The Lives of Glenn Gould", 113.

and religious nature of the interaction between Gould and his music, between Gould's fans and his musical recordings, and between Gould's fans and other fans, who form a sense of shared identity through mutual acknowledgment of the transformative effect of his musical recordings on their lives.²⁸ Recording technology becomes a conduit for the spiritual transfiguration and moral redemption of society through music. The above photo, taken by photojournalist Dan Weiner during the 1955 recording session for Gould's debut Columbia album, conveys what Graham Carr has considered a primary motif of Gould iconography: 'the idealization of a technological sublime'.²⁹ Constructing the recording studio as a site for Gould's flights of imaginative fancy, posthumous cultural works such as François Girard's much-celebrated *Thirty Two Short Films About Glenn Gould* (1993) have not only contributed to an understanding of Gould's genius as a fundamentally creative achievement, but have confirmed how the linking of music and technology has centrally informed representations of Gould's 'ecstatic' and 'moral' identity.³⁰

Though Bergman stops short of advocating Gould 'worship', the tone of her comments supports a theological narrative which has historically been mobilised to convey notions of the pianist's exceptionality. Throughout his life and afterlife, Gould has been characterised not only as a 'prophet', but as a 'monk', a 'saint', a 'puritan', a 'holy man', a 'priest', an 'evangelist', an 'apostle', a 'guru', and 'one of the god-people'.³¹ Of course, beyond the case of Gould himself, sociologists have long argued for a view of celebrity as a fundamentally religious phenomenon.³² In theorist Chris Rojek's account, "'post-God" celebrity is now one of the mainstays of organizing recognition and belonging in secular society'.³³ Like the deity,

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Graham Carr, "Visualizing 'The Sound of Genius'", 17.

³⁰ François Girard (dir.), *Thirty Two Short Films About Glenn Gould*. Film. Canada: Rhombus Media, 1993.

³¹ E.g. Alfred Bester, "The Zany Genius of Glenn Gould" in *The Holiday*, Vol. 35, No. 4 (Apr., 1964); Robert S. Clark, "Glenn Gould: Prophet" in *The Hudson Review*, Vol. 36, No. 4 (Win., 1983/4); Arthur Darack, "Glenn Gould is apostle of non-conformity" in *Cincinnati Enquirer* (Nov. 15, 1960).

³² E.g. Chris Rojek, *Celebrity* (London: Reaktion Books, 2001); John Frow, "Is Elvis a God?" in *International Journal of Cultural Studies*, Vol. 1, No. 2 (Aug. 1, 1998); Pete Ward, *Gods Behaving Badly: Media, Religion, and Celebrity Culture* (London: SCM Press, 2011).

³³ Chris Rojek, *Celebrity*, 58.

the celebrity and his or her artefacts are invested with feelings of ‘awe and wonder’ by followers, and become the focus of elaborate rituals of consecration and commemoration.³⁴ Both encourage the assertion of powerful forms of individual and group identity, and both can provide moral templates for society. However, known to audiences primarily through his concerts, recordings, and music broadcasts, Gould provided access to more complex and meaningful forms of selfhood, given the unique experience music affords to the listener of the body, time, and sociability.³⁵ Gould also expanded the role and nature of the interaction between celebrity and fan by making the issues of audience participation and moral improvement core concerns of his media philosophy and public image.

This theological narrative originated in critics’ attempts to come to terms with Gould as a concert performer. In Bell’s view, responses to Gould’s music and personality have informed a view of him as an archetypal ‘Platonic’ genius, possessed by divine forces to express creative ideas of mysterious and transcendent beauty.³⁶ Critics spoke of his ‘spell-weaving talent’, his ‘almost other-worldly dedication’, and his ‘trance-like mystery’.³⁷ His first major profile in an American periodical led with the headline ‘Music World’s Young Wonder’, and journalists delighted in reporting his many musical and personal oddities and ‘rituals’.³⁸ At his death in 1982, newspapers described him as a ‘cosmic force’, best known for his ‘curious artistry’.³⁹ Posthumous biographies capture the tone of this reception, with titles such as *Wondrous Strange* (2003) and *The Ecstasy and Tragedy of Genius* (1997).⁴⁰

³⁴ Ibid., 54.

³⁵ Simon Frith, “Music and Identity” in Stuart Hall (ed.), *Questions of Cultural Identity* (London: SAGE Publications, 1996), 124.

³⁶ Alana Bell, “The Lives of Glenn Gould”, 35.

³⁷ Lenore Crawford, “Spell-weaving talent shows in composing, performance” in *London Free Press* (Jul. 10, 1956); James Boeringer, “Glenn Gould” in *Musical Courier*, Vol. 151, No. 3 (Feb. 1, 1955); Albert Johnston, “Pianist Glenn Gould blends trance-like mystery and superbness” in *Daily Californian* (Mar. 8, 1958).

³⁸ Gordon Parks, “Music World’s Young Wonder” in *Life* (Mar. 12, 1956). Gladys Shenner wrote that “music is almost a religious ritual to him” (“The genius who doesn’t want to play”).

³⁹ Geoffrey Payzant quoted in Jonathan Gross, “The genius was a warm human being” in *Toronto Sun* (Oct. 5, 1982); Richard Pontziou, “BACH: The Goldberg Variations, Glenn Gould. CBS Masterworks digital (new series) IM 37779” in *San Francisco Examiner* (Dec. 21, 1982).

⁴⁰ By Kevin Bazzana and Peter Ostwald, respectively.

The central myth of Gould as a spiritual force and moral teacher is foreshadowed in some of his earliest self-representations. Journalistic interest in Gould in North America exploded following the critical success of his 1956 debut recording for Columbia Records of Bach's Goldberg Variations, and Gould used these new media opportunities to differentiate himself as a colourful and independent-minded young prodigy. In the press literature from 1956-1961, we are confronted with a Gould who says he can 'play like a god' in moments of high emotion, who believes in supernatural phenomena, who is constantly distracted by the 'mental music' which visits him uninvited, who strives for perfect performances, who condemns the use of the pedal in piano music as 'vulgar', who expresses his horror at the hunting and killing of animals, and who forthrightly espouses his moral objections to the live concert.⁴¹ Gould's dozen-or-so television appearances also helped disseminate the theological narrative, as images of Gould's 'ecstatic' platform manner reached into North American homes.⁴² From 1961 onwards, Gould began to script his television and radio appearances, and address the wider social implications of his musical thought.⁴³ In his first major American publication, 'Let's Ban Applause!' (1962), Gould provided his most forceful denunciation yet of the competitive norms of concert life, gave his most concrete summation of his moral vision of music, and introduced a new theme: the moral power of technology.⁴⁴ For Gould, public musical performance sponsored a view of music as a vehicle for spectacle and personal display, whereas the private experience of home audition through radio, recording, and television allowed for music to fulfil its true, moral mission: namely, 'the gradual, life-long construction of a state of wonder and serenity' in which 'each man contemplatively create his

⁴¹ Jock Carroll, "I don't think I'm at all eccentric" in *Weekend Magazine*, Vol. 6, No. 27 (1956); Dennis Braithwaite, "I'm a child of nature" in *Toronto Daily Star* (Mar. 28, 1959); Alfred Bester, "The Zany Genius of Glenn Gould" (1964).

⁴² "He rocks, groans, his eyes roll back like those of a medieval ecstatic" (Laurence Shames, "Glenn Gould: Music by an Offbeat Pianist" in *The Esquire Music Review*, Vol. 96, No. 6 (Win., 1981-2)).

⁴³ Gould became known to Canadian viewing audiences as a musical educator in a series of groundbreaking television specials for the CBC, beginning with *The Subject is Beethoven* for the *Festival 61* series (Feb. 6, 1961). The first of Gould's radio documentaries, *Arnold Schoenberg – The Man Who Changed Music*, was broadcast on CBC Radio on the series *CBC Wednesday Night* on August 8, 1962.

⁴⁴ Glenn Gould, "Let's Ban Applause!" in *Musical America*, Vol. 82, No. 2 (Feb., 1962).

own divinity'.⁴⁵ Also arguing for the link between the prima donna temperament and 'the vulgar artistic hostility of sun-baked societies' as represented in an Italian operatic tradition, Gould first set out here his philosophical stall regarding the connection between musical taste, national geography, and moral character.⁴⁶

After his concert retirement in 1964, Gould became known in the media as a 'philosopher of the recording'.⁴⁷ What scholar Juha Markus Mantere has described as Gould's 'technological ethics' combined the theological reading of music and technology articulated by French-Catholic religious thinkers, the sociological and psychological perspectives on the media advanced by contemporary Canadian theorist Marshall McLuhan, and Gould's own idiosyncratic thinking.⁴⁸ Gould's highly original recording philosophy has generated much scholarly attention and has kept his name alive through colloquia, media conferences, journal papers, and books devoted to its study.⁴⁹ For the purposes of showing how the idea of technology provided an important ideological canvas for conveying Gould's identity as a spiritual force and moral teacher, I will briefly address some of this philosophy's core themes as represented by Gould in his media work.

Gould sees a moral distinction in the way music is performed and experienced in a live concert versus on a recording. The social organisation of concert life is problematic in that the elevated personal and creative status of performers within the socio-musical hierarchy foregrounds their identity at the expense of the music they perform.⁵⁰ This encourages egotistic, competitive, and hostile behaviours which are psychologically and spiritually

⁴⁵ Ibid., 11.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ Richard Kostelanetz, "The Glenn Gould Variations" in *Esquire* (Nov., 1967).

⁴⁸ Juha Markus Mantere, "The Gould Variations: Technology, Philosophy, and Criticism in Glenn Gould's Musical Thought and Practices" (PhD Dissertation; Frankfurt Am Main: Peter Lang, 2012). The nature of Gould's interaction with these thinkers is addressed in Chapter V.

⁴⁹ The most thorough-going analyses can be found in Elizabeth Angilette, *Philosopher at the Keyboard: Glenn Gould* (New Jersey: Scarecrow Press, 1992) and Juha Markus Mantere, "The Gould Variations" (2012).

⁵⁰ Gould talked of "the great schism brought about by the expanding specialization within the musical hierarchy". See Glenn Gould, "An Argument for Music in the Electronic Age" in *Varsity Graduate*, Vol. 11, No. 3 (Dec., 1964).

damaging and undermine their responsibility to the music and to themselves as musical communicators and moral beings. Drawing on McLuhan's ideas about the role of the media as agents of social transformation, Teilhard's views of the technological network as a form of spiritual consciousness, and Le Moyne's concept of the 'charity of the machine', Gould believed that the recording media could transform the social organisation of high art culture and unleash the moral potential of music and humankind by fostering a serene and contemplative environment for artistic appreciation.⁵¹ 'I believe in "the intrusion" of technology', Gould famously wrote, 'because . . . that intrusion imposes upon art a notion of morality which transcends the idea of art itself'.⁵² He felt that the collaborative nature of studio work and the increasing technological sophistication of home playback devices blurred the boundaries of creative responsibility within the musical hierarchy, reducing the ego-driven pressures on the performer, and empowering the listener.⁵³ The creative empowerment of the home listener he felt was 'the most fundamental change that is being occasioned by the electronic presentation of music', contrasting it with the mindless conformism of the concert crowd.⁵⁴ Music could be experienced more directly, more profoundly, and more personally, owing to the private circumstances of home audition, the supposed elimination of identity factors as influencers of musical judgment, and the perfectibility of music as sound and structure afforded by the editing capabilities of recording technology. The ultimate purpose of recording was to create a 'one-to-one relationship between performer and listener', and performer/listener and work, which restored 'something of that instantaneous spiritual involvement which . . . the coming of the renaissance short-circuited'.⁵⁵ This was 'a shared

⁵¹ Gould quotes both McLuhan and Le Moyne in his major essays on recording. See "Dialogue on the Prospects of Recording" in *Varsity Graduate: Explorations*, Vol. 11, No. 5 (Apr., 1965); and "An Epistle To The Parisians: Music and Technology, Part I" in *Piano Quarterly*, Vol. 23, No. 88 (Win., 1974-5).

⁵² Glenn Gould, "Music and Technology" (1974-5), 18.

⁵³ "Dialogue on the Prospects of Recording" (1965).

⁵⁴ Glenn Gould, "An Argument for Music in the Electronic Age", 124.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 126.

innerness' which Gould referred to as 'ecstasy', and which prefigured a transformation of the soul and redemption of the moral order.⁵⁶

In his mature media interviews, Gould spoke of possessing 'a missionary zeal' when discussing musical recordings, guided by his belief that they can 'change lives'.⁵⁷ Gould's 'technological ethics' were incarnated in his press identity in numerous ways. The paradoxical image of a reclusive, ethereal genius deeply invested in the very-human activity of communicating with others through the media was a primary motif, conveyed through stories of Gould's preference for social interaction via the telephone.⁵⁸ Journalist Peter Goddard suggested that Gould's media work had allowed him to uncover 'the human potential in his art'.⁵⁹ Beyond his preference for over-the-air communication, the pianist's 'yearning for transcendence' through his recordings confirmed the idea of a spiritual artist and Platonist who used studio editing techniques to overcome the human imperfections and fallibilities of live performance and distil 'the crystalline, disembodied idea of the music'.⁶⁰

His moral views on technology reached the greatest audience through his CBC radio specials, broadcast on the national networks. These included *Dialogues on the Prospects of Recording* (1965) and *On the Moog Synthesiser* (1968).⁶¹ The programmes saw Gould in conversation with high-profile media artists and thinkers such as Marshall McLuhan and Walter Carlos, the latter having risen to public prominence with his renditions for electronic synthesiser of Bach's keyboard music in his album *Switched-on Bach* (1968). The Columbia LP *Glenn Gould: Concert Dropout* (1968) was also another important conversational 'position paper' on the media, distributed as a bonus disc with Gould's piano recording of Beethoven's Fifth Symphony (1968). Gould also appeared as technologist on CBC Television in the personality

⁵⁶ A discussion of Gould's idea of "ecstasy" is provided in Geoffrey Payzant, *Music & Mind*, 65-69.

⁵⁷ Barclay McMillan, programme from CBC Radio series *Mostly Music* (Oct. 23, 1980); Glenn Gould, "Rubinstein" in *Look*, Vol. 35, No. 5 (Mar. 9, 1971).

⁵⁸ E.g. Richard Kostelanetz, "The Glenn Gould Variations" (1967); Norman Snider, "Glenn Gould at 45".

⁵⁹ Peter Goddard, "Glenn Gould is a conjurer" in *The Canadian Composer*, No. 68 (Mar., 1972).

⁶⁰ Laurence Shames, "Glenn Gould: Music by an Offbeat Pianist" (1981-2).

⁶¹ All sources cited in this paragraph are referenced fully in the Bibliography.

profile *Variations on Glenn Gould* (1969) and on the programme *Sound or Unsound* for Yehudi Menuhin's *Music of Man* series (1979). His writings on the subject appeared most frequently in the magazines *High Fidelity* and *Piano Quarterly*, musical periodicals of modest circulation in both Canada and the United States.⁶²

Gould also used his media appearances to discourse on the topic of spirituality, religion, and morality in more general terms. While the nature of Gould's religious faith has been another topic that his biographers have puzzled over, to journalist Elyse Mach the pianist spoke of his 'tremendously strong sense' in an afterlife.⁶³ As early as 1956 it was being reported that Gould 'had no time for vices', and after 1964 Gould liked to identify as 'the last Puritan' owing to his reputation as 'an anti-athletic, non-concert-going teetotaler'.⁶⁴ Gould's retelling of his childhood experiences playing the organ gave him opportunity to reflect on his Presbyterian-Methodist upbringing and his view of churches as a tranquil recluse from frenetic city living.⁶⁵

Gould's 'theological' identity was also conveyed through a discourse of 'North'. Beginning with his 1967 radio documentary *The Idea of North*, this discourse became central to his self-representation as an artist, philosopher, and public personality in his writings, recordings, and images.⁶⁶ One CBS press report described 'North' as 'the philosophy and core of who Glenn Gould is'.⁶⁷ In the posthumous reception literature, argues Sherrill E. Grace, it has functioned

⁶² E.g. "The Prospects of Recording" (Apr., 1966); "An Epistle to the Parisians: Music and Technology" (Win., 1974-5); "What the Recording Process Means to Me" in *High Fidelity*, Vol. 33, No. 1 (Jan., 1983).

⁶³ Elyse Mach, *Great Contemporary Pianists Speak for Themselves* (New York: Dodd, Mead & Co., 1980), 109.

⁶⁴ Gladys Shenner, "The genius who doesn't want to play"; John McGreevy (dir.), *Glenn Gould's Toronto*.

⁶⁵ John McGreevy (dir.), *Glenn Gould's Toronto*.

⁶⁶ Glenn Gould, *The Idea of North* in the CBC *Ideas* series. CBC radio (Dec. 28, 1967). The documentary was prefaced by remarks from Gould, in which he explained what North meant to him personally (see "'The Idea of North': An Introduction" in Tim Page (ed.), *Glenn Gould Reader*, 391-394). Gould clarified his ideas on North in *Glenn Gould: Concert Dropout. In Conversation with John McClure*. LP. Columbia Masterworks BS 15 (Apr. 3, 1968). He appeared as a Northerner in the album art for his Columbia recordings (e.g. MS 7413 (1970)), and performed the music of "Northern" composers (e.g. that of Sibelius in M 34555 (1977)). He developed Northern themes in his television programmes (e.g. *Variations on Glenn Gould* (1969)), in his two-series radio show *The Art of Glenn Gould* (1966-67 and 1969), and in interviews.

⁶⁷ Susan Koscis, "Glenn Gould Biography". CBS Records promotional copy (1982).

as ‘the governing metaphor for the man himself’.⁶⁸ Gould followed in a long line of Canadian artists and cultural thinkers – among whom the ‘Group of Seven’ landscape painters and playwright Herman Voaden – who were fascinated by the symbolism of ‘North’ as a commentary on Canadian identity.⁶⁹ For Gould, this meant conceiving of ‘North’ as an ideological commentary on his aesthetic positions and repertoire preferences, on his personal commitments and social attitudes.⁷⁰ Believing that music was moral to the extent that it encouraged a turning inward of the soul, ‘North’ was an aesthetic category which identified the compositional practices and stylistic traits which Gould considered best able to achieve these ends. Music had to engage the mind and not the body.⁷¹ This was exemplified in a Northern European musical tradition, particularly the Austro-German schools, which ostensibly made a virtue of abstract, non-sensual, rational, and structural approaches to musical writing.⁷² Music that was overly dependent on instrumental technique or sonority for its compositional effects, or that was programmatic, theatrical, or excessively virtuosic betrayed an idealistic orientation, and was to be denounced.⁷³ Gould absorbed the works of middle-period Beethoven, of late-period Mozart, and of the various Russian schools into this scheme, but ultimately came to identify this aesthetic orientation most with ‘Southern’ values, and particularly with an Italian operatic tradition.⁷⁴ He saw musical outlook as a reflection of national character and climate – a stance with questionable racial overtones, as the North becomes equated with the ‘cool’, the logical, and the cerebral, and the South with the ‘hot’,

⁶⁸ Sherrill E. Grace, *Canada and the Idea of North* (Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2001/7), 13.

⁶⁹ The “Group of Seven”, most active in the years 1920-1933, mythologised the Canadian landscape through their work, and in so doing laid the foundations for a discourse of Canadian national identity built upon an idea of the nation as place and space. Herman Voaden (1903-1991) wrote plays which envisioned a mystical, sublime North.

⁷⁰ E.g. Glenn Gould, “‘The Idea of North’: An Introduction”. Liner notes. CBC Learning Systems T-56997 (1967); Perry Rosemond (dir.), *Variations on Glenn Gould* in the *Telescope* series for CBC Television (May 8, 1969).

⁷¹ “I’m primarily interested in art that communicates spiritually . . . I’m essentially suspicious of art that communicates on a primarily sensual level”. In Tony Thomas, “Glenn Gould” in *Canadian Stereo Guide*, Vol. 2, No. 3 (Sum., 1973), 52.

⁷² Juha Markus Mantere, “The Gould Variations”, 205; Kevin Bazzana, *Performer in the Work*, 33.

⁷³ Gould spoke of the “worldly grime” of Scarlatti sonatas, of the “empty gestures”, “theatrical figurations” and “hedonistic quality” of early Romantic music. See Barclay McMillan, *Mostly Music*.

⁷⁴ Monteverdi, as a composer of “Southern Europe”, was “gauche, artless, and predictable” (Glenn Gould, “William Byrd and Orlando Gibbons”. Liner notes from Columbia M 30825 (1971)).

the impulsive, and the corporeal.⁷⁵ Gould clarified the distinction by drawing on Canadian national mythology, which has represented the Canadian wilderness as, among other things, ‘an interior landscape’ and ‘a place of spiritual rejuvenation and clarity’.⁷⁶ By presenting himself as a ‘northern artist’, Gould and his performances came to be seen as embodying these national traits.

In Gould’s social thinking, to go North was to go on a journey of personal and intellectual discovery by renouncing society or the urban lifestyle, a journey which could be undertaken literally (as in stories of Gould’s ‘retreat’ to his secluded cottage in Northern Ontario, or his visits to the quaint northern town of Wawa), or in the mind of the individual.⁷⁷ But when mobilised to clarify Gould’s identity as a moral teacher, northern rhetoric could also appeal to the idea of renewed participation. Just as Gould’s ‘technological ethics’ rely on a notion of the media as a conduit for meaningful musical communication and transcendent experience, so too does the moral power of a conceptual ‘North’ rely on the idea of nature as mediating the contact between the individual and the divine. As sound theorist Jonathan Alexander writes, while the theme of northern solitude is incarnated in Gould’s work (considered later), so too is that of ‘interconnectedness’, of ‘one’s deep connectedness to the earth and to others’.⁷⁸

Alexander’s statement provides a first intimation of the contradictions inherent in Gould’s identity.

⁷⁵ Juha Markus Mantere draws parallels between Gould’s binary aesthetic and ethical distinctions and those of Eduard Hanslick, Nietzsche, and Canadian musical contemporary R. Murray Schafer (Juha Markus Mantere, “The Gould Variations”, 194-202).

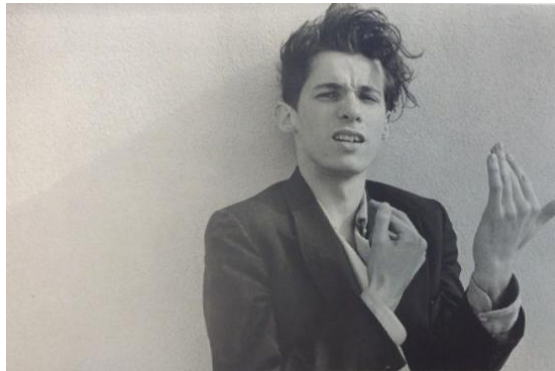
⁷⁶ Laura Grey, “The Idea of North: Sibelius, Gould, and Symbolic Landscapes” in *The Conrad Grebel Review*, Vol. 28, No. 1 (Win., 2010). See <https://uwaterloo.ca/grebel/publications/conrad-grebel-review/issues/winter-2010/idea-north-sibelius-gould-and-symbolic-landscapes#2> (accessed Mar. 10, 2018).

⁷⁷ Glenn Gould, “‘The Idea of North’: An Introduction”. Gould is represented in terms of pastoral and northern imagery as early as 1956, in Gladys Shenner, “The genius who doesn’t want to play”; and Jock Carroll, “I don’t think I’m at all eccentric”. The trope of northern retreat is established as a primary motif in the NFB film *Glenn Gould: Off the Record* (1959), as the film explores the tensions between Gould’s life as a recording artist in New York City and his attachment to Canadian cottage country.

⁷⁸ Jonathan Alexander, “Glenn Gould and the Rhetorics of Sound” in *Computers and Composition*, Vol. 37 (2015), 83.

Narrative II: Gould the Bad

Fig. D



I preface my discussion of another aspect of Gould's identity with remarks from two American journalists, both of whom contributed profiles of Gould in the last years of his life. In her book *Great Contemporary Pianists Speak for Themselves* (1980), Elyse Mach introduces Gould as follows:

Just about everything concerning Glenn Gould is, to say the least, unconventional. He is practically self-taught [. . .] His lifestyle is more than unconventional. He defies tradition in his views toward his instrument, classical music, and the whole aura that surrounds the usual concept of the world of the classical pianist.⁷⁹

In 'Glenn Gould: Music by an Offbeat Pianist' (1981), Laurence Shames expands on the nature of Gould's iconoclasm, and links it to broader issues of his musical reception:

[Gould] is that rarest of birds: a reckless classicist, a rollicking highbrow. He plays the piano the way he damn well pleases, and people respond to him accordingly; no classical musician of our time has been the recipient of more wildly disparate reviews.⁸⁰

These texts contribute to the narrative of Gould as a figure of rebellion whose unconventionality has, for good or ill, altered the cultural perception of what a classical artist is and does. It situates Gould within a tradition of 'Longinian' representations of genius which

⁷⁹ Elyse Mach, *Great Contemporary Pianists Speak for Themselves*, 89.

⁸⁰ Laurence Shames, "Glenn Gould: Music by an Offbeat Pianist", 102.

musicologist Peter Kivy argues has historically framed the reception of great musical figures such as Handel and Beethoven by valorising their subversive originality and creative agency.⁸¹ Gould's creative greatness is considered the cause and effect of his solitary disposition and independence of mind, themes which are articulated through the rhetoric of the recording studio as a controlled and hermetic environment conducive to creative experiment, and of 'North' as a metaphor for self-empowerment and self-discovery through social isolation.

Analysis of Gould's earliest concert reception in the Canadian press reveals how his idiosyncratic platform manner and musical interpretations caught the attention of critics from the very start of his career.⁸² However, as Carr's semiotic analyses have demonstrated, the conscious self/promotion of Gould as a rebellious figure did not begin until 1955, when his signing with corporate giant Columbia Records augured radical new approaches to the selling of the pianist which exploited broader trends in the entertainment industry and society at large.⁸³ These approaches were nevertheless rooted in an appreciation of Gould's highly eccentric musical personality, which his hugely popular debut recording of Bach's Goldberg Variations established as the primary context for his cultural reception.

Columbia's marketing of Gould as rebel reflected the increasing permeability of notions of 'high' and 'low' in North American culture, and the allure of a 'midcult' aesthetic capable of driving sales and consumption of 'serious culture' to a burgeoning middle-class arts demographic through engaging and accessible content.⁸⁴ Bell argues that Gould's images in

⁸¹ Peter Kivy, *The Possessor and the Possessed: Handel, Mozart, Beethoven, and the Idea of Musical Genius* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001), 26. Longinus was a Greek author from the first century whose work *On the Sublime* was rediscovered and re-interpreted by eighteenth-century writers on aesthetics, notably Kant in his *Critique of Judgment* (1790).

⁸² At his professional concerto debut in 1947, aged fourteen, Gould was chided for his "incipient mannerisms" and "disturbing fidgeting". See Pearl McCarthy, "Schools concert program pleases, Heinze conducts" in *Globe & Mail* (Jan. 15, 1947).

⁸³ Graham Carr, "Visualizing 'The Sound of Genius'", 33.

⁸⁴ The "midcult" phenomenon was famously critiqued by American essayist Dwight Macdonald (1906-1982). See his essays in John Summers (ed.), *Masscult and Midcult: Essays Against the American Grain* (New York: New York Review Books, 2011).

the mid-Fifties ‘combined elements of identity not previously seen in classical music’.⁸⁵ His debut album was one of the first to feature photographs of the recording artist as cover art, and he was marketed like a pop music icon. Images and texts played up his youthful good looks, casual mode of dress, and extravagant platform manner; dwelt on the contradictions in Gould’s public and private life; and glorified his rebellious and controversial lifestyle and musical approach. Combining the cerebral with the glamorous and the refreshingly irreverent, Gould was at once square, hip, and soulful, helping further expand the audience for classical music by overturning the ‘longhair’ assumptions commonly associated with the genre. He was a favourite with Fifties’ Beatniks, with suburban intellectuals, with cool jazz and rock enthusiasts, and with teenagers who identified such figures as Gould, James Dean, and Elvis Presley with the values of an incipient counterculture.⁸⁶ To Peter Goddard, he was ‘an adult playing out a teen dream of stardom with rock ‘n’ rollers moves scaled for a classical music concert’. His sex appeal was ‘subversive because it was deemed to be off-limits’.⁸⁷

From 1956, Gould cultivated his rebellious identity via his media self-representations. By doing so, he was staking his ground to originality, and providing ballast to his reputation as an entirely new phenomenon in classical music. He spoke of his refusal to follow the advice of his teachers and his tendency to isolate himself from ‘colleagial influence’; his disdain for ‘rules and regulations’; his ‘rebellious’ attitude towards live concert performance, to his own career as a performer, and to ‘encrusted tradition[s]’ of performance practice; his indifference to the piano as an instrument, to piano music as a genre, and to most of the standard piano repertoire; and his admiration for Toronto as a city outside the cultural mainstream.⁸⁸ He milked his reputation for eccentricity, marking his social difference through his shabby

⁸⁵ Alana Bell, “The Lives of Glenn Gould”, 28.

⁸⁶ Alfred Bester, “The Zany Genius of Glenn Gould”; Arved Ashby, *Absolute Music*, 132; Kevin Bazzana, *Wondrous Strange*, 156.

⁸⁷ Peter Goddard, *The Great Gould*, 95.

⁸⁸ Vincent Tovell, “10 Minutes with Glenn Gould”. CBC Television. Mar. 13, 1962; Norman Snider, “Glenn Gould at 45”; Betty Lee, “The Odd, Restless Way of Glenn Gould” in *The Globe Magazine* (Dec. 1, 1962); Alfred Bester, “The Zany Genius of Glenn Gould”; Elyse Mach, *Great Contemporary Pianists*; John McGreevy (dir.), *Glenn Gould’s Toronto*.

clothing and a range of colourful musical props (notably his custom performing chair, but also a rug for his feet, and even on one occasion a gas mask to suppress his infamous musical humming). Claiming his personal and professional independence from his former teacher – the Chilean-born pianist Alberto Guerrero – helped to feed his image as a self-driven artist with a completely original musical approach and temperament (‘even Paderewski worked under a teacher’, wrote Gladys Shenner).⁸⁹ This laid the groundwork for characterisations of Gould in the press as, for example, ‘an apostle of non-conformity’, ‘Bach’s bad boy’, ‘a classical Brando’, an ‘iconoclast of the keyboard’, and a ‘singular’ pianist.⁹⁰ At the start of his concert career, he was introduced to the American public as a ‘reluctant pianist’ who ‘would rather make records than give concerts – and would much rather compose than do either’.⁹¹ Stories of Gould’s attempts to sue Steinway (a company to which he was affiliated as a performer), his supposed altercations with Leonard Bernstein over his infamous 1962 concert performance of Brahms’ First Piano Concerto with the New York Philharmonic, not to mention the critical backlash his performances received from powerful establishment critics such as Harold C. Schonberg, cemented his reputation as ‘music’s problem child’.⁹²

With his retirement from live performance in 1964, after just nine years of international touring, Gould rebelled against the popular assumption that a successful musical career was reliant on the publicity and income generated on the concert circuit. His view that the musical recording was an autonomous art form, perfectible via the creative use of technology, and not just a surrogate of the concert experience, marked a radical departure from the aesthetic and ontological premises underpinning the prevailing discourse of musical recording in the classical tradition. In his later years, his solitary lifestyle and closely guarded private life

⁸⁹ Gladys Shenner, “The genius who doesn’t want to play”, 102.

⁹⁰ Arthur Darack, “Glenn Gould is apostle of non-conformity”; Tim Page, “Glenn Gould: Bach’s Bad Boy” in *Soho News*, Vol. 8, No. 8 (Nov.-Dec., 1980); Paul Stewart, “Gould: bio of a classical Brando” in *Excalibur* (Oct. 12, 1978); Annalyn Swan, “Music: Iconoclast of the keyboard” in *Newsweek* (Oct., 1982); Carmen Elsner, “Gould is singular; moves with music” in *Madison State Journal* (Nov. 4, 1961).

⁹¹ Gordon Parks, “Music World’s Young Wonder”.

⁹² John H. Harvey, “Music’s problem child” in *Pioneer Press* (Jul. 8, 1962).

seemed to suggest a kind of rebellion against society and fame itself. Having rebranded himself a musical philosopher and media artist who concerned himself with the pursuit of intellectual and musical ideals, his rebelliousness could serve the ends of abstraction. As Bazzana has claimed, ‘the most basic premiss of Gould’s aesthetic was that music is primarily mental and only secondarily physical’, and an idealistic bias is reflected in his mature media statements that he had ‘never . . . written one single fingering into a score’, and that he did ‘almost no practicing at all’.⁹³ After 1964, his writings, his experimental work in radio, recording, and television, but also his brief forays into film composition and conducting, painted a picture of a career ‘that def[ied] the strictures of the ultraspecialized musician’s role’.⁹⁴

In the previous section, I argued that the theological narrative of Gould had a basis in his own artistic thinking. He held that music could contribute to the spiritual and moral elevation of society if the radical implications of recording technology as a vehicle of meaningful communication were acknowledged in the performance and reception of musical works. Gould’s northern identity also linked the issues of spirituality, morality and communication: contact with nature encouraged introspection and replenished the soul. Gould’s notion of ‘ecstasy’ connoted the idea of communication and community by suggesting a process by which the individual dissolves his/herself and forms a spiritual ‘oneness’ with the universe.⁹⁵ Gould’s technological ethics also incorporated elements of his discourse on the role of artistic solitude and creativity, but since his cultural reception as a spiritual figure and redeemer has, understandably, emphasised the themes of communication and morality, I have focused on these dimensions of his work in my analysis.

⁹³ Kevin Bazzana, *Performer in the Work*, 11; Jim Aikin, “Provocative Insights from a Controversial Classical Pianist” in *Contemporary Keyboard*, Vol. 6, No. 8 (Aug., 1980). Reproduced in John P. L. Roberts, *The Art of Glenn Gould*; Elyse Mach, *Great Contemporary Pianists*, 108.

⁹⁴ Laurence Shames, “Glenn Gould: Music by an Offbeat Pianist”, 102. Gould provided the soundtrack for George Roy Hill’s film *Slaughterhouse-Five* (1972) and the more obscure Canadian film *The Wars* (1983), the latter based on Timothy Findley’s novel of the same name and directed by Robin Phillips. Gould conducted a chamber performance of Wagner’s *Siegfried Idyll* in Toronto in August 1982.

⁹⁵ Geoffrey Payzant, *Glenn Gould, Music & Mind*, 64.

The narrative of Gould as rebel is more closely aligned with his discourses on solitude and creativity. Once again, these discourses were primarily articulated via northern and technological rhetorics and iconographies in his interviews, writings, and broadcasts. As Bazzana and Mantere have suggested, this topic gets to the heart of Gould's relationship to issues of tradition and authenticity.⁹⁶ Believing in the transformative power of art on human lives, Gould cultivated a view that individuals should form an intensely personal relationship with music. His humanist vision held that each individual should strive for personal authenticity through music, a Rousseauian 'sentiment of being', independent of the values, opinions, and demands of others.⁹⁷ The special duty of composers, performers, and listeners to themselves led Gould to privilege their creative role and authority, and thus to denounce the commonplace notion that the nature or value of art and the artistic process resided in authenticity to a composer's intentions, to a performance tradition, received aesthetic opinion, or fashionable cause.⁹⁸ It was, in Gould's view:

[A]n ultimate argument of individuality – that man can create his own synthesis of time without being bound by the conformities that time imposes.⁹⁹

As reflected in Gould's idiosyncratic interpretations and public statements, he advanced a critical framework for musical appreciation and performance which posited the work as a self-contained aesthetic structure, detached from its social and historical contexts of production. Understood as a social and aesthetic category, solitude was the pre-requisite for creativity and the condition of independent critical judgment which Gould felt had been fatally undermined by the concert experience. In this sense, the truly creative artist was in a permanent state of rebellion. Like Richard Strauss, whom Gould polemically defended on account of his

⁹⁶ Kevin Bazzana, *Performer in the Work*, 62; Juha Markus Mantere, "The Gould Variations", 64-73.

⁹⁷ Kevin Bazzana, *Performer in the Work*, 62.

⁹⁸ Bernard Asbell, "An Interview with Glenn Gould"; Glenn Gould, "An Argument for Richard Strauss" in *High Fidelity*, Vol. 12, No. 3 (Mar., 1962); Glenn Gould, "Piano Music by Grieg and Bizet, with a Confidential Caution to Critics". Liner notes for Columbia M 32040 (1973).

⁹⁹ Glenn Gould, "An Argument for Richard Strauss", 111.

ostensibly anti-Zeitgeist worldview, Gould was ‘the existential character who flings himself unquestioningly against the world’.¹⁰⁰

Gould channelled this discourse through his technological self-representations. ‘The ultimate gift of electronic culture to art’, he wrote, ‘will be a total re-thinking of the nature of individuality’.¹⁰¹ It encouraged the kind of creative play that he considered central to his aesthetic. The ability of the performer and listener to form individualised responses to the music was allowed by the isolated circumstances of studio work and home listening, and reflected a radical ontology of recordings as ‘to a certain degree timeless . . . outside of history, outside of a particular environmental context’.¹⁰² Against the passivity and conformism of the concert artist, the recording artist was a free agent whose creative vision was complemented by recording techniques which enabled new possibilities for artistic experiment and control. Against the ‘sweaty mass response’ of the concert crowd, the home listener was a ‘creative listener’ whose reactions were ‘shot full of unique insights’ owing to the apparent ability of recordings to divest the act of aesthetic judgment from considerations of a performer’s identity, or a sense of social or historical occasion.¹⁰³ Press caricatures of Gould as a cloistered studio artist confirmed his reputation as a social rebel.¹⁰⁴ Forging new creative paths via his experimental studio aesthetics, Gould’s rebelliousness became most associated with his unorthodox musical recordings. To one disgruntled critic, he was ‘the punk-classic figure who murdered Mozart on disc’.¹⁰⁵

Some of the most striking images of Gould as rebel were the ones that drew on the symbolic power of ‘North’.¹⁰⁶ Since 1956, Gould had used the print media to promote his views on the links between creativity and isolation, and journalists were happy to provide visual

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., 110.

¹⁰¹ Glenn Gould, “An Argument for Music in the Electronic Age”, 126-7.

¹⁰² Elyse Mach, *Great Contemporary Pianists Speak for Themselves*, 92.

¹⁰³ Betty Lee, “The Odd, Restless Way of Glenn Gould”, 11.

¹⁰⁴ Alfred Bester, “The Zany Genius of Glenn Gould”; William Littler, “‘Retired’ pianist Glenn Gould is busier than ever”.

¹⁰⁵ Royal S. Brown, “A Boo for the Boos of Glenn Gould” in *Fanfare*, Vol. 6, No. 3 (Jan., 1983), 65.

¹⁰⁶ For example, the cover art to his album of Beethoven sonatas MS 7413 (1970).

correlatives to Gould's statements.¹⁰⁷ Bell has demonstrated how this discourse assumed a pastoral character beginning in 1959 with the two NFB documentaries made about Gould.¹⁰⁸ Gould appears to have first made this connection more explicit in an interview with CBC producer Vincent Tovell shortly after the release of the films. Here he speaks of the 'tremendous relief' of being completely alone in his northern cottage retreat, and suggests his productivity improves during the winter months.¹⁰⁹ His 1967 radio documentary *The Idea of North* – considered by Gould an 'autobiographical statement' – established the important function of 'North' as an allegorical commentary on 'the relationship of isolation and solitude to one's productive capacity . . . to one's life in the world'.¹¹⁰ For musicologist Laura Grey, the trope of Gould as Northerner harnesses the mythic notion of an 'untouched and uncultivated wilderness', associating Gould's rebelliousness with the archetype of the genius spurning tradition or convention.¹¹¹ In Gould's mature self-representations, 'North' symbolised the journey towards self-awareness and self-knowledge entered on by rebelling against the conformist pressures of 'Southern' life.¹¹² Encouraged by Gould himself, journalists developed a picture of the pianist's life and work which absorbed and extended his northern rhetoric and iconography, positioning him as a national icon, and an artist as radical in his creative approach as in his dealings with the media.

¹⁰⁷ Jock Carroll, "I don't think I'm at all eccentric"; Gladys Shenner, "The genius who doesn't want to play".

¹⁰⁸ Bell contends that the films mobilised an idea of the Canadian landscape "not [as] a void . . . but a fertile space for developing musical thinking". See Alana Bell, "The Lives of Glenn Gould", 165.

¹⁰⁹ Vincent Tovell, "At Home with Glenn Gould".

¹¹⁰ Kevin Bazzana, *Wondrous Strange*, 300; Glenn Gould letter to Helen Whitney, Sep. 3, 1971.

¹¹¹ Laura Grey, "The Idea of North".

¹¹² E.g. by rejecting urban routines or social fads. See John McGreevy (dir.), *Glenn Gould's Toronto*; Perry Rosemond (dir.), *Variations on Glenn Gould*.

Narrative III: Gould the Mad

Fig. E



Journalist Tim Page has spoken of ‘the popular impression of Gould as haunted neurotic, moping nobly through life, doomed and misunderstood’.¹¹³ In his influential biography of the pianist, Kevin Bazzana reflects on the ‘obsessional, schizoid, and narcissistic traits’ seen to characterise Gould’s mythologised personality.¹¹⁴ Gould’s social phobias, hypochondria, and eccentric behaviours have even nourished a genre of psychobiography, one which explores the nature of his creative genius through questions of his mental well-being.¹¹⁵ He has been labelled ‘a tortured soul’ whose ‘tremendous psychological and physical challenges’ were aggravated by a series of personal failures and tragedies, including the breakdown of his most important romantic relationship in 1973, and the death of his mother in 1975.¹¹⁶ Gould becomes ‘the genius ultimately undone by madness’, his tragic premature death at age fifty the inevitable consequence of his mental and physical decline.¹¹⁷

Like the narrative of Gould as rebel, the narrative of Gould as madman dwells on the themes of the artist’s isolation, creativity, and individuality. In Bell’s view, however, biographers

¹¹³ Tim Page and Yo-Yo Ma, *Glenn Gould: A Life in Pictures* (Canada: Doubleday, 2002), 39.

¹¹⁴ Kevin Bazzana, *Wondrous Strange*, 39.

¹¹⁵ See Peter Ostwald, *Ecstasy and Tragedy of Genius*; Helen Mesaros, *Bravo Fortissimo Glenn Gould: The Mind of a Canadian Virtuoso* (Maryland: Heritage Special Edition American Literary Press, 2008). Both authors are professional psychiatrists, and Ostwald’s work is prefaced with comments from neurologist Oliver Sacks.

¹¹⁶ Rhona Bergman, *The Idea of Gould*, 221; Alana Bell, “The Lives of Glenn Gould”, 133.

¹¹⁷ Alana Bell, “The Lives of Glenn Gould”, 140.

have tended to represent his isolation less as self-imposed than as forced upon him by the fact of his unique psychology. She cites the work of Michael Clarkson, whose exposé of Gould's romantic life portrays an artist unable to sustain meaningful relationships with women owing to his neuroses and borderline 'psychotic' tendencies.¹¹⁸ In such accounts, his creative genius is rooted less in his iconoclasm – as an artist self-consciously striving to push artistic boundaries – than in his innate, peculiar characteristics of mind, or in habits inherited from his mother. For Bell, then, biographical representations which play up the idea of Gould's madness have greater affinity to the 'theological' narrative of Gould in that his creative powers and eccentricities are more likely to be conceived as something lying outside of his direct control.¹¹⁹ As a genius, he is no longer the Longinian rule-breaker who invents new musical and technological forms by bending the old ones to his creative will, but the Platonist with unusual and inexplicable gifts. Bell supports this interpretation by noting that Gould's oddities of behaviour are typically invoked by biographers in the context of discussions of his genius as a musician (rather than as a thinker), where a discourse of the artist possessed by creative forces has had greater conceptual currency.¹²⁰ Unlike the previous two narratives, Bell suggests that the madman narrative, grounded in the myth of his health problems and neuroses, was 'not part of Gould's public construction of "Glenn Gould"' in his mature self-representations.¹²¹ While Gould could sometimes position himself as a Platonist when he wrote, for example, of the 'terrifying evaporation of inspiration which plagues the subconscious of all creative people', Gould never made the loss of control over his health into a public issue.¹²² Many of the narrative's elements were retroactively read into Gould's biography with the discovery of a personal diary and notepads Gould kept in the last years of

¹¹⁸ Alana Bell, "The Lives of Glenn Gould", 132. Clarkson's book is *The Secret Life of Glenn Gould: A Genius in Love* (Toronto: ECW Press, 2010).

¹¹⁹ Bell writes that Oswald's biography "works to eliminate the sense of control that Gould sought in both his life and work by suggesting that both his genius and eccentricity were inherited qualities" (p. 127).

¹²⁰ Bell has argued that biographer Otto Friedrich locates Gould's genius in his pianism and emphasises the "strangeness" of Gould's creative gifts "and the resulting strangeness of Gould himself" (p. 85).

¹²¹ Alana Bell, "The Lives of Glenn Gould", 57.

¹²² Glenn Gould, "An Argument for Richard Strauss", 110.

his life.¹²³ Here Gould obsessively and painstakingly recorded details of his sleeping patterns, blood pressure, and pill intake, and expressed alarm at the loss of control over his hand coordination and performance mechanism. Nevertheless, Gould's self-representations certainly provided impetus for the narrative: he spoke often of his hypochondria, his pill dependency, his idiosyncratic performance rituals, and his social phobias. According more with a Longinian view, Gould, through his technological and northern rhetoric, represented his eccentricity not as an inevitable and insurmountable condition of his strange genius, but as a lifestyle choice necessary to his arduous work ethic and philosophy of self-abnegation.

The idea of Gould's abnormality and suffering as an inescapable consequence of his innate creative genius was a prominent feature of his pre-1964 reception as a musician. Perhaps the earliest example is found in Shenner's article for *Maclean's* (1956), where the author talks of the 'curse' of Gould's genius: his inability to relate with others owing to his exceptional maturity.¹²⁴ A later article suggested that Gould's heightened sensitivity as a genius caused him to 'suffer' more when he 'made the slightest slip'.¹²⁵ Concert critics cultivated the familiar trope of Gould as emotional genius within this context, referring, for example, to his 'musical agony' and his 'ecstatic suffering'.¹²⁶ In 1982, Canadian journalist Eric McLean summarised the 'Platonic' perspective when he wrote that 'few people in Canadian history have been so isolated by their talents as was Glenn Gould'.¹²⁷

Bell bases her view of Gould's self-representation as a self-made Longinian genius on a series of press interviews the pianist conducted in the mid-Fifties.¹²⁸ Here Gould appears to deny the possibility that performers can be geniuses, given his opinions about the creative shortcomings of concert performance. He considers a concert career 'a kind of superficial

¹²³ These findings appear to have come to light with Friedrich's official biography.

¹²⁴ Gladys Shenner, "The genius who doesn't want to play".

¹²⁵ Hugh Thomson. Interview with Glenn Gould from the *Assignment* series. CBC Radio (Jul. 15, 1958).

¹²⁶ John E. Ferritto, "The Sound of Music: Gould brings both piano artistry, musical agony to Severance" in *Cleveland Sun Press* (May 11, 1961). Second quote is from Harold C. Schonberg via Peter Goddard in "Glenn Gould is a conjurer" (1972).

¹²⁷ Eric McLean, "The isolation of Glenn Gould: His genius set him apart" in *The Gazette* (Oct. 9, 1982).

¹²⁸ Alana Bell, "The Lives of Glenn Gould", 46-51. Notably Dennis Braithwaite, "I'm a child of nature".

thing’ and downplays his pianistic ability. He justifies his intended break from public performance on the grounds that a career as composer is more respectable and will afford him the creative freedom and authority that the artist should properly demand of him- or herself.¹²⁹ Following his retirement, and lack of success as a composer, Gould then justifies his career as a recording artist by re-conceiving of performance as an act of ‘re-creation’ rather than of mere interpretation, and of the recording studio as a site for artistic experiment and control.¹³⁰ Gould, as Longinian genius, ‘focus[es] on his own agency in his learning process, his groundbreaking musical interpretations, and his use of technology’.¹³¹

In his many media appearances, Gould showed a Longinian bias by claiming that his eccentric lifestyle was tailored to the demands of his work. ‘I’m alone . . . a lot, because the recording studio . . . provides me with the atmosphere to work productively’, he claimed.¹³² He avoided people because they were a source of ‘conflicting and contrasting’ opinions, he worked at night because he could make use of studio equipment without disturbance, he didn’t care much for food because eating was a waste of time and self-indulgent.¹³³

Nevertheless, Gould embellished his reputation as a sad, lonely, macabre genius, no more so than in his publicity shots for CBS from 1977-1982, where the framing of Gould’s gaunt figure against a series of stark visual backdrops introduced a darker element into his iconography.¹³⁴ His rhetoric of ‘North’ also emphasised such darker elements – quite literally – as he spoke of his wish to travel to the Canadian Arctic ‘to spend a winter in the dark’, and claimed that his ‘North’ radio documentaries explored ‘the dark night of the human soul’.¹³⁵ In François Girard’s famous film, the ‘dour’ and ‘woebegone’ character of Gould’s North is

¹²⁹ Bernard Asbell, “An Interview with Glenn Gould”; Dennis Braithwaite, “I’m a child of nature”.

¹³⁰ Jim Aikin, “Provocative Insights”, 272.

¹³¹ Alana Bell, “The Lives of Glenn Gould”, 46.

¹³² Elyse Mach, *Great Contemporary Pianists Speak for Themselves*, 107.

¹³³ Elyse Mach, *Great Contemporary Pianists Speak for Themselves*; Alfred Bester, “The Zany Genius of Glenn Gould”.

¹³⁴ E.g. the cover art to CBS Masterworks M 35891 (1980).

¹³⁵ Glenn Gould (pr. Andrew Kazdin), *Glenn Gould: Concert Dropout*. I would take issue with Georges Leroux’s claim that Gould “battled so intensely against melancholy that he filtered it out completely past representation”. See Georges Leroux, “The Representation of Genius” (1987?) in Ghyslaine Guertin (ed.), *Glenn Gould: Universe of a Genius* (Québec: Momentum Publishing, 2007).

made emblematic of the pianist himself, whose long and lonely journey across Canada's barren snowscapes gives a thematic unity to his biographical 'variations'.¹³⁶

Throughout his mature career, Gould was represented by journalists as the archetypal genius suffering for his art. By choice, Gould was totally committed to his work, and to the outside observer this involved some kind of cost. For Richard Kostelanetz, Gould's constant rehearsal of his public identity via the media had made a 'victim' of his ability to interact spontaneously with others.¹³⁷ William Littler was struck by the 'financial sacrifices' Gould was willing to make to pursue his media career.¹³⁸ He was ostensibly earning less than a concert artist, and spent many thousands on his home studio equipment. His work itself was a tremendous act of will, as he 'laboured' in the studio for many hours.¹³⁹ Gould gave 'little thought to the amenities of life', and journalists devoted paragraphs to evocative descriptions of Gould's 'primitive appearance', his 'informal and ill-matching clothes', and messy living conditions.¹⁴⁰ While these writers could refer to Gould's 'genuine and profound strangeness', many found a method in Gould's madness:

Gould's understanding of, and attachment to . . . isolation . . . is only a logical extension of his deliberate isolation from his concert audiences in the recording studio . . . which, in turn, was only a logical extension of the hermetic apartment-life he led in downtown Toronto. Glenn Gould is very logical.¹⁴¹

Gould as Romantic Genius: Neglected or Connected?

Above all, audiences are drawn to Gould on account of his genius. As well as reflecting the cultural fascination with supremely gifted individuals, it recognises the uniquely privileged status of the concept as a hermeneutic window into Gould's life and work. Those who write

¹³⁶ Glenn Gould (pr. Andrew Kazdin), *Glenn Gould: Concert Dropout*; Gladys Houck, "Glenn Gould: Talking about television – and Beethoven" in *The Canadian Composer*, No. 38 (Jan., 1971); François Girard (dir.), *Thirty Two Short Films About Glenn Gould*.

¹³⁷ Richard Kostelanetz, "The Glenn Gould Variations".

¹³⁸ William Littler, "'Retired' pianist Glenn Gould is busier than ever".

¹³⁹ Richard Kostelanetz, "The Glenn Gould Variations".

¹⁴⁰ Joseph Roddy, "Glenn Gould" in *People Weekly*, Vol. 16, No. 22 (Nov. 30, 1981); Richard Kostelanetz, "The Glenn Gould Variations".

¹⁴¹ Peter Goddard, "Glenn Gould is a conjurer", 24, 26.

about or envisage Gould must contend with the fact that his moral and creative discourse ‘presents him as an agent in his own construction of what it means to be an exceptional artist, and what constitutes exceptional art’.¹⁴² Gould’s self-representation as genius through his many writings, musical works, broadcasts, and interviews has made Gould himself something of a genius archetype (see, for example, Thomas Bernhard’s novel *The Loser* (1983)). For Gould, the exceptional artist is independent-minded and recognises the link between creative self-expression and the ability of art to improve lives. It captures an essential paradox of his thought: the necessity of isolation for meaningful communication. The artist must renounce society in order to reconcile himself with it. The relationship of the individual to the collective in Gould’s philosophy – at once hostile and benign – I believe is the fundamental dialectic which, through his rhetoric of technology and North, has structured the three divergent reception profiles around his genius and his nationality.¹⁴³ Gould’s insistence on creative individuality structures the view of Gould as an isolated or rebellious artist, conveyed through the symbolism of the recording studio as a site for solitary and experimental work, and the North as a place of exile and adventure. His discourse concerning the humanitarian mission of art and artists structures his reception as a communicator and quasi-religious figure, conveyed through the symbolism of technology as a vehicle for idealised communication, and of ‘North’ as a place of renewed participation and spiritual redemption. These provide a frame of reference for debating Gould’s relevance to broader cultural issues. In discussions of Gould’s identity as a genius, for example, biographers have debated the artistic merits of his

¹⁴² Alana Bell, “The Lives of Glenn Gould”, 52.

¹⁴³ I believe my theory is supported by the recent Gould literature, and Gould’s own writings. In Gould’s radio documentary *A Glenn Gould Fantasy* (1980), Gould has one of his alter-egos, Karlheinz Klopweisser, describe how the characters of his *Solitude Trilogy* interact : “you create a dialectic through which their polarities are united”, he says; “you create a collective recognition of the argument that binds them together”. It should be added that Gould regarded his *Solitude Trilogy* as autobiographical. The variations on Gould’s media identity are variations on his “argument” concerning the creative and moral life of the artist. In a recent paper, Craig Jordan-Baker has noted “the conceptual tension between notions of society and isolation” in Gould’s *Solitude Trilogy*. Georges Leroux has suggested that Gould is “preoccupied with the paradox of community”. See Craig Jordan-Baker, “The Idea of Community: Glenn Gould’s *Solitude Trilogy*”. Research Paper (2014). See: [https://research.uca.ac.uk/1989/1/The%20Idea%20of%20Community%20\(Conference%20Paper\).pdf](https://research.uca.ac.uk/1989/1/The%20Idea%20of%20Community%20(Conference%20Paper).pdf) (accessed Mar. 28, 2018); Georges Leroux (tr. Donald Winkler), *Partita for Glenn Gould: An Inquiry into the Nature of Genius* (Québec: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2010), 178.

experimental radio documentaries, the nature of his ‘rebelliousness’ as it relates to Platonic and Longinian paradigms of creative exceptionalism, and the relationship of his eccentricity to a discourse of artistic madness.¹⁴⁴

The premium Gould placed on individual expression reveals a fundamentally Romantic sensibility, and one which allies him to a nineteenth-century aesthetic and philosophical discourse of genius which still retains its conceptual currency. As Bazzana has noted, although Gould was highly critical of the tradition of ‘Romantic’ piano performance, and developed a playing style which owed many debts to the values of pre-war neo-Classicism, his championing of creative freedom in interpretation marked a return to a more subjective nineteenth-century approach, and a break from the musical literalism of his contemporaries.¹⁴⁵ Thus, for critic Michael Anthony, it was the ‘eccentricity’ and ‘personality’ of his playing, as contrasted with the ‘tab-collar type of playing’ of other pianists of the Fifties, that made Gould distinctive.¹⁴⁶ His playing and performance manner led journalists to compare Gould to Romantic keyboard characters such as Vladimir de Pachmann.¹⁴⁷ His persona ‘could please the most romantic expectations’, beyond even anything seen in the movies.¹⁴⁸ His concert manager, Walter Homburger, emphasised his similarities to ‘dynamic virtuosi of the past’ such as Liszt and Paganini.¹⁴⁹ Scholar Jacques Drillon has cross-compared images of Liszt and Gould in performance to reveal how Gould’s ‘seductive’ iconography articulates a Romantic artistic rhetoric of genius.¹⁵⁰ Graham Carr, too, has suggested that Gould’s musical portraits share in the Romantic assumption that ‘intelligence and creativity were inner, mental

¹⁴⁴ For example, Peter Ostwald’s work contrasts with that of Geoffrey Payzant by dismissing the importance of Gould’s radio career, emphasising his social difference as something beyond his control, and linking Gould’s eccentricity to a narrative of psychological degeneration.

¹⁴⁵ See “Gould and Romanticism” in Kevin Bazzana, *Performer in the Work*, 51-58.

¹⁴⁶ Michael Anthony, “Gould’s last recording serves as contrast” in *Minneapolis Tribune* (Oct. 24, 1982).

¹⁴⁷ Edward Wodson, “Conservatory pupils’ work draws crowd” in *Toronto Telegram* (May 9, 1946).

¹⁴⁸ Norman Snider, “Glenn Gould at 45”.

¹⁴⁹ Press Book for Glenn Gould (1961). Issued by Walter Homburger.

¹⁵⁰ Jacques Drillon, “Glenn Gould and Franz Liszt: The Piano Above All” in *Glenn Gould*, Vol. 2, No. 2 (Fall, 1996).

phenomena’ that could be read off the face of the genius.¹⁵¹ Like the Romantic portraiture from which they drew inspiration, these images, by revealing the artist in an apparently spontaneous and unguarded moment of creation, established a ‘hermeneutic of intimacy’ between Gould and his fans.¹⁵² Throughout the Fifties, the ubiquity of these images in publications high and low (and particularly those targeted to a female demographic) also helped drive Gould’s appeal and cult following.

As a genius, Gould’s ‘eccentricity’ was subversive, his ‘personality’ a sign of authenticity. Carr has suggested that Gould’s individualism was played up in his technological representations given that depictions of the pianist in a corporate, factory setting threatened to undermine ‘prevailing myths about artistic independence and creative autonomy’.¹⁵³ As a virtuoso performer, and one whose corporate promotion was deemed excessive and kitsch, Gould gave journalists and critics ground to speculate that he was merely playing the character of genius – that his eccentric individuality was contrived to boost sales and brand awareness.¹⁵⁴ In typically Romantic fashion, Gould asserted his authenticity as a genius by emphasising his disdain for audiences, publicity, and the public spotlight, and making clear that his eccentricities were organic to his art.¹⁵⁵ The negotiation of Gould’s identity as a genius, then, traced broader musical-historical dynamics, in that it foregrounded the contradictions between the market orientation of virtuoso musicians and the absolutist values that such musicians could purport to represent.

¹⁵¹ Graham Carr, “Visualizing ‘The Sound of Genius’”, 20. See, for example, the photos from Gould’s 1955 recording sessions taken by photographer Dan Weiner.

¹⁵² A term coined by celebrity theorist Tom Mole in *Byron’s Romantic Celebrity: Industrial Culture and the Hermeneutic of Intimacy* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2007). By observing Gould’s photographs, reading his writings, viewing his broadcasts, or listening to his music and radio documentaries, audiences feel personally connected to him. They assume that he reveals himself and is made accessible through his representations.

¹⁵³ Graham Carr, “Visualizing ‘The Sound of Genius’”, 18.

¹⁵⁴ “His invertebrate posture at the keyboard and his habit of collapse at the end of each solo line were sheer show business” (J. Dorsey Callaghan, “Pianist lives up to billing” in *Detroit Free Press* (Mar. 16, 1956)). For criticisms of his corporate promotion, see Irving Kolodin, “Introducing Glenn Gould” in *Saturday Review* (Jan. 28, 1956), and C. J. L., “The Record Debut of Glenn Gould” in *American Record Guide* (Feb., 1956).

¹⁵⁵ E.g. Gladys Shenner, “The genius who doesn’t want to play”.

Caricatured as a rebel and solitary artist, Gould was the Beethovenian genius in the Longinian mould in his active defiance of musical and social norms, his ‘labours’ and experiments in the ‘womb-like’ recording studio a sign of his uncompromising creativity and control over his own artistic destiny.¹⁵⁶ The Longinian view is shared by Gould’s first biographer, Geoffrey Payzant, whose work locates Gould’s genius in his radical technological ideas and practices, rather than in his ‘innate’ gifts as a performer.¹⁵⁷ Gould’s technological representations gave truth to the claim made by art historian Lynda Nead that the rhetoric of the studio functions in similar ways to that of the Romantic artist’s garret in modern typographies of genius. It is ‘the special site of creativity: half temple, half laboratory, where the artist/chemist transforms [his raw materials] into the gold of high art’, yielding insight into the artist’s genius as a set of creative processes.¹⁵⁸

Gould’s northern rhetoric, of course, also shared affinities with the Romantic cult of nature. He was well aware of the connection. He wrote of being influenced by the ‘romanticized . . . Group-of-Seven paintings’ as a boy, and that his ‘metaphorical manipulation of the north is a bit . . . romantic’.¹⁵⁹ Modern representations of Gould as Northerner trade in the aesthetic currency of Romanticism, as revealed in a comparison of Véronica Xavier’s sketch *Gould and Solitude* (1996) with Caspar David Friedrich’s painting *The Monk by the Sea* (1810). Both contrast the physical magnitude of the land, sea, or sky with the lonely isolation of the individual, and suggest the ability of the individual to harness what Schelling has referred to

¹⁵⁶ The discovery of Gould’s health diaries of the late Seventies, and a love letter to an unidentified woman called “Dell”, has further integrated Gould into the Beethoven mythology, eliciting comparison with the composer’s health anxieties in his Heiligenstadt Testament and love letter to his “Immortal Beloved”. See e.g. Kevin Bazzana, *Wondrous Strange*, 344; Alana Bell, “The Lives of Glenn Gould”, 77.

¹⁵⁷ Geoffrey Payzant, *Music & Mind*.

¹⁵⁸ Lynda Nead, “Seductive Canvases: Visual Mythologies of the Artist and Artistic Creativity” in *Oxford Art Journal*, Vol. 18, No. 2 (Jan., 1995), 67.

¹⁵⁹ Glenn Gould, “‘The Idea of North’: An Introduction”.

as ‘the holy ever-creative, original energy of the World’ through the act of contemplating his/her natural surroundings:¹⁶⁰

Fig. F and G



Gould’s record producer Andrew Kazdin has suggested how his technological representations could evoke images of the Romantic mad genius: the studio was his ‘laboratory’ where he could assemble ‘Frankenstein monsters’ from his tapes.¹⁶¹ It locates Gould within a discourse which asserts the link between creativity and madness, one more succinctly expressed in conductor George Szell’s famous line about Gould: ‘that nut is a genius’.¹⁶² The myth of the mad genius is, of course, a familiar musical trope, a dominant feature of the reception of Romantic composers such as Beethoven, Schumann, and Alkan, and of modern performers such as the pianist David Helfgott. There was certainly something of E. T. A Hoffmann’s Kreisler in Gould’s representation – he who feverishly worshipped ‘only what the mind produces’ – perhaps exemplified in the 1969 television profile *Variations on Glenn Gould*. In one scene, Gould vigorously conducts his own humming as he is shown absentmindedly traipsing around a secluded woodland in Northern Ontario. In concert, Gould was often characterised in the Platonic mode, as an artist possessed by demonic forces.¹⁶³ His

¹⁶⁰ Quoted in Tim Blanning, *The Romantic Revolution: A History* (New York: Modern Library, 2010) from Friedrich Wilhelm Joseph von Schelling’s *On the Relation of the Plastic Arts to Nature* (1845).

¹⁶¹ Andrew Kazdin, *Glenn Gould at Work: Creative Lying* (New York: E. P. Dutton, 1989), 19-20.

¹⁶² The remark was made in 1957 following a concert collaboration between the two men. In 1971, the music journal *Grand Baton* referred to it as an “immortal comment” about Gould (Vol. 8, No. 2-11, p. 37).

¹⁶³ He was “in a trance, possessed by demons good and evil”. Critic’s review quoted in Kevin Bazzana, *Wondrous Strange*, 179.

interpretations on disc were often deemed ‘bizarre’, ‘perverse’ and ‘wrong-headed’.¹⁶⁴ As Bell notes, the image of Gould as an eccentric and possible madman has led to a difference of narrative emphasis among his biographers.¹⁶⁵ Some dwell on the tragedy of Gould’s situation, others see it as a way to normalise Gould by emphasising his human vulnerability, and others use it to assert his Otherness.¹⁶⁶

Theorist Jacques Attali has commented on the insider/outsider role of the Romantic genius: he is at once socially different, but also the embodiment of society’s core values.¹⁶⁷ In *Beethoven* (1870), Wagner argued that the most sublime music emerged from the ‘immediate consciousness of the unity of our inner essence with that of the external world’, and consequently claimed that the ‘inwardness’ of the composer was a condition of his greatness.¹⁶⁸ In as much as music could communicate a feeling for the universal sublime, it could ‘redeem humankind from spiritual disgrace’.¹⁶⁹ As I have shown, similar themes are broached in relation to the theological narrative of Gould as genius. This narrative now negates Gould’s individuality and accentuates the introspective and spiritual qualities of his life and music, his views regarding music’s moral purpose, his capacity for self-transcendence, and his listener-centric philosophy of recording. Gould stated that he was ‘primarily interested in art that communicates spiritually’, and believed that recordings could ‘change lives’ if the listener engaged with them in a state of deep personal introspection.¹⁷⁰

When critics wrote that Gould’s recordings ‘[bore] the stamp of a tremendous amount of solitary contemplation’ given their ‘transcenden[t]’ quality, they were updating the Romantic

¹⁶⁴ This was particularly true of his Mozart and Beethoven recordings. Gould could also get in on the act, describing his recording of Beethoven’s “Appassionata” Sonata (1970) as “the most perverse in history” (Kevin Bazzana, *Wondrous Strange*, 255).

¹⁶⁵ Alana Bell, “The Lives of Glenn Gould”, 142.

¹⁶⁶ Exemplified, respectively, in Peter Ostwald’s *Ecstasy and Tragedy of Genius* (1997); Peter Raymont and Michèle Hozer’s film *Genius Within: The Inner Life of Glenn Gould* (Canada: White Pine Pictures, 2009); and Otto Friedrich’s *Glenn Gould: A Life and Variations* (1989).

¹⁶⁷ Jacques Attali (tr. Brian Massumi), *Noise: The Political Economy of Music* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1985), 12-13.

¹⁶⁸ Quoted in Scott Burnham, “The four ages of Beethoven: critical reception and the canonic composer” in Glenn Stanley (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Beethoven* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 278.

¹⁶⁹ *Ibid.* The quote is Burnham’s own.

¹⁷⁰ Tony Thomas, “Glenn Gould”, 52; Glenn Gould, “Rubinstein”, 58.

view of the connection between inwardness and the sublime.¹⁷¹ The sublime speaks in a universally understood language, thus Payzant describes Gould's concept of 'ecstasy' as 'a shared awareness of innerness', and Bell has demonstrated how fans have often characterised their own subjective responses to Gould's music in terms of a dissolution of personal identity.¹⁷²

Gould's rhetoric of North bolstered a theological reading of his genius in the Romantic mould by conceiving of nature as a divine, healing force with which he liked to 'commune'.¹⁷³ Conceiving of North also as a metaphor for a Platonic turning inward of the soul, his aesthetic bears comparison with Schelling's view that 'Nature is visible Spirit; Spirit is invisible Nature'.¹⁷⁴ This is to say nothing of his allegiance to a Canadian artistic tradition of representing a Northern mystical sublime, also rooted in Romantic aesthetics, and exemplified in the paintings of Lawren Harris, the plays of Herman Voaden, and the novels of Aritha van Herk.¹⁷⁵

Gould's technological representations had the potential to undercut Gould's Romantic image of genius. Nevertheless, his media discourse made clear his view that technological mediation was a precondition of sublime and redemptive musical experience. Gould's 'technological sublime' had a strong visual and audiovisual component, too, as images and films fetishised Gould's interaction with studio gadgetry, and traded on the affective currency of the music he performed in the studio.¹⁷⁶ Georges Leroux has written that 'technical mediation assures a targeted community, it presupposes a search for salvation. In this process of withdrawal . . .

¹⁷¹ Laurence Shames, "Glenn Gould: Music by an Offbeat Pianist", 104.

¹⁷² Geoffrey Payzant, *Music & Mind*, 65; Alana Bell, "The Lives of Glenn Gould", 111.

¹⁷³ Gladys Houck, "Glenn Gould: Talking about television", 46.

¹⁷⁴ Quoted in Tim Blanning, *The Romantic Revolution: A History from Schelling's Ideas Concerning a Philosophy of Nature* (1797).

¹⁷⁵ Their contributions to a conceptual "North" are considered in Sherrill E. Grace, *Canada and the Idea of North*.

¹⁷⁶ Graham Carr, "Visualizing 'The Sound of Genius'", 17-18.

Gould worked toward self-annihilation'.¹⁷⁷ As technologist, Gould was searching for a Wagnerian universal sublime.

Gould as Canadian Icon

At one level, the tensions between the individual and the collective in Gould's self-representations have driven the contemporary debate around the pianist by forcing critics to confront his suitability as a figure of emulation. To imitate Gould's musical style directly is to miss the point of his aesthetic, which holds that individuals should renounce the influence of others. Many have felt that his iconoclasm precludes him from being widely influential.¹⁷⁸ Critics denounced him as a musical aberrance, a view recapitulated in scholarly terms by Philip Auslander, who cites the work of sociologist Erving Goffmann to argue for the uniqueness of Gould's musical personae relative to the various social frames of classical performance culture.¹⁷⁹ At the same time, his aesthetic emphasised the power of art and artists to transform society, and the personal rapport that audiences have felt towards Gould has made him a role model to many, whether in his approach to keyboard technique, Bach interpretation, or to the programming of concert repertoire.¹⁸⁰

A similar attempt to come to terms with the pianist's influence is apparent in his Canadian reception. At one point around the turn of the twenty-first century, his relevance to a discourse of national identity was seemingly denied, as Canadians felt that his brand of neurotic eccentricity disqualified him from a spot on the country's paper currency.¹⁸¹ Since then, however, there is evidence that Gould has been more readily embraced as a standard-bearer of Canadian identity.¹⁸² Speaking in a television programme commemorating Canada's 150th year of Confederation, for example, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau championed Gould

¹⁷⁷ Georges Leroux, "The Representation of Genius".

¹⁷⁸ E.g. Kevin Bazzana, *Wondrous Strange*, 10.

¹⁷⁹ Royal S. Brown, "A Boo for the Boos of Glenn Gould"; Philip Auslander, "Musical Personae" in *The Drama Review*, Vol. 50, No. 1 (Spr., 2006), 111.

¹⁸⁰ Richard Kostelanetz, "The Glenn Gould Variations".

¹⁸¹ Kevin Bazzana, *Wondrous Strange*, 6.

¹⁸² Notably in Mark Kingwell, *Glenn Gould*; François Girard (dir.), *Thirty Two Short Films About Glenn Gould*.

as a model for the government's innovation agenda.¹⁸³ In fact, the question of how Gould's identity maps on to and expands existing definitions of Canadian identity has historically informed the way biographers, scholars, and fans have interpreted his life and work.¹⁸⁴ This reflects the powerful presence of nationalist discourse in Canadian cultural life – one historically and theoretically grounded in the writings of such figures as Northrop Frye and Margaret Atwood – through which Canadians have sought to give shape, meaning, and distinction to their identities *as* Canadians by interpreting the role and significance of their greatest artists and thinkers.¹⁸⁵ It also reflects the view, recently proposed by theorist Samita Nandy, that Canadian celebrities are uniquely implicated in processes of national identity formation through the uses they make of Canadian myths and symbols in their media representations.¹⁸⁶ The task of defining and preserving Canadian identity is deemed essential given the unique problems posed by the country's immense land mass, fragmented and diverse population, and the cultural influence of its powerful southern neighbour.¹⁸⁷ Gould himself contributed to his reception as Canadian: he made television and radio appearances under the auspices of nationalist institutions such as the National Film Board of Canada (NFB) and the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC), lived in Toronto throughout his career, championed the Canadian way of life in media interviews, and his visual and intellectual presentation as an artist incorporated elements of the Canadian national mythology. While this nationalist context is addressed more fully in Chapter V and VI, I will now briefly outline how Gould's interest in the tensions between the individual and the collective, between isolation and community, has orientated responses to Gould as a Canadian icon.

¹⁸³ Ruth Thomson (pr.), *Canada 150: Geeking Glenn Gould*. BBC Radio 3. Broadcast Jun. 25, 2017.

¹⁸⁴ E.g. Mark Kingwell, *Glenn Gould*; Alana Bell, "The Lives of Glenn Gould"; and Ruth Abernethy's bronze statue of Gould, *Glenn* (1999).

¹⁸⁵ Northrop Frye (1912-1991) was a prominent Canadian literary critic and theorist, whose writings on Canadian identity have been highly formative on the discourse around it. See e.g. *The Bush Garden: Essays on the Canadian Imagination* (Ontario: House of Anansi, 1971). Margaret Atwood (1939-) extended Frye's work, arguing that Canadian identity is premised on notions of survival and victimhood. See e.g. *Survival: A Thematic Guide to Canadian Literature* (Ontario: House of Anansi, 1972).

¹⁸⁶ Samita Nandy, *Fame in Hollywood North*, 18.

¹⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 39.

Gould's preoccupation with the theme of isolation most clearly associates him with a discourse of Canadian national identity. It is a connection that has been much commented on in the literature on Gould, and situates him within a rich intellectual and creative tradition, spanning the work of Frye and his conception of Canada as a nation of 'solitudes touching other solitudes', for example, to Atwood's poetic exploration of Canadian isolation in her novels.¹⁸⁸ By representing himself as an isolated Northerner, moreover, and by reading metaphorical significance into this image, Gould appealed to the mythic significance of the frontier in archetypal representations of Canada as an isolated northern nation.¹⁸⁹ In representations of Gould as rebel, 'Northern' isolation is interpreted as a form of imaginative resistance to a comfortable 'Southern' way of life, much as the northern frontier in nationalist thought has functioned as a metaphor for Canada as a creative, self-reliant nation, resisting the mass cultural norms of the United States to the South.¹⁹⁰ In representations of Gould as the mad genius, 'doomed and misunderstood', his 'Northern' isolation becomes a metaphor for his suffering and sacrifice as an artist committed to his work outside of the mainstream, much as Canada's frontier has also functioned as a hostile wilderness where one either survives or is made a victim: the myth of a beleaguered nation in thrall to an American Other.¹⁹¹ National myths of northern isolation help situate responses to Gould's life and work, as when Bazzana suggests that Frye's myth of a 'thinly-settled country under a bleak northern sky' can be heard in Gould's playing.¹⁹² Beyond this, as Bell has discussed in relation to Mark Kingwell's Gould biography, the pianist's northern identity itself becomes an elastic, polyvalent idea

¹⁸⁸ E.g. Laura Grey, "The Idea of North"; Jonathan Alexander, "Glenn Gould and the Rhetorics of Sound"; Northrop Frye, "Sharing the Continent" (1977) in *Divisions on a Ground: Essays on Canadian Culture* (Toronto: House of Anansi Press, 1982), 59; Margaret Atwood, *The Handmaid's Tale* (Canada: McClelland and Stewart, 1985).

¹⁸⁹ Nandy has written of the ideological function of the frontier in representations of Canada as North. She goes on to claim that "[media] representations celebrate Canada's Northern frontier values and mediate Canadian talent and stardom as an effect of the frontier". See Samita Nandy, *Fame in Hollywood North*, 71, 77-78.

¹⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 71-72. "North acts as a cultural resistance to America's continental practices in film and television in Canada" (p. 72).

¹⁹¹ See Margaret Atwood, *Strange Things: The Malevolent North in Canadian Literature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995).

¹⁹² Kevin Bazzana, *Wondrous Strange*, 294.

through which to define and interpret the ambiguities and multiplicities of the nation's identity.¹⁹³

Gould's technological isolation and experimental aesthetics in the studio also mapped on to a nationalist discourse. His rhetoric channelled the view of Canada as a technological nation distinct from the United States in so far as it possessed a unique approach to matters of technology and broadcasting.¹⁹⁴ Gould's technological thinking shared important affinities with the broader North American technological discourse of the Sixties and Seventies in that it dwelt on the moral and social effects of the mass media.¹⁹⁵ But beyond this, it contributed to a rich Canadian discourse of communications in the latter twentieth century – elaborated by such thinkers as Harold Innis, George Grant, and Marshall McLuhan – through which Canadians have come to terms with aspects of their identity and relationship to the United States.¹⁹⁶ As I argue in Chapter V, Gould's advocacy of listener involvement in music, his view of new media as a democratising force, and his interest in the aural and spatial characteristics of his recordings incarnated McLuhan's ideas in fundamental ways, as was noted by critics during Gould's life.¹⁹⁷ Moreover, both the 'theological' narrative of Gould as technologist and the Canadian technological discourse were premised on a moral view of the role technology could play in national life. Ryan Edwardson has written of how the 'romanticization of moral cultivation' had underwritten the first moment of Canadian nationalism around the mid-century, reflected in broadcasting policy that asserted the intrinsic value of high-cultural programming.¹⁹⁸ Gould's 'theological' identity asserted the link between technologically mediated experiences of music and the formation of a community of

¹⁹³ Alana Bell, "The Lives of Glenn Gould", 211-217.

¹⁹⁴ Arthur Kroker's book, *Technology and the Canadian Mind* (1984), begins by claiming that "Canada's principal contribution to North American thought consists of a highly original, comprehensive, and eloquent discourse on technology" (p. 7).

¹⁹⁵ Juha Markus Mantere, "The Gould Variations", 93. One thinks of the moral panic around television, or concerns around the impact of automation on the workforce.

¹⁹⁶ The thinking of these writers is dissected in Robert E. Babe's, *Canadian Communication Thought: Ten Foundational Writers* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2000).

¹⁹⁷ E.g. Richard Kostelanetz, "The Glenn Gould Variations".

¹⁹⁸ Ryan Edwardson, *Canadian Content*, 147.

morally and spiritually enlightened listeners. For the nationalists, music broadcasting had a special role in elevating and drawing together scattered communities in a vast land.¹⁹⁹ The broadcasting system itself, as a physical and ideological apparatus, was the mythic centrepiece of the Canadian discourse of ‘technological nationalism’.²⁰⁰ The CBC was at the forefront of the ‘fictioning of nationhood’ and the establishment of that ‘community in anonymity’ which Benedict Anderson latterly identified as a hallmark of the modern nation state.²⁰¹ This national community was distinctively Canadian in that it demonstrated what Frye considers an essential aspect of the Canadian psyche: the ‘garrison mentality’.²⁰² The need to construct a morally cultivated community of viewers and listeners is a response to the perception of a threat: that of a debased but popular form of American commercial programming capable of undermining Canada’s national identity and autonomy by swamping the Canadian broadcast networks.

Frye’s ‘garrison mentality’ links the themes of the individual and the collective in a way that offers an angle of inspection on the typically Canadian aspects of Gould’s identity. Frye originally developed his concept in the context of his examination of the effects of landscape on the Canadian character: the North is a dangerous frontier to which the individual reacts by developing new forms of communal awareness. Gould’s radio documentary, *The Idea of North* – which Bell argues is an example of Gould’s experimental approach to self-representation – partakes in this conceptual scheme, as he has his radio subjects discuss how

¹⁹⁹ As the art that “more than any other ministers to human welfare”, it answered best to the call to renew the “spiritual foundations” of national life made in the influential “Massey Commission” Report (1951). The commission investigated the state of the Canadian arts and culture, and laid the groundwork for the mid-century cultural nationalist movement. See Geoffrey Waddington, “Music and Radio” in Ernest MacMillan (ed.), *Music in Canada* (Canada: University of Toronto Press, 1955).

²⁰⁰ Please refer to the thesis introduction for some preliminary remarks on the nature and importance of “technological nationalism” in Canada. Nandy refers to it as a “discourse of the state”, through which national identity is negotiated (*Fame in Hollywood North*, 38).

²⁰¹ Shaun Moores, “Broadcasting and its Audiences” in Paul du Gay (ed.), *Production of Culture/Cultures of Production* (London: SAGE Publications, 1997); Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 1983/91), 36.

²⁰² The idea of the “garrison mentality” is central to Frye’s work on Canadian identity. I comment on it further in Chapter V.

the hardships of North help individuals to discover ‘what the sense of community means’.²⁰³ It also serves as a metaphorical comment on Gould’s technological career: his response to the hostile environment of the live concert entailed his re-engagement with a community of home listeners. I see three other conceptual similarities between a view of Canadian identity as a ‘garrison mentality’ and Gould’s own media identities. First, the theme of isolation as a form of communication is articulated through the idea of frontier garrisons, and through Gould’s studio philosophy of ‘action at a distance’.²⁰⁴ Second, as argued by Diane Dubois, the notion of the garrison mentality links the twin concerns of personal freedom and concern for others: the two central themes of Gould’s artistic philosophy as articulated through his creative and moral thought.²⁰⁵ Third, garrison communities are collectivist structures made up of strong-minded individuals: a vision of community to which Gould would subscribe as a recording artist.

The correspondence between Frye’s mythologies of landscape and Gould’s technological rhetoric is no coincidence. Discourses of ‘North’ and technology have operated symbiotically at the heart of the debate around Canadian identity. The unity of the nation is predicated on the ability of Canada’s communications networks to counteract the problems engendered by the country’s geographic isolation. Similarly, this chapter has argued that ‘Northern’ and technological rhetorics and iconographies were used by Gould and his promoters in his media representations to situate his own identities as an exceptional artist and Canadian.

Following his concert retirement, Gould developed an obsessive interest in controlling all aspects of his media representation, and attempted to establish a definitive narrative of his life and achievements by associating himself and his work with a highly idiosyncratic creative and moral discourse. The work of Alana Bell has suggested that Gould’s ‘auto/biographical

²⁰³ Glenn Gould, *The Idea of North* in the *CBC Ideas* series. CBC radio (Dec. 28, 1967).

²⁰⁴ The term was first used as a description of Gould’s studio philosophy in Geoffrey Payzant’s *Glenn Gould, Music & Mind*.

²⁰⁵ Diane Dubois, *Northrop Frye in Context* (Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2011), 134-135.

play' through the media has influenced his posthumous reception in characteristic ways, and has helped generate and sustain interest in him as a musician and cultural figure. My work has developed Bell's theories by connecting the debates around Gould's genius and nationality to the broader contours of his cultural reception, and by suggesting that a dialectical tension in Gould's celebrity – between expressions of solitude and community, isolation and communication – is the dynamic force that structures and animates his modern identity politics.

CHAPTER II

THE POLITICAL ECONOMY OF MYTH: GOULD AND THE CIRCUIT OF CULTURE

Gould's Celebrity as Cultural Process

In this chapter, I flesh out a conceptual framework for thinking about Gould's artistic mythology as constituted by a set of cultural sites and practices. This sets the stage for my work in later chapters, where I provide situated analyses of Gould's celebrity at key junctures of his career. The intellectual scaffolding for the current work is provided by sociocultural theorist Stuart Hall, whose 'Circuit of Culture' model has had a major influence on scholarly approaches to the study of cultural phenomena.¹ Based on Hall's model, I consider Gould's celebrity in terms of the sites and practices of its representation, production, consumption, and regulation.² Hall's model has sought to correct the deficiencies of overly deterministic, 'top-down' theories of cultural diffusion by giving theoretical weight to a view of the contingent and relational nature of sociocultural phenomena. In this way, it has intersected with and informed contemporary approaches to the study of stardom. These approaches have emphasised the discursive character of celebrity, its mutual constitution across a range of social fields, and its articulation via the complex mechanisms and processes of cultural production.³ My work can be placed within the context of this broader literature on stardom.

¹ Stuart Hall (1932-2014) was arguably the most prominent theorist of British cultural studies. He helped lay the groundwork for the "Birmingham School" of cultural theory in the 1960s. His "Circuit of Culture" model was first operationalised in his seminal 1997 study of the Sony Walkman (Hall et al., *Doing Cultural Studies: The Story of the Sony Walkman*. London: SAGE Publications, 1997). It has subsequently been adopted and adapted by scholars in a variety of fields.

² The fifth "moment" in Hall's circuit – identity – is not considered here, given that the topic of Gould's identity has already been addressed, via Alana Bell's work, in Chapter I.

³ Famously, Richard Dyer's work on film stars introduced the idea that celebrity could be read as a signifying system and tool of ideology (Richard Dyer, *Stars*. London: British Film Institute, 1979). Recent studies have advanced a production-consumption model of celebrity (notably Graeme Turner, *Understanding Celebrity*. London: SAGE Publications, 2004/14). Sean Redmond explicitly invokes Hall's model as a theoretical influence on his work (Sean Redmond et al., *Stardom and Celebrity: A Reader*. London: SAGE Publications, 2007).

It also shares with this literature a concern for broadening and thickening the discourse on celebrity by incorporating the insights of scholars in other disciplines.⁴

First, I consider Gould's celebrity as a form of representation. Drawing on celebrity theorist Richard Dyer's influential notion of the 'star text', I take a semiotic view of Gould's musical celebrity to explore its function as 'an organizing structure for conventionalized meaning' – i.e., as a signifying system and practice.⁵ This analysis reveals that much of the affective power of Gould's celebrity sign derives from its ability to mediate discourses and ideologies of genius and authenticity, nationhood and place, style and genre, age and youth, gender and sexuality, technology and work, and privacy and fame that are given heightened cultural significance within the social world of mid-century North America. Gould's celebrity sign is circulated, negotiated, and legitimated via a highly developed media infrastructure which links the meanings of his celebrity to its technologies of representation.

Second, a production-oriented account attends explicitly to the economic and industrial forces structuring the representation and reception of Gould's celebrity identity. It signals a shift of emphasis away from the consideration of Gould as a discursive construct, to a consideration of Gould as a manufactured brand commodity, strategically developed by the cultural and media industries for commercial profit.⁶ In line with the work of other cultural theorists and writers on celebrity, I develop a two-pronged approach to the question of how Gould's celebrity articulated and legitimised the logics of consumer capitalism. First, a macro-level analysis considers how corporate ownership of the means of production imposed constraints on the meanings of Gould's celebrity in the bid to transform him from 'a subject of critical

⁴ Sean Redmond et al., *Stardom and Celebrity: A Reader*, 6; Elizabeth Barry, "Celebrity, cultural production and public life" in *International Journal of Cultural Studies*, Vol. 11, No 3 (2008), 253; Tom Mole (ed.), *Romanticism and Celebrity Culture, 1750-1850* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009).

⁵ Richard Dyer, *Stars*; P. David Marshall, "Tools for the Analysis of the Celebrity as a Form of Cultural Power" in *Celebrity and Power: Fame in Contemporary Culture* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997), 56.

⁶ Graeme Turner, *Understanding Celebrity*, 26.

adulation to an object of popular consumption'.⁷ Second, a micro-level analysis reverses this equation, shifting attention away from the broader institutional and commercial structures to 'the more messy informal world of human actions, working relationships and cultural meaning' – the 'cultures of production' – which underpin corporate life.⁸

Third, an analysis of Gould's celebrity from the perspective of its consumption invites a consideration of its role in constructing and deconstructing the social world. As a performer, writer, and broadcaster admired by musicians and non-musicians alike, and one plagued by fanatical admirers even during his lifetime, Gould's celebrity has functioned as a model of identification, pleasure, and desire.⁹ Fandom, of course, is a particularly explicit manifestation of the social power of celebrity. Other forms of social ritual – attending Gould's concerts, listening to his recordings, watching his television shows etc. – are examples of more routine, but no less significant, habits of consumption. This analysis suggests the utility of framing an account of celebrity meaning as much in terms of the generative social practices of audiences as in terms of the commercial-industrial practices of institutions.

Finally, I consider the theme of regulation in respect of two issues. First, how Gould's celebrity informed and was informed by a distinctively Canadian discourse of cultural nationalism, according to which an interventionist approach to the regulation of culture at the state level was deemed central to the project of constructing a Canadian sense of national heritage, identity, and autonomy. Second, exploring more fully the relation between discourse and social power, I ask how Gould himself presented an ideological challenge to the dominant paradigms of classical music production within North America via his celebrity representations, and how the types of critical discourse on Gould generated by establishment intermediaries represented an attempt to regulate and contain these ideological effects.

⁷ Graham Carr, "Visualizing 'The Sound of Genius'", 5.

⁸ Keith Negus, "The Production of Culture" in Paul du Gay (ed.), *Production of Culture/Cultures of Production*, 69.

⁹ Kevin Bazzana, *Performer in the Work*, 4.

The Work of Representation

For Stuart Hall, ‘representation connects meaning and language to culture’.¹⁰ Meaning is considered to be constructed and circulated through practices of representation, leading to a view of language (i.e. representational systems which signify) as foundational to an understanding of cultural phenomena and their significance. Hall’s interest in the powerful interconnection of language and culture – and in the semiotic approach as a means of analysing it – has been shared by a number of theorists of celebrity, who have examined the celebrity as a regime of representation, produced and distributed across a range of media-industrial and social contexts.¹¹ In Richard Dyer’s famous formulation, the film star is:

[A] structured polysemy. [This term identifies] the finite multiplicity of meanings and affects they embody and the attempts so to structure them that some meanings and affects are foregrounded and others are masked or displaced.¹²

For Dyer, the celebrity/star construct is sociologically significant to the extent that its signifying practices make it a site of ideological struggle. The star is mobilised ideologically through the media ‘texts’ which he/she authors, as well as through the texts which he/she may have little or no control over, such as publicity and promotional material, tabloid gossip, professional criticism, and so on. It is through these intertextual practices (visual, aural, and written) that the connotative meaning of the celebrity signifier is expanded, and the signifier differentiated from other signs within a sign system, affording the celebrity and his/her image a unique role and status within the culture.¹³

One might ask: how was Gould’s celebrity made meaningful through practices of representation? How was it ideologically inflected? To answer these questions, it is worth

¹⁰ Stuart Hall, “The Work of Representation” in Stuart Hall (ed.), *Representation: Cultural Representations and Signifying Practices* (London: SAGE Publications, 1997), 15.

¹¹ E.g., Richard Dyer, *Stars*; P. David Marshall, “Tools for the Analysis of the Celebrity as a Form of Cultural Power”, 56-61; Michael L. Quinn, “Celebrity and the Semiotics of Acting” in *New Theatre Quarterly*, Vol. 6, No. 22 (May, 1990).

¹² Richard Dyer, *Stars*, 3.

¹³ P. David Marshall, “Tools for the Analysis of the Celebrity as a Form of Cultural Power”, 58.

reflecting on Gould's relationship to the modern mass media. 'People can only become celebrities through the transmission of their image', writes theorist Jessica Evans; 'celebrity *by definition* requires mediation'.¹⁴ Gould's career was intertwined with the development of the North American media. These media provided the vehicle for the rapid dissemination of his image to diverse audiences, and the harnessing of his image to the economies of cultural production and consumer desire.¹⁵ As scholars such as Alana Bell have highlighted, the issue of Gould's media representation is a key locus of debate for considerations of his celebrity identity, given his obsessive quest to cultivate and control public perceptions about his life and achievements through his conspicuous and often radical forms of self-representation in his writings, interviews, broadcasts, and recordings.¹⁶ To come to terms with Gould's celebrity as a form of representation requires a multi-leveled approach that takes into account the meanings generated by the specific content of the celebrity text itself, the meanings generated by the technological form which mediates the text's production and reception, and the broader network of social, cultural, aesthetic, and political meanings within which the text is embedded.

As a highly emotive artist whose challenge to the norms and rituals of classical musical life became central to his image, Gould has attracted much interest from musical semiologists and performance theorists. In a famous and somewhat influential paper, François Delalande studied Gould's eyebrow movements and related performance gestures to arrive at an understanding of how Gould's performances are able to function as a 'structured language and vehicle for meaning'.¹⁷ His taxonomising of Gould's 'posture, movements, and mimicries' in a selection of his performances of Bach's keyboard works, and his mapping of

¹⁴ Jessica Evans & David Hesmondhalgh, "Celebrity, media and history" in Jessica Evans & David Hesmondhalgh (eds.), *Understanding Media: Inside Celebrity* (Maidenhead: Open University Press, 2005), 11-55.

¹⁵ Graham Carr, "Visualizing 'The Sound of Genius'", 31.

¹⁶ Alana Bell, "The Lives of Glenn Gould".

¹⁷ François Delalande, "Gould's Gesturing: Elements for a Semiology of Musical Gesture" in Ghyslaine Guertin (ed.), *Glenn Gould: Universe of a Genius* (Québec: Momentum Publishing, 2007).

these to various ‘expressive’ registers, has provided insight into how Gould was able to give his musical interpretations ‘material existence’.¹⁸ His analysis suggests the importance of gesture, theatricality, and rhetoric to an understanding of the ways Gould’s performances encoded meaning for his audiences, and to how they contributed to the connotative expansion of Gould’s celebrity sign.

Others have looked to Gould’s body as a signifying site for the contestation of broader cultural politics.¹⁹ As part of his investigation into ‘the style and semiotic content’ of Gould’s celebrity iconography in the late Fifties, Graham Carr has also dealt with Gould as performer, though here more in the Auslanderian sense of a ‘performed identity’.²⁰ Seeking to arrive at a historically and culturally specific understanding of Gould’s sign system, Carr invokes the work of Roland Barthes to suggest that the primary accomplishment of Gould’s image was in naturalising a set of ideological assumptions informing the socio-cultural discourse environment of mid-century North America. He re-interprets Gould’s idiosyncratic performance gestures as signifiers of personal authenticity and original genius. He also assigns significance to their role in mediating the debate around issues of the body in musical performance, suggesting how this links Gould’s identity to a broader politics of gender and sexual identity. Carr views Gould’s celebrity through the lens of discourse, and in doing so, links the appeal of Gould to his important social role.

Carr acknowledges the seminal role of the mass media in mobilising Gould’s cultural identity. ‘In the span of a few months’, he writes, ‘Gould had been transformed from a young and talented musician into a cultural worker. Photography and film were crucial to articulating his

¹⁸ François Delalande, “Gould’s Gesturing”; see also his “Meaning and behavior patterns: The creation of meaning in interpreting and listening to music” in Eero Tarasti (ed.), *Musical Signification: Essays in the Semiotic Theory and Analysis of Music* (Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter, 1995).

¹⁹ Graham Carr, “Visualizing ‘The Sound of Genius’”.

²⁰ See Philip Auslander, “Musical Personae”, 102. Auslander himself has suggested that the meanings of Gould’s performed persona are at such odds with the meanings of the social frames and genre frames of classical music that Gould in effect becomes his own frame of reference (ibid., 111).

transformation'.²¹ Photography and film, but also television, radio, and the print media played a crucial role in the construction of Gould's celebrity image, as vehicles of ideological mobilisation and dissemination. As I have shown in Chapter I, Gould recognised this role: he used the media to discourse on the importance of his status as a creative and moral artist, and moulded this discourse to his self-image as Northerner and as technologist. He thus laid the foundations for narratives around his spirituality, his rebelliousness, and his madness, and ensured that these narratives were framed in terms of discourses of artistic genius and Canadian nationality. In Chapter V, I examine in detail how Gould's radical approach to self-representation through the electronic media incarnated the communication philosophy of his friend and fellow countryman Marshall McLuhan (1911-1980), and the effects this had on the reception of his celebrity. In his recordings, radio documentaries, and some television shows, Gould radically reconceived the traditional relationship between music and technology to define a code of artistic presentation which he felt better able to harness the affordances of the electronic media. His view of the artistic and social implications of new technologies, and his interest in, for example, the sound-spatial characteristics of his recordings, the compositional use of spoken-word material, and techniques of musical montage, all betrayed the influence of McLuhan, who famously declared that 'the medium is the message', and believed that print-based visual culture was giving way to sound-based aural culture and creating new forms of cognitive awareness characterised by an ability to adapt more easily to information overflow.²²

The media also contributed to the meanings of Gould's celebrity by inflecting them with their own social, aesthetic, and economic values. Carr, for instance, focusing on visual media,

²¹ Graham Carr, "Visualizing 'The Sound of Genius'", 18.

²² Gould spoke of possessing a "total respect for the medium" of recording (McMillan, 1980). In a letter of 1971 he presented the outlines of a philosophy of musical presentation on television which respected the "natural vocabulary of the medium" (Glenn Gould letter to Helen Whitney, Sep. 3, 1971). McLuhan was a personal friend of his, and references to McLuhan are scattered throughout his writings; for example, "Should We Dig Up The Rare Romantics?" (1969), "The Prospects of Recording" (1966), and "The Grass is Always Greener in the Outtakes" (1975).

considers how Gould's images in the Fifties were 'products of a specific moment, when photography, live television, and cinéma-vérité were mobilized by an ethos of "spontaneous witness" and the desire to convey a sense of real-world action'.²³ In a similar vein, my work in Chapter VI considers how Gould's representations in the Canadian broadcast media in the late Sixties were 'products of a specific moment' when a middlebrow approach to programming was adopted as part of a wider nationalist agenda that sought to confront the economic and cultural threats to Canada's sovereignty posed by American mass culture. Further, I suggest that the meanings of Gould's Northern identity interacted with broader generic and political codes, in that the on-location shooting style of his documentaries which allowed for him to draw allusions to myths of Canadian landscape reflected the primacy of a social realist aesthetic which fulfilled the nationalist duty to 'represent Canada to Canadians'. In Chapter IV, I consider how the commercial interests of Columbia Records intervened in the way Gould was represented as a recording artist on album jackets and in the promotional literature, and, in Chapter V, how Gould's sonic representations incarnated a native experimental tradition of radio documentary and drama production, as well as distinctively Canadian discourses on 'North' and technology.

As part of his effort to understand how Gould's self-representations as a musical performer interacted with the stylistic and generic codes of the mass media, Carr has considered how Gould's musical gesturing was ideologically framed through the intervention of contemporary photographic and film techniques – close-ups, screen splitting, slow pans etc. – which contributed to an understanding of Gould's authenticity and individuality as a star performer. Gould was not only a performer of music, of course, but also a performer 'of his own complex constructions of self'.²⁴ He engaged in various forms of auto/biographical play through his work. He saw musical performance not only as an opportunity to interpret a work, but to discourse with it: to reveal its strengths and weaknesses, to correct it, and perhaps even

²³ Graham Carr, "Visualizing 'The Sound of Genius'", 10.

²⁴ Alana Bell, "The Lives of Glenn Gould", v.

to poke fun at it, as consistent with his creative and moral principles.²⁵ The result, as Juha Markus Mantere suggests, is to ‘bring to the fore a new kind of agency . . . Gould’s own mediated presence in our ears’.²⁶ Both in public and behind-the-scenes, he stage-managed his self-representations: he scripted his mature media interviews and media appearances, he indulged journalists’ requests to play up to his eccentric press image, he liaised closely with his media publicists and in-house photographers, and had almost complete editorial oversight over his writings, radio shows, and recordings. He was articulate and charismatic in front of the cameras – he had what Nick Couldry has termed ‘media-based symbolic capital’ – although his verbosity and academic style meant that he lacked the natural powers of communication of that other great musical educator, Leonard Bernstein.²⁷ The meanings of Gould’s mediated persona were enriched via the network of information circulated about him by critics, journalists, fans, promoters, and co-workers in the mass media (particularly in the tabloid press), locating his celebrity sign within the discourses of North American popular culture, and differentiating him from other North American performers in the field such as Eugene Istomin (1925-2003) and Van Cliburn (1934-2013).

The Work of Production

Carr has identified 1955 as the watershed year of Gould’s celebrity career.²⁸ From then on, his musical identity was ‘inextricably (,) indeed contractually’ bound up with his corporate identity as a Steinway Artist, as a recording artist for Columbia Masterworks, and as a media artist for the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation.²⁹ As one of classical music’s brightest

²⁵ See Kevin Bazzana, “Performance as Discourse” in *Performer in the Work*, 85-127. Of course, Gould rejected claims that deviating from the composer’s musical intentions was “immoral”; quite the contrary – to pursue a literalist approach meant shirking one’s responsibility to oneself as a creative being capable of bettering oneself through personal interaction with music.

²⁶ Juha Markus Mantere, “The Gould Variations”, 129.

²⁷ Nick Couldry, “Media meta-capital: Extending the range of Bourdieu’s field theory” in *Theory and Society*, Vol. 32 (2003), 653-677; Kevin Bazzana, *Wondrous Strange*, 227. Bernstein had, of course, found broader fame as a music educator on the CBS *Omnibus* series from 1954, and, from 1958, through his CBS broadcasts of the New York Philharmonic’s *Young People’s Concerts*.

²⁸ Graham Carr, “Visualizing ‘The Sound of Genius’”, 18.

²⁹ *Ibid.*

young stars, he was aggressively and imaginatively marketed and promoted across the full range of the mass media, guaranteeing him mainstream visibility and a foothold in the consumer market. While his musical talents were obviously crucial to his success, equally crucial was the industrial apparatus nurturing and disseminating his brand image to a mass audience. This powerful conjunction of music and marketing saw his debut Columbia recording of Bach's Goldberg Variations emerge as one of the best-selling classical albums of all time, and assured Gould of an international reputation and diverse following.³⁰

The commodification of Gould's identity in the Fifties coincided with broader economic and social changes that had transformed the business of classical music in North America. Sales in recorded music had benefited from greater consumer demand brought about by the post-war expansion of a middle-class arts demographic. Columbia Records had emerged as an industry leader, attracting some of the most distinguished and celebrated artists of the day to its rosters: in popular music Billie Holiday, Johnny Cash, Mitch Miller; in classical music Leonard Bernstein, Isaac Stern, Rudolf Serkin.³¹ At the same time, an expanding celebrity industry, wedded to the technologies of the modern mass media, catered to the public's growing appetite for star performers, in the process reconfiguring the terrain upon which the battles of popular culture were fought. In response, record companies developed new industry standards of marketing and promotion that were keyed to contemporary cultural trends, to the new consumption habits of their consumer base, and to the new cultural reality that 'young musicians of all types had become part of a shared media discourse'.³²

As mentioned in Chapter I, the negotiation of Gould's identity as a genius played out in terms of a culture/commerce binary, in which his claims to represent absolutist musical values were judged against his conspicuous forms of press promotion.³³ Similarly, when critics questioned

³⁰ Kevin Bazzana, *Wondrous Strange*, 153.

³¹ Clive Davis, *Clive Inside the Record Business* (New York: William Morrow & Company, 1975), 240.

³² Graham Carr, "Visualizing 'The Sound of Genius'", 8.

³³ Paul du Gay, "Introduction" in Paul du Gay (ed.), *Production of Culture/Cultures of Production*, 1.

whether Gould was ‘an Eccentric or [a] Musician’, they were really attempting to locate Gould within an evolving discourse of celebrity which pitted a traditional view of fame as hard-won achievement against the modern view of celebrity as a ‘centre of false value’ foisted upon the mass public by the exploitative and profit-hungry machinery of the mass media and culture industries.³⁴ Gould, as celebrity, was morally suspect because he seemed to make active appeals to the tastes of a majority (he was criticised for the ‘sheer show business’ of his routines) and because the quantity and quality of his press promotion ‘bore all the hallmarks of . . . popular culture’.³⁵ Reports of his concert and non-concert activities circulated in prestigious broadsheets such as the *New York Times* as well as in the tabloid press and general-interest magazines such as the *New York Post* and *Glamour*.³⁶ His countercultural brand of musicianship evoked comparison with that of other pop-cultural subversives of the time such as Elvis Presley and James Dean.³⁷ Reviewers marvelled and despaired at the unprecedented scale of the publicity campaign accompanying the release of his debut Columbia recording.³⁸ His concert programmes and press releases made a point of emphasising the recent business relationships he had secured.³⁹

Underlying much of the critique of Gould as musician and celebrity was the implicit assumption that he was a puppet of the industry, cynically manipulated by corporations whose interests lay not in nurturing artistic talent but in chasing the bottom line by appealing to popular tastes. After 1964, Gould described his former concert career in terms of exploitation, suggesting that his image in these days was a ‘media concoction’ for which he held little

³⁴ Josef Mossman, “Detroiters Can Decide: Eccentric or Musician” in *The Detroit News* (Mar. 16, 1956); P. David Marshall, *Celebrity and Power*, xi.

³⁵ J. Dorsey Callaghan, “Pianist lives up to billing”; Graham Carr, “Visualizing ‘The Sound of Genius’”, 33.

³⁶ E.g. John Briggs, “Glenn Gould, 22 year-old pianist, bows” in *New York Times* (Jan. 12, 1955); Harriett Johnson, “Gould with Philharmonic tomorrow” in *New York Post* (Jan. 25, 1957); Anon., “Men we’d like you to meet . . .” in *Glamour* (Apr., 1956).

³⁷ Henry Mitchell, “Elvis and Gould shook up; what’s left really counts” in *Memphis Commercial Appeal* (Feb. 3, 1960).

³⁸ Irving Kolodin, “Introducing Glenn Gould” in *Saturday Review* (Jan. 28, 1956).

³⁹ Walter Homburger, Press Book for Glenn Gould (Aug., 1961).

responsibility.⁴⁰ This sentiment is channelled in the bleak mid-century cultural criticism of such theorists as Theodor Adorno and Daniel Boorstin, the former famously bemoaning the subjugation of culture to the instrumental rationalities of twentieth-century capitalist production, the latter seeing in the celebrity a ‘pseudo human event’ reflective of the turn to the trivial and the illusory in an era of mass culture and media sensationalism.⁴¹ According to such an analysis, the ‘structural interrelatedness of intellectual and popular culture’, which Carr argues is reflected in Columbia’s marketing initiatives, is the logical consequence of an economic-industrial regime which seeks to maximise profits by bringing the techniques of standardisation and homogenisation to bear on cultural production.⁴² Here, the rhetoric of unique genius undergirding Gould’s brand identity is merely an example of pseudo-individuality, providing the consumer with an illusion of artistic choice so as to ensure his/her continued participation in the reproduction of a hegemonic economic and social order. In terms expressed by American social critic Dwight Macdonald, Gould could be said to exemplify a ‘midcult’ turn in the American arts – the debasement of high culture by a monolithic culture industry that:

. . . refuses to discriminate against or between anything or anybody. All is grist to its mill and all comes out finely ground indeed.⁴³

Such analyses tap into the view that corporations – especially those operating in the entertainment sector such as Columbia Records/CBS – wield a decisive power over processes of cultural production by virtue of their economic clout within consumer society.⁴⁴ In the critical literature, this has led to a focus on the technical processes and economic patterns of

⁴⁰ Norman Snider, “Glenn Gould at 45”.

⁴¹ Theodor Adorno & Max Horkheimer, “The Culture Industry: Enlightenment as Mass Deception” (1944) in *Dialectic of Enlightenment* (1st ed. 1947; tr. John Cumming 1972/97). Reproduced in Vincent B. Leitch (ed.), *Norton Anthology of Theory and Criticism* (USA: W. W. Norton & Company, 2010), 1110-1127; Daniel Boorstin, *The Image; or, What Happened to the American Dream* (New York: Atheneum, 1962).

⁴² Graham Carr, “Visualizing ‘The Sound of Genius’”, 8.

⁴³ Dwight Macdonald, *Against the American Grain: Essays on the Effects of Mass Culture* (New York: Random House, 1962), 12.

⁴⁴ Olivier Driessens, “The celebritization of society and culture: Understanding the structural dynamics of celebrity culture” in *International Journal of Cultural Studies*, Vol. 16, No. 6 (2012).

manufacturing, organization, marketing, and distribution that such corporations instantiate.⁴⁵ Special attention has been paid to the role of cultural intermediaries in marrying production and consumption processes through their expert handling of signifying practices – an issue especially relevant to Gould’s celebrity given the quality and quantity of his media promotion. Nevertheless, this approach has been criticised for perpetuating a rather glib and superficial reading of institutions and their role, wrongly equating ownership of cultural production with its control, overstating the case for corporate unity, oversimplifying the complex entanglement of production and consumption processes, and leaving no room for a consideration of the motivations of individuals or the meanings underlying economic activity.⁴⁶ Thus, for social theorists such as Keith Negus:

Cultural production is not simply a technical and economic activity but one that involves particular ‘occupational communities’ whose cultural beliefs and ‘arts of living’ are often a source of division and antagonism within the company.⁴⁷

In stark contrast to the image of the corporate monolith churning out standardised goods in response to market imperatives, here we are presented with a more complex, micro-level account of cultural production which considers how the play of power within a corporation has unique and specific effects on the production of cultural meaning. Clive Davis, President of Columbia Records from 1967-1973, has nicely illuminated these tensions in his memoirs, describing the difficulties he faced in staking out a space for the creatively oriented culture of his company within the more regimented and impersonal corporate culture at CBS as a whole. ‘Talented people in long hair and blue jeans *had* to feel comfortable here’, he writes; ‘a music company with a button-down mind will find it hard to prosper’.⁴⁸ He reflects on the

⁴⁵ E.g. Keith Negus, “The Production of Culture”; Sean Nixon, “Circulating Culture” in Paul du Gay (ed.), *Production of Culture/Cultures of Production*.

⁴⁶ Keith Negus, “The Production of Culture”, 84; for a more granular analysis of the role of institutions in cultural production, see Georgina Born, “The Social and the Aesthetic: For a Post-Bourdieuian Theory of Cultural Production” in *Cultural Sociology*, Vol. 4, No. 2 (Jul., 2010), 190-191.

⁴⁷ Keith Negus, “The Production of Culture”, 95.

⁴⁸ Clive Davis, *Clive Inside the Record Business*, 121.

marginalisation of Columbia Records under the management of a CBS executive that ‘looked at us as finger-popping nonconformists’.⁴⁹ At Columbia Masterworks, meanwhile, he describes the domineering influence of a select cadre of best-selling classical artists on the allocation of economic, creative, and promotional resources within the department.⁵⁰

Different occupational and social communities ‘intervened [in], mediated, and changed’ Gould’s brand identity at each stage of the production process by bringing their own cultural competencies and experiences to bear on it.⁵¹ The production of a commercial Gould recording was a complex collaborative effort involving record manufacturers, audio and piano technicians, engineers, producers, promoters, designers, distributors, corporate lawyers, and corporate executives. In his post-concert years (1964-1982), the whole production process was overseen by Gould himself, who cultivated familial relationships with staff at the inter-divisional level to ensure adherence to shared commercially and artistically defined goals. Nevertheless, co-workers have suggested that working relationships with Gould were oftentimes far from harmonious. They criticise Gould’s overbearing and precious attitude to his studio work; his insensitivity to the needs of others; his oversensitivity to the remarks of others; and his obsessive, exploitative, paranoiac, and manipulative tendencies.⁵² These professional differences were oftentimes explicitly played out in terms of culture clashes between different occupational communities. Evidence of this is provided by Gould’s long-term record producer Andrew Kazdin, who, in his memoirs, bemoans the technical incompetence of engineers working under him on Gould’s projects, expresses frustration at being assigned menial tasks by Gould which he considers below his status, and brings Gould to task on his claim that the producer’s role in the recording process is essentially non-

⁴⁹ Ibid., 122.

⁵⁰ Ibid., 240.

⁵¹ Keith Negus, “The Production of Culture”, 101.

⁵² Kevin Bazzana, *Wondrous Strange*, 368-378; Otto Friedrich, *Glenn Gould: A Life and Variations*, 294-301; Andrew Kazdin, *Creative Lying*.

musical.⁵³ As is nicely illustrated in his discussion of acoustic balance considerations in Gould's Columbia recordings of Beethoven's piano concerti with Vladimir Golschmann, Kazdin asserts the ability of the record producer to intervene uniquely in creative and commercial decisions by virtue of his specialised educational background and training.⁵⁴

The Work of Consumption

One of the ways that modern theorists have sought to combat rigidly deterministic accounts of cultural production is by asserting the important role of consumers in the construction and diffusion of cultural meaning and identity. Subscribing to the view that consumption is 'an activity with its own practices, tempo, significance, and determination', theorists have reconceptualised the traditional social category of the 'mass' in terms of diverse audiences who are active, creative, critical and engaged participants in cultural life.⁵⁵ In the recent work on celebrity, meanwhile, there has been an effort to account for stars as social objects, as 'audience subjectivities' whose power lies in their ability to channel popular sentiment and act as models of identification and desire.⁵⁶

Gould clearly commanded a large and diverse following throughout his professional career. His debut recording of Bach's Goldberg Variations became Columbia's best-selling classical recording, even outselling stalwart popular artists such as Louis Armstrong; his concerts attracted record crowds, with tickets for many of them selling for 'unheard of' prices; and even his work for radio and television could be known to attract a considerable audience.⁵⁷ He counted among his fans intellectual luminaries such as Roland Barthes and Samuel Beckett. In the last ten years, modern social media has provided new opportunities for Gould fans to

⁵³ Andrew Kazdin, *Creative Lying*, 44, 94, 120.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 110-116.

⁵⁵ Hugh Mackay, "Introduction" in Hugh Mackay (ed.), *Consumption and Everyday Life* (London: SAGE Publications, 1997), 4.

⁵⁶ P. David Marshall, *Fame in Contemporary Culture*, xiii.

⁵⁷ Kevin Bazzana, *Wondrous Strange*, 153, 190; Otto Friedrich, *Glenn Gould: A Life and Variations*, 74.

meet, discuss and reminisce about his work, share devotional fan art, and coordinate special events in his honour.⁵⁸

The rise of the Gould cult, in fact, attests to what Graeme Turner has described as the power of celebrities to ‘inject significance, even desire, into our own everyday lives’.⁵⁹ The effect of Gould on his listeners provides the conceit for Bruno Monsaingeon’s 2005 film *Glenn Gould: Hereafter*, and is an important dimension of his mythology that I broach in Chapter I in the context of my discussion of the ‘theological’ narrative of Gould’s identity.⁶⁰ Like Bergman’s text *The Idea of Gould* (1999), Monsaingeon’s film pitches Gould’s genius in terms of ‘a series of interactions with the unremarkable’.⁶¹ Six Gould devotees are interviewed, each recounting how their lives have been personally transformed by Gould’s art. For Monsaingeon, Gould’s music leads him to believe in a life hereafter. For an older Russian lady, Natasha Gugina, Gould’s music helps her ‘come back to life’ following a series of debilitating strokes. The message is clear: Gould remains perpetually relevant because of the perpetual relevance of his music to the lives and identities of others.

The comments of Gould’s record producer Andrew Kazdin best illustrate the way Gould could function as an object of fan desire. In his memoirs, he writes:

The kind of public image that Gould projected – intelligent, artistic, eccentric, reclusive, handsome, famous, *single* – apparently was irresistibly appealing to a certain type of woman, and from time to time Glenn would receive fan mail of a rather suggestive type. [. . .] On occasion . . . one of these women would exhibit a level of ingenuity and/or perseverance that would enable her to slip through a few layers of Gould’s security system.⁶²

Multiple writers have commented on the sexualised and erotic aspects of Gould’s representations as an artist and celebrity. Kevin Bazzana has suggested that his ‘early

⁵⁸ Kevin Bazzana, *Performer in the Work*, 4.

⁵⁹ Graeme Turner, *Understanding Celebrity*, 8.

⁶⁰ Bruno Monsaingeon (dir.), *Glenn Gould: Hereafter*. Film. Canada: Rhombus Media, 2006.

⁶¹ Alana Bell, “The Lives of Glenn Gould”, 104.

⁶² Andrew Kazdin, *Creative Lying*, 77-83.

publicity photos played up his doe-like, androgynous appearance' to appeal to women and gay men.⁶³ Otto Friedrich has written of the 'sexiness' of Gould's bodily gestures in performance, while Rhona Bergman has used the term 'lovemaking' to describe Gould's relationship to his instrument.⁶⁴ Carr has developed such ideas in his sociological account. He argues that aspects of Gould's media iconography in the 1950s were projected onto 'a larger visual canvas of masculinity', fuelling desire by affording consumers the ability to construct their own idealised image of Gould in accordance with their own gendered preferences.⁶⁵ In the language of celebrity theory, para-social interaction between Gould and his audiences was established through the power of his media representations to mediate social subjectivity.

For Stuart Hall, 'meanings are actively made in consumption through the uses to which people put [cultural artefacts] in their everyday lives'.⁶⁶ Much recent work in cultural studies has explored the power of audiences to generate subcultural identities through their reworking of officially codified meanings.⁶⁷ The symbolic materials of Gould's celebrity provided a basis for creative, oftentimes subversive, cultural practices among fans. In Monsaingeon's *Glenn Gould: Hereafter*, for example, we are introduced to a female fan in her mid-twenties, who proudly bears her back tattoo of the principal motif of Gould's String Quartet (1953-55), underwritten by Gould's signature. '[The tattooist] thought it was something pretty cool to have done', she states, 'because so many tattoos are of heavy-metal bands, and this was a classical musician!'.⁶⁸ Here, the symbolic materials of high-art culture – a grand-stave reduction of Gould's only major published composition – are reworked to provide meaning for a fan whose gender, class, and even age put her in a conflicted relationship to the traditional social world of classical music.

⁶³ Kevin Bazzana, *Wondrous Strange*, 156.

⁶⁴ Peter Ostwald, *Ecstasy and Tragedy of Genius*, 145; Rhona Bergman, *The Idea of Gould*, 137.

⁶⁵ Graham Carr, "Visualizing 'The Sound of Genius'", 27; Kevin Bazzana, *Wondrous Strange*, 156.

⁶⁶ Stuart Hall (ed.), *Doing Cultural Studies: The Story of the Sony Walkman*, xxxii.

⁶⁷ Hugh Mackay, *Consumption and Everyday Life*, 6.

⁶⁸ Natalie Flood in *Glenn Gould: Hereafter*.

The occasion of the tenth anniversary of Gould's death offers a more concrete example of how the signifying practices of Gould's celebrity provided the basis for collective identity formation. As part of the general commemorations held in Toronto, 1992, a Glenn Gould parade was organised in which participants donned tweed coats and caps in show of tribute to the pianist's famed eccentricities.⁶⁹ In this case, the material signifiers of Gould's celebrity are made to serve the ends of fan solidarity, while secondarily serving to solidify a sense of regional and national cultural identity given the special identification of Gould, as a musical icon, with Toronto's creative culture. This example attests to the role of consumption practices in what theorist Shaun Moores has described as 'the fictioning of nationhood' through their ability to 'shape spatial patternings and bind places together'.⁷⁰

The varied cultural practices of fan consecration provide a window onto the ways in which Gould's celebrity acquired meaning and resonance within the culture. Stressing the 'everyday' character of consumption, just as important to the authentication of Gould's celebrity was the web of ritualistic activities of consumers and critics – attending his concerts, listening to his records, appraising his work, and so forth. These served to entrench the meanings of Gould's celebrity within the social practices and discourses of the time. The tangible 'outcomes' of these consumption behaviours – measured in terms of concert attendance, volume of record sales, the value judgements of professional critics etc. – had a demonstrable effect on the way his image was marketed by institutions, reflecting the mutually constitutive nature of production and consumption processes.⁷¹

⁶⁹ This parade is mentioned in Kevin Bazzana, *Wondrous Strange*, 9.

⁷⁰ Shaun Moores, "Broadcasting and its Audiences" in Hugh Mackay (ed.), *Consumption and Everyday Life*, 241, 11.

⁷¹ Hall et al., *Doing Cultural Studies*, xxii; Shaun Moores, "Broadcasting and its Audiences", 11; Paul du Gay, "Introduction", 8. "Columbia Records rode the controversies about Gould's recordings all the way to the bank", writes Kevin Bazzana in *Wondrous Strange* (p. 256). Within Gould's archival papers, a number of publicity documents (headed "Marketing Round-Up") evidence the ways in which the body of criticism around Gould's music was placed at the service of saleable identity narratives.

The Work of Regulation

As ‘a locus of formative social power in consumer capitalism’, mediating the struggle over the norms of individual and collective identity, the celebrity is a key site of regulation in contemporary culture.⁷² Previous sections of this chapter have considered how Gould’s celebrity was indexed to broader trends in the wider culture and society. Carr suggests that conditions were favourable for Gould to make a mark on American cultural life in the mid-Fifties, given the privileged role musicians of all genres had begun to play in negotiating social controversies around race, age, gender, and so on.⁷³ Of course, the idea of Gould’s celebrity as manifesting a dialectical tension between the individual and the collective, isolation and community, underpins my understanding of the processes of his identity formation, which I outline in Chapter I. Accordingly, Gould is the inimitable and lonely genius, or the social role model and moral healer; a Canadian victim of the North, or a communicator in the McLuhan mould, uniting the nation through the media.

Gould lived in Toronto all of his life, and writers have been keen to explore the ways in which the pianist’s biography intersected with a sense of Canadian national identity.⁷⁴ For Kevin Bazzana, Gould’s formation as a personality, artist, and celebrity was inseparable from the Canadian context of post-war artistic ferment, economic prosperity, and technological advance which existed within a newly invigorated framework of cultural nationalism.⁷⁵ For Alana Bell, too, the cultural regulation of Gould’s identity is bound up with the regulation of the nation’s identity. She suggests how Gould’s embrace of northern and technological rhetoric (for example) ‘made it easy to appropriate him as a national symbol’ during his lifetime.⁷⁶ Here one thinks also of his role in cultural diplomacy as the first Canadian (and

⁷² P. David Marshall, “Tools for the Analysis of the Celebrity as a Form of Cultural Power”, 51.

⁷³ Graham Carr, “Visualizing ‘The Sound of Genius’”, 8.

⁷⁴ E.g. Otto Friedrich, *Glenn Gould: A Life and Variations*, xi; Kevin Bazzana, *Wondrous Strange*, 13; Junichi Miyazawa, *Glenn Gould: A Perspective* (Tokyo: Shunjusha, 2005).

⁷⁵ Kevin Bazzana, *Wondrous Strange*, 116.

⁷⁶ Alana Bell, “The Lives of Glenn Gould”, 152.

North American) pianist, in 1957, to visit the Soviet Union following the death of Stalin. Carr's recent analysis of the event has highlighted how discussions of Gould in the press were regulated by a discourse of the Canadian state, which latterly sought to identify the achievements of Gould with 'ideas, beliefs and actions that transcend the individual'.⁷⁷ In posthumous biographical accounts, notably Mark Kingwell's, Gould's celebrity amounts to a set of Canadian themes through which to negotiate the nation's fragmented identity. In others, his celebrity is itself regulated by a strong ideological view of the nation. At the same time, Gould himself 'deliberately attempted to shape the nation' via his lifetime self-representations.⁷⁸ My work also broaches issues of Canadian identity and Gould's cultural regulation in the context of Canadian discourses of broadcasting, which, from the mid-Sixties, had the effect of transforming Gould's television- and radio celebrity into a vehicle for regulating cultural nationalist discourses.

Gould's idiosyncratic pianism and presentational manner, of course, also presented a serious challenge to the hegemonic conservative discourses regulating the social conduct and practices of classical music.⁷⁹ This view is shared by critic Harris Goldsmith, who has suggested that Gould was seen as a 'special menace' by traditionalists, who were 'too conditioned by their heritage not to feel threatened by, and resentful of, Gould's challenge to their orthodoxy'.⁸⁰ As a populist icon known as much for his bizarre lifestyle and personality as for his spectacular musicianship, it was feared by some that Gould exerted a malign influence on the classical discourse by drawing it into the ambit of an imagistic, inauthentic celebrity culture. The press criticism of Gould throughout his life, particularly when emanating from a distinguished arts journalist such as Harold C. Schonberg, had the effect of limiting the social power of these popular, 'progressive' discourses which Gould's celebrity

⁷⁷ Graham Carr, "'No Political Significance of Any Kind', Glenn Gould's Tour of the Soviet Union and the Culture of the Cold War" in *The Canadian Historical Review*, Vol. 95, No. 1 (Mar., 2014), 19-21, 7.

⁷⁸ Alana Bell, "The Lives of Glenn Gould", 153.

⁷⁹ Graham Carr, "Visualizing 'The Sound of Genius'", 33.

⁸⁰ Harris Goldsmith, "Glenn Gould: An Appraisal" in *High Fidelity*, Vol. 33, No. 2 (Feb., 1983), 54.

harnessed to great effect.⁸¹ Thus critics hoped to contain Gould's ideological challenge to the dominant elitist paradigm of music-making in the classical tradition. The dialectical tension between serious and popular, traditional and progressive, private and public, and nationalist and aesthetic discourses in the regulation of Gould's celebrity politics in North America from the mid-century onwards was a primary, animating force.

Conclusion

Stuart Hall's 'Circuit of Culture' model provides a generative conceptual framework for thinking about the meanings of Gould's celebrity – as a signifying system (representation), as a brand commodity (production), as an object of consumer desire (consumption), and as a form of cultural regulation. While I have attempted to isolate these four 'moments' in Hall's circuit for the sake of clarity, it is important to remember that they are mutually constitutive, so that the meanings of Gould's celebrity are produced through the processes of influence and feedback between sites. My attempt to theorise the bases of Gould's celebrity power within Hall's conceptual framework provides a grounding for my broader ambition to understand the nature and developmental trajectory of Gould's artistic mythology. While some general attempt has been made here to sketch the outlines of a 'Gouldian sociology' with the aid of recent cultural scholarship on the pianist, the following chapters draw this sociological theory more closely and more creatively into dialogue with the specific circumstances of Gould's celebrity career in North America, beginning with an analysis of his celebrity's origins in pre-war Canada.

⁸¹ E.g. Harold Schonberg, "Music: Inner voices of Glenn Gould".

CHAPTER III

‘HITCH YOUR WAGON TO A STAR’: GOULD THE TORONTO PRODIGY, 1932-1954

The remarkable thing is that Toronto was able to produce him, understand him, and find a place for him.

Alfred Bester, 1964.¹

Gould as Canadian: Myths of Landscape, Technology, and Community

On the evening of September 27th, 1979, a one-hour television documentary, *Glenn Gould's Toronto*, was premiered on CBC Television. Over one year earlier, fledgling filmmaker John McGreevy had approached Gould to take part in his *Cities* project, a thirteen-part series of films co-produced by McGreevy and the Canadian firm of Nielsen-Ferns. Styled as a documentary-cum-travelogue, each episode promised viewers an insight into the physical and cultural geography of a great city, as seen from the idiosyncratic perspective of a local celebrity acting as tour guide. Not just a tour of the city, then, it was also pitched as ‘a tour through the mind(s) of the host(s)’.² As a famous musician who had lived in Toronto all his life, and one known for his colourful views and compelling media personality, Gould was well-suited to the role. He had much enjoyed Peter Ustinov’s award-winning portrait of Leningrad broadcast the previous year, and believed that his unorthodox relationship to the city of his birth might make for an interesting and revealing narrative. Gould took to the project with relish, drafting a 45,000 word script, devoting a week of his busy schedule to on-site filming, and agreeing to publicity and promotion requests from local journalists and McGreevy’s distributors.³ While initial response to the film in the local papers was mixed (‘it

¹ Alfred Bester, “The Zany Genius of Glenn Gould”.

² John Doig, “Always on Sunday” in *Today Magazine*, *Toronto Star* (May 17, 1980).

³ Otto Friedrich, *Glenn Gould: A Life and Variations*, 219-226; Sid Adilman, “Lost Chord: Glenn Gould resurfaces and rediscovers Toronto” in *Toronto Star* (Sep. 2, 1978); Letter to Glenn Gould from Samuel Jephcott of Nielsen-Ferns International (Feb. 1, 1979).

might be argued that *Glenn Gould's Toronto . . .* should more aptly be called *Toronto's Glenn Gould*'), more favourable reviews soon followed.⁴ 'It's programs like yours that help Canadians like Canada', wrote one fan, crediting the success of the portrait to the breezy confidence of Gould's on-screen performance.⁵ Far from Gould's fame being an obstacle to proper appreciation of the city, it had facilitated it. In the reflected glow of Gould's stardom (and luminous narration), the show had revealed Toronto's hidden charms, brought the city to life, and had given reason for a constitutionally modest and self-deprecating nation to withhold its traditional judgments about 'Hogtown'.⁶ Within two years of its premiere, the film was being enthusiastically received by foreign audiences, and international broadcasters were intrigued to find out more about the media work of this Toronto musician who had so decisively put Toronto on the cultural map.⁷ Meanwhile, McGreevy's revelations notwithstanding, those closer to home were left wondering how so ordinary a city as theirs could produce so extraordinary an artist as Glenn Gould.

At the time the film was broadcast, Gould had established a unique presence on the Canadian cultural scene. Following his retirement from the concert stage in 1964, he had gained national exposure through his innovative and eclectic multimedia work (recordings, essays, television- and radio documentaries) and through the promotional efforts of Canada's national broadcaster and the periodical press. Moreover, the style and semiotic contents of Gould's media iconography consolidated a view of the artist as one in personal and professional retreat. Gould appealed to his reputation as professional hermit in pitching the film to a Canadian audience. 'This is a place I live in and really have no contact with', he told the

⁴ Bob Pennington, "Gould discovers his home town" in *Toronto Sun* (Sep. 27, 1978).

⁵ Letters to Glenn Gould from Gerry O'Hara (Sep. 25, 1980), (Oct. 2, 1979).

⁶ A pejorative nickname for Toronto. Other nicknames include Toronto the Good, Toronto the Blue, City of Churches, and the Queen City, referencing the city's puritan traditions.

⁷ A letter retrieved from the Gould Archives reveals that the film was broadcast by the Canadian High Commission to "an entranced audience of about 100" in Canada House, London, Mar. 26, 1980 (see Hugh Davidson letter to Glenn Gould, Apr. 1, 1980). Following this viewing, Gould received interest in his media work from BBC TV producer John Selwyn-Gilbert. Gould's media work was not well known to international audiences at this time.

Toronto Star, allowing him to ‘turn an awful liability into an asset’.⁸ The critics agreed.

‘Scenes long familiar to us are being explored by him for the first time, and it is his reactions that lift this hour-long production above the tedium of a travelogue’, wrote Bob Pennington of the *Sun*.⁹ Gould may have had little physical contact with the Toronto of his day, yet as a born-and-bred Torontonians his cultural contact with the city was profuse. It was Gould’s application of a finely honed cultural sense to the modern cityscape, transmitted through biting, humorous, and occasionally outrageous observations about some of Canada’s most revered institutions, to which the film owed its success.

This chapter holds that the reasons for the success of Gould’s 1979 film on Toronto were similar to those that propelled Gould to success *in* Toronto in the earliest phase of his musical career. Both had to do with the accumulation and ownership of key psychological, material, and promotional resources derived from Toronto’s urban situation and associated contexts of cultural production, regulation, and consumption. Thus, Gould’s film addresses:

- a) the role of place and space in the Toronto psyche. Canada’s vast physical geography, diverse climate, and unique geopolitical circumstances have exerted a huge influence on all aspects of the nation’s development.¹⁰ Thus for Gould, ‘Toronto’s rationale as a city . . . is linked inevitably with its strategic location on Lake Ontario’.¹¹ His film explores the role of physical geography in relation to Toronto’s evolving cultural, political, and economic associations with Britain, France, Europe, and America from the 1930s-1970s, and how these associations shaped Toronto’s psychological geography. Gould also examines the psychological boundaries of the urban, the sub-urban, and the rural, invoking established tropes of pastoral purity and urban decay, and drawing the connection between geographic place and intellectual space (urban-congested/rural-

⁸ Sid Adilman, “Lost Chord”.

⁹ Bob Pennington, “Gould discovers his home town”.

¹⁰ Mary Vipond, *The Mass Media in Canada* (Toronto: James Lorimer & Company Ltd., 2011), 10-11.

¹¹ Galley proof of script for *Glenn Gould’s Toronto* (Nov., 1980).

liberated). Gould appeals to the Canadian fascination with landscape and the North, and a Canadian discourse of identity founded not so much on the question of ‘who am I?’ but ‘where is here?’¹²

- b) the dialectic of technological nationalism and continentalism. As an immense landmass with a small, scattered, and diverse population, Canada’s material and mythological definition as a nation has been bound up with the idea of communication.¹³ The development of a nation-wide communications infrastructure has historically been essential to Canadian cultural and political integration. The Canadian mass media, and their institutional and technological contexts of production, have thus operated at the centre of national life. Yet a countervailing ideology of liberal individualism, associated with free-market principles and a tightening of economic, cultural, and technological ties to America, has inspired the need for protectionist measures at the federal and provincial level of Canadian government.¹⁴ Gould’s film addresses the Canadian preoccupation with communication and the threat of Americanisation through a consideration of modern Toronto’s technological landmarks and the relationship of Toronto’s technological culture to the conflict between the city’s traditional and progressive cultural orientations. Towering skyscrapers and gleaming banks are cited as evidence of a new vulgar, materialistic, fashion-conscious mindset imported from America which has disturbed the ‘sober, restrained Toronto mindscape’.¹⁵ Yet Gould also extols the virtues of Toronto’s technological culture, suggesting it provides an ‘alternative environment’ which is ‘comforting’ and conducive to his personal and professional well-being, and has largely resisted the forces of American integration.¹⁶

¹² Northrop Frye, “Conclusion to a ‘Literary History of Canada’”, 222.

¹³ Mary Vipond, *The Mass Media in Canada*, 12.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 13.

¹⁵ *Glenn Gould’s Toronto* (John McGreevy Productions, Nielsen-Ferns International, 1979). Part of McGreevy’s *Cities* series. First broadcast on CBC Television, Sep. 27, 1979.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*

c) Canadian communitarianism and fame culture. For sociologist Seymour Lipset, Canada is ‘a more class-aware, elitist, law-abiding, statist, collectivity-oriented, and particularistic (group-oriented) society than the United States’.¹⁷ This may account for the fact that Canadian celebrity culture is more localised than its U.S. counterpart, with Toronto’s strong media industry playing a vital role in familiarising local talent to local audiences.¹⁸ Gould’s film highlights various aspects of Canadian communitarianism as manifested in Toronto’s civic life, whether it be by drawing attention to the historic ‘island community’ off of Toronto’s south coast, relating the story of local resistance to the purchase of a Henry Moore sculpture, or in associating the distinctiveness of Toronto’s city core with its ‘vital downtown neighbourhoods’.¹⁹ Describing himself as an ‘anti-hero’, and praising the anonymity and moral restraint of the city, Gould also speaks to a particularly Canadian view of fame which defines itself in opposition to a loud, frenetic, and morally suspect culture of Hollywood celebrity. The group-oriented and self-deprecating Canadian sensibility informed local press response to the film, one critic suggesting that ‘Gould’s Toronto is replete with criticism he is able to make as a native born and would not come as well from even those of us who have chosen this as our home’.²⁰

Gould ruled out a strictly autobiographical approach to his subject matter. Although stating that the ‘images in [his] memory bank have to do with the Toronto of the Forties and early Fifties when [he] was a teenager’, Gould, in the main, chooses not to revisit the places and experiences that shaped his early development.²¹ Rather, drawing on his innovative approach to radio documentary, Gould instead decided to create a ‘mood piece’ – in this case, a mapping of Toronto’s modern psychological geography by bringing an ‘old-world’ mindset to

¹⁷ Seymour Martin Lipset, *North-American Cultures: Values and Institutions in Canada and the United States*, 2.

¹⁸ Samita Nandy, *Fame in Hollywood North*, 27.

¹⁹ *Glenn Gould’s Toronto*.

²⁰ Bob Pennington, “Gould discovers his home town”.

²¹ *Glenn Gould’s Toronto*.

bear on ‘new-world’ conditions.²² Gould’s Toronto is located in the interplay of British standards of morality and conduct, an American philosophy of commercial enterprise, and a European spirit of cultural adventure. His is a bustling technological metropolis with an environmentalist streak, a city of banks and a city of churches, a spearhead of the Canadian cultural revolution and yet one ever-mindful of its roots and fragile identity. The viewer is led, irresistibly, to the conclusion that Gould himself is the sum of these contradictions that he recognises in the city.

Critics intuitively responded to the film’s appeal to Canadian myths of landscape, technology, and community as articulated in Gould’s perceptive account of Toronto’s physical and cultural environment, its technological culture, and its vital neighbourhoods. These national myths and local contexts, so thoroughly absorbed by Gould, were precisely those that nurtured Gould’s rise to local musical stardom in the earliest years of his life.

Part I: Gould’s Celebrity Psychology (1932-1945): ‘Toronto the Good’ and Family Values

Gould’s admirers have generally felt that the milieu of pre-war Toronto offered an inhospitable cultural environment for the development of his creative life and colourful artistic personae.²³ They suggest that Gould’s cosmopolitan musical interests and radical temperament could not have been influenced by a city whose culture was so parochial and beholden to staid English cultural- and institutional norms. Bazzana offers two responses to this claim. First, he suggests it neglects to consider how the city’s culture exerted a negative form of influence on the pianist: in other words, how Gould’s appetite for more sophisticated and adventurous cultural experiences was stimulated precisely by the perceived lack of such opportunities at home. Second, he argues that even the more idiosyncratic aspects of Gould’s

²² Gould refers to his CBC radio documentary on Richard Strauss (1979) as a “mood piece” in a letter to Paul Myers of CBS Records, May 1976. See John Roberts & Ghyslaine Guertin (eds.), *Glenn Gould: Selected Letters* (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1992), 228.

²³ As argued by Kevin Bazzana, *Wondrous Strange*, 13.

identity reveal the pianist as someone who ‘remained, all his life, in fundamental ways, an old Toronto boy’.²⁴ In his need for solitude, he was the Canadian ‘homebody whose idea of a good time was to stay in alone’.²⁵ In referring to himself as ‘the Last Puritan’, he was invoking the influence of his Wasp upbringing in Toronto’s leafy suburbs.²⁶ Following Bazzana, this section argues for the influence of pre-war Torontonians on the development of Gould’s artistic temperament. I draw heavily on Helen Mesaros’ psychological study *Bravo Fortissimo Glenn Gould: The Mind of a Canadian Virtuoso* (2008), a source rarely quoted in the Gould literature, but that, by far, gives the most comprehensive and detailed account of Gould’s early career and personal development.

At the time of Gould’s birth, approximately eighty percent of Toronto’s 630,000 inhabitants identified as British.²⁷ The Orange Order, a Protestant fraternal organisation with roots in Scotland and Ireland, held religious sway over Toronto well into the Fifties, propagating strict codes of morality and ensuring that the tempo of city life was adjusted to the demands of the church.²⁸ Loyalty to King and Country was expected of citizens, a residue of the British Tory hegemony over Toronto’s political culture.²⁹ A colonial mindset prevailed, which led to the underestimation and neglect of native Canadian talent and achievement.³⁰ The artistic situation was worsened by the effects of the Great Depression, as the city’s cultural life became the first victim of tightened personal and federal budgets. Cultural historian Ezra Schabas has written of how the arts were deemed an elitist and frivolous luxury undeserving of state or municipal funding.³¹ In common with European countries, the city had also adopted discriminatory social policies that targeted minority communities, and this prevented

²⁴ Ibid., 13.

²⁵ Ibid., 318.

²⁶ I.e. White Anglo-Saxon Protestant (“Wasp”).

²⁷ Robin Elliott, “Toronto: The Social and Artistic Context” in John Beckwith & Brian Cherney (eds.), *Weinzweig: Essays on His Life and Music* (Waterloo: Wilfred Laurier University Press, 2011), 32.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ “We Beaches people . . . accepted England and the King as fixed stars in the heavens”, Robert Fulford in William Kilbourn (ed.), *Toronto Remembered: A Celebration of the City* (Ontario: Stoddart Publishing, 1984).

³⁰ Ezra Schabas, *Sir Ernest MacMillan: The Importance of Being Canadian* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1994), 112.

³¹ Ibid.

the flowering of a cosmopolitan artistic culture.³² Local composer Godfrey Ridout declared the Thirties ‘a low point in the history of music in Canada’.³³ Outsiders were known to deride the city’s dowdy conservatism and moral prudishness (‘Long ago a moth imprisoned in a musty purse invented the Toronto mind’, commented one journalist).³⁴

Gould was fully immersed in this environment. He was born in ‘the most British neighbourhood of the most British major city in the most British province of a former British colony’.³⁵ Ninety-eight percent white, protestant, and solidly middle class, the Beaches area of Toronto has been described by Gould’s next-door neighbour Robert Fulford as:

. . . the best place in the world to spend childhood, the worst place in the world to spend adolescence. [. . .] it was a closed, deadening WASP world, a suspicious and narrow and clique-ish little compartment in which we all worked hard to avoid knowing both ourselves and our neighbours. [. . .] [It was a] world in which art, imagination and genuine politics played no part at all.³⁶

Gould’s mother has been described as ‘censorious’ and ‘prudish’, his father ‘organized and disciplined’.³⁷ Adhering to a rigid moral code and protestant work ethic, they were a clear product of their time and place. Deviating from the image presented by Fulford, however, both were actively involved in the amateur musical scene of the time – specifically, Toronto’s strong choral- and church music traditions. While Fulford appears to juxtapose the ‘WASP world’ and the world of art and imagination, the Goulds clearly saw them as complementary: music helped to build good moral character, and acclimatised one to the mores and habits of respectable bourgeois society.

³² John Beckwith, *Unheard Of: Memoires of a Canadian Composer* (Toronto: Wilfred Laurier Press, 2012), 64; Kevin Bazzana, *Wondrous Strange*, 24.

³³ Ridout is quoted by Robin Elliott in “Toronto: The Social and Artistic Context”, 41.

³⁴ The quote is by Canadian journalist Scott Young, and is referenced in William Kilbourn (ed.), *Toronto Remembered*, 146.

³⁵ Kevin Bazzana, *Wondrous Strange*, 19.

³⁶ Robert Fulford in William Kilbourn (ed.), *The Toronto Book: An Anthology of Writings Past and Present* (Toronto: MacMillan Company of Canada, 1976), 90, 97.

³⁷ Robert Fulford in Colin Eatock (ed.), *Remembering Glenn Gould: Twenty Interviews with People Who Knew Him* (Canada: Penumra Press, 2012), 145; Robert Fulford in Helen Mesaros, *Bravo Fortissimo*, 44; Kevin Bazzana, *Wondrous Strange*, 36.

In her capacity as both Gould biographer and psychiatrist, Helen Mesaros has suggested that ‘the role of parents, and particularly, the nature of the relationship between gifted children and their parents’ has a very strong bearing on the early psychological development of distinguished musical artists.³⁸ Thus, for Gould scholar Kevin Bazzana, ‘we may credit much of [Gould’s] later confidence and originality as a performer to the [family] support he received as a child’.³⁹ Certainly the literature makes clear that Gould’s mother was the most decisive psychological influence on Gould in the first ten years of his life.⁴⁰ Herself a piano teacher and singing coach by occupation, and one with latent frustrations that she had not advanced her musical career further, Florence carefully nurtured Gould’s talents, applying her own strict and regimented approach to his musical training from the age of three, while offering him regular encouragement and rewarding his musical success. The nature of Florence’s devotion to her only child is made clear in a letter written to her by a friend shortly after Gould’s tumultuous American concert debut in 1955:

You were never satisfied with just anything, you wanted only the best, the old saying ‘hitch your wagon to a star’.⁴¹

Mesaros argues that Gould responded well to Florence’s method of instruction, the young pianist seeing his technical progress at the instrument as a means to his mother’s affection. Florence was clearly a powerful force of validation for the young Gould, and it is not hard to see how the pianist’s work ethic at the instrument, disciplined approach to the learning of new music, and hunger for new repertoire in later years was buoyed by the musical confidence, rigour, and drive instilled in him by his mother in his childhood.

³⁸ Helen Mesaros, *Bravo Fortissimo Glenn Gould: The Mind of a Canadian Virtuoso* (Maryland: Heritage Special Edition American Literary Press, 2008), 32.

³⁹ Kevin Bazzana, *Wondrous Strange*, 56.

⁴⁰ Kevin Bazzana, *Wondrous Strange*, 32; Peter Ostwald, *Ecstasy and Tragedy of Genius*, 61; Otto Friedrich, *Glenn Gould: A Life and Variations*, 30.

⁴¹ Letter to Florence Gould from “Pearl” (Feb. 2, 1955).

In matters of personal development, Gould was ‘raised to be a nice boy, well-behaved, well-spoken, and always clean, tidy, and inoffensive . . . this was the ego-ideal of his mother’.⁴² Gould ‘identified with [Florence’s] strict moral values, puritanism, tendency toward rational thinking, and emotional inhibition’.⁴³ It is likely, then, that his mother’s Protestant worldview had some influence on his mature moral thinking, media identity, and artistic premises.⁴⁴ It is revealing that, upon his mother’s death in 1975, Gould chose to emphasise his mother’s religious commitments in his obituary for her, speaking of her ‘tremendous faith’ and her attraction to music for the sacred service.⁴⁵

Peter Ostwald’s psychobiography *The Ecstasy and Tragedy of Genius* (1997) was the intellectual inspiration for Mesaros’ work, and Ostwald’s view that ‘the hereditary element [of musicality] in [Gould’s] neurological makeup was . . . fortified by both his parents’ provides the starting point for Mesaros’ study.⁴⁶ Mesaros more fully develops Ostwald’s idea that Gould’s increasing emotional dependence on his mother in early childhood manifested psychological traits which would inform his later public image. Both attend to the effects of his social anxiety on his performance psychology. Both also read psychological significance into the change of the family name from ‘Gold’ to ‘Gould’ in December 1938, a decision taken by Gould’s mother.⁴⁷ Mesaros argues that this decision, taken in light of rising anti-semitism in the neighbourhood, had a ‘profound emotional impact’ on the young Gould.⁴⁸

Ostwald considers the issue in relation to Gould’s developing psychology of performance. He writes:

⁴² Helen Mesaros, *Bravo Fortissimo*, 82. Gould, obviously, did not always live up to this ideal!

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 32.

⁴⁴ Gould scholars Kevin Bazzana, Geoffrey Payzant, Juha Markus Mantere, Elizabeth Angilette, and Georges Leroux have all studied Gould’s moral writings. Bazzana has suggested that Bach and Schoenberg provided Gould with models of “structural density” and “an idealistic attitude towards music” which formed an intellectual axis for his aesthetic ideas, interpretations, and performance style. See Kevin Bazzana, *Performer in the Work* (1997); Geoffrey Payzant, *Music & Mind* (1978); Juha Markus Mantere, “The Gould Variations”; Elizabeth Angilette, *Philosopher at the Keyboard* (1992); Georges Leroux, *Partita for Glenn Gould: An Inquiry into the Nature of Genius*, tr. Donald Winkler (Québec: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2010).

⁴⁵ Gould quoted in Peter Ostwald, *Ecstasy and Tragedy of Genius*, 37.

⁴⁶ Peter Ostwald, *Ecstasy and Tragedy of Genius*, 45.

⁴⁷ Helen Mesaros, *Bravo Fortissimo*, 41.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

. . . I cannot believe that the boy had no feelings about being made to give up a name that has so many desirable associations – money, glitter, wealth, treasure – and that must have become part of his positive self-image in the course of his appearances under the name ‘Glen[n] Gold’.⁴⁹

Mesaros speculates that Florence’s decision was motivated by a desire to safeguard the life chances of her son: having an Anglo-Saxon name would give Gould a better chance of success in his musical career.

Mesaros proposes three other psychological influences on the young Gould in this earliest period: his relationship to his father, the death of family members, and the war effort.⁵⁰ First, Gould’s father, Bert, is presented as a negative psychological influence on the young pianist. Bert’s stereotypically ‘masculine’ worldview conflicted with the artistic interests of Gould and his mother.⁵¹ He resented the fact that Gould was unwilling to take over the family fur business. The sense of antagonism between Gould and his father was intensified via the role of his mother, with Mesaros even claiming that the three related to each other in terms of an ‘Oedipal triangle’, in which Bert competed with Gould for Florence’s affections.⁵² Second, Mesaros speculates that the death of Gould’s maternal grandmother and granduncle in 1939 heightened his feelings of social anxiety, alienation, and existential angst, and drew him closer still to his mother and her religious mindset. Third, she claims that Gould’s ‘frail sense of self’ was further destabilised by the Second World War and its attendant hardship, suffering, and social disruption.⁵³

⁴⁹ Peter Ostwald, *Ecstasy and Tragedy of Genius*, 55.

⁵⁰ Helen Mesaros, *Bravo Fortissimo*, 419, 42.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 52-53.

⁵² *Ibid.*, 152.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 43.

Material Contexts for Gould's Celebrity (1932-1945): Parental Support, and the Early Toronto Music Scene

Gould's psychological preparedness for the role of idiosyncratic musician and celebrity was a necessary but not sufficient condition for his musical success in the public eye. He also needed access to musical institutions and musical networks that would allow him to derive maximum personal and professional advantage from his skill and dedication. As Bazzana writes, 'talent and ambition are useless where opportunity is wanting'. Fortunately for Gould, he was 'in the right place at the right time'.⁵⁴ While it is true that Toronto's musical culture before and during the war was under-developed, it still afforded access to a variety of musical experiences which would serve Gould's early development well. The city was, after all, the nation's second largest in terms of population after Montreal, and Canada's financial capital.⁵⁵ In fact, those culturally active at the time suggest that, relative to the state of the performing arts more generally, Toronto's music scene fared quite well.⁵⁶ There was a solid choral- and church music tradition, a well-respected chamber ensemble in the Hart House String Quartet (1926), and a symphony orchestra and conductor of national stature in the Toronto Symphony Orchestra (T.S.O.; 1906) and Sir Ernest MacMillan (1893-1973).⁵⁷ The Toronto Conservatory of Music (1886) and Toronto Music Faculty (1918), both affiliated with the University of Toronto (1827), provided systematic instruction in music performance, theory, and history.⁵⁸ The University of Toronto Press (1901), local magazine publications *Saturday Night* (1887) and *Maclean's* (1911), and CBC Radio were the main vehicles for the dissemination of musical culture to the wider public – not just Canadian culture, but also culture from the

⁵⁴ Kevin Bazzana, *Wondrous Strange*, 116.

⁵⁵ *The Canada Year Book 1932* (Ottawa: F. A. Acland, 1932). See http://www66.statcan.gc.ca/eng/acyb_c1932-eng.aspx?opt=/eng/1932/193201410103_p.%20103.pdf (accessed Jan. 19, 2017).

⁵⁶ Ezra Schabas, *Sir Ernest MacMillan*, 112. Robert Fulford writes, "Anyone in Toronto who was going to be as fine an artist as Glenn became would, almost of necessity, have been a musician" in Colin Eatock, *Remembering Glenn Gould*, 145.

⁵⁷ Ezra Schabas, *Sir Ernest MacMillan*, 112-113.

⁵⁸ See John Beckwith, "Toronto: Youth" in *Unheard Of: Memoires of a Canadian Composer*; and Robin Elliott, "Toronto: The Social and Artistic Context".

‘home country’ and, increasingly, from the U.S.⁵⁹ Unlike in American cities, however, local- and state funding for the arts was unforthcoming, which necessarily reduced the scale and scope of local musical productions and programming.⁶⁰ Despite this, there was a healthy interest in Toronto’s musical culture from the wider society – an interest catered to by the city’s prestigious and high-capacity concert halls – and indeed from abroad: composers George Gershwin and Igor Stravinsky, conductors Adrian Boult and Heinz Unger, and performers Percy Grainger and Josef Hofmann all contributed to the city’s musical life in this decade.⁶¹

Gould’s mother introduced the young pianist to this artistic environment, keen to broaden his musical horizons and educate him in the ways of polite society. Gould himself attended the Hofmann recital at age six – his first concert – and he would later talk of the ‘staggering impression’ that it made on his early musical development.⁶² Mesaros relates that Gould was also an avid listener to the radio, tuning in regularly to the concerts given by the New York Philharmonic and organist E. Power Biggs, as well as the musical programming of the CBC. His family also owned a gramophone, and his mother would take him to see ‘musical movies’.⁶³ This speaks to the family’s personal and material investment in Gould’s musical upbringing, perhaps the decisive factor in considering how his early environment provided him with the springboard for his musical success. Both sides of Gould’s family were ‘distinguished and socially affluent’.⁶⁴ When combined with his mother’s total commitment to his son’s musical development (and Gould’s aptitude for music), it created the optimum set of conditions for his artistic growth. Mesaros relates that ‘the entire running of [the Gould family] household was geared towards the needs of the little newcomer’ and that Florence ‘insisted on Glenn having all the comforts of quality clothes, tutorials, and piano lessons,

⁵⁹ Robin Elliott, “Toronto: The Social and Artistic Context”, 38.

⁶⁰ Ezra Schabas, *Sir Ernest MacMillan*, 113.

⁶¹ Ezra Schabas, *Sir Ernest MacMillan*, 122, 181; Otto Friedrich, *Glenn Gould: A Life and Variations*, 16.

⁶² Vincent Tovell, “At Home with Glenn Gould”, 66-88.

⁶³ Helen Mesaros, *Bravo Fortissimo*, 45.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 23.

often supplied at her own expense'.⁶⁵ The primary source of funding, however, was Gould's father, a furrier with a successful family business. Realising the extent of Gould's talents, and perhaps appreciating Gould's personal dedication to his craft, Bert could apparently overcome his reservations about Gould's interest in pursuing a musical career, and invested huge sums (\$3,000 per year) in Gould's musical education, in Gould's instruments, and in the construction of a home annex for Gould to practice and study.⁶⁶ He was also his son's musical handyman, responsible for building the adjustable chair which would later become synonymous with Gould the performing artist.⁶⁷ Gould readily conceded his status as the pampered only-child in later years: 'I had things very much, too much, my own way', he told Toronto journalist Dennis Braithwaite in 1959. He reflected that this was harmful to his social development, but beneficial to his musical development in equipping him with 'the supreme arrogance a concert artist requires', yielding an example of how his family's material circumstances influenced his evolving musical psychology.⁶⁸

The economic, social, and cultural capital of Gould's parents opened up a world of musical opportunities to their son. These were not available to other children who, while perhaps equally talented, did not possess the resources necessary to gain favour with the city's musical opinion-formers or media elite.

First, his family's religious connections provided him with early opportunities to develop and showcase his skills as a public performer in a church setting.⁶⁹ Both of his parents had family roots in the town of Uxbridge, and both inherited a tradition of religious and musical service, reflective of the privileged role of the church in Canadian social and cultural life. Gould's great-grandfather was a Methodist minister in Uxbridge (1886), his grandfather Tom Gold

⁶⁵ Ibid., 27, 47.

⁶⁶ Kevin Bazzana, *Wondrous Strange*, 56; Peter Ostwald, *Ecstasy and Tragedy of Genius*, 49.

⁶⁷ Peter Ostwald, *Ecstasy and Tragedy of Genius*, 74.

⁶⁸ Dennis Braithwaite, "'I'm a Child of Nature'"; Kevin Bazzana, *Wondrous Strange*, 54.

⁶⁹ The Glenn Gould Archives contain at least eight programmes relating to his church performances in Toronto and the surrounding area in the period 1938-1945, while Helen Mesaros suggests that there were "at least two dozen more" before he was six. See Ruth Pincoe, *Descriptive Catalogue of the Glenn Gould Papers* (Ottawa: Canada Communication Group, 1992), 60-61; Helen Mesaros, *Bravo Fortissimo*, 1.

had founded the much-celebrated Uxbridge Bible Class (1907), and his grandmother Alma Horne had played piano and organ for the local Sunday church service.⁷⁰ Gould had occasion to perform to large and sympathetic audiences as a solo performer or as accompanist to his parents' vocal performances, to familiarise himself with the hymnal repertoire, and to build a local profile. It is instructive that what Mesaros calls his 'live debut', on June 5 1938, to a congregation of 1,600 people, took place in the context of the 'Golden Jubilee' celebrations of his grandfather's Bible Class. That this occasion heralded Gould's first public notice in the print press speaks to the importance of the event.⁷¹

Second, Gould's parents were involved in a special capacity with the Kiwanis Music Festival, one of English-Canada's most important annual music competitions. Bert Gould has been described as a 'moving force' behind the festival. He contributed time and money to the festival out of a desire to help aspiring pianists like his son.⁷² The festival testified to the influence of 'British ideals of music . . . of British manners and values' on Canadian musical life of the twentieth century.⁷³ Prize-winning concerts attracted local talent scouts, and prize winners could expect trophies, musical scholarships, and recognition in the local media by respected critics. Gould appeared in the festival in three consecutive years (1944-1946), he won a first-prize trophy in his first year of entry, his performances were reviewed in Toronto's major broadsheets, and he met his concert manager Walter Homburger through the festival (in 1946).⁷⁴ These festivals also afforded Gould important early opportunities of competing seriously with other promising young artists, and provided musical experiences

⁷⁰ Helen Mesaros, *Bravo Fortissimo*, 7-24.

⁷¹ Helen Mesaros, *Bravo Fortissimo*, 1; Anon., "Golden Jubilee services – Uxbridge United Church" in *Uxbridge Times Journal* (Jun. 9, 1938).

⁷² Peter Ostwald, *Ecstasy and Tragedy of Genius*, 75.

⁷³ Kevin Bazzana, *Wondrous Strange*, 54.

⁷⁴ Colin Eatock, *Remembering Glenn Gould*, 3; Anon., "Young musicians win applause as festival ends" in *Toronto Globe and Mail* (Mar. 5, 1945).

that would inform his criticism of public performance and music competitions in his later writings.⁷⁵

Third, the family's prosperity provided Gould with the resources to balance the demands of his school work and musical life, and opened doors to distinguished music pedagogues and high-profile performers who were able to confirm Gould's musical talents, advise him and his parents on career matters, and teach him.⁷⁶ Such a consultation informed his mother's decision to enrol Gould at the Toronto Conservatory of Music (TCM), which he attended from 1940 to 1952. The TCM's English-derived musical curriculum may have appeared unadventurous to a musician of Gould's temperament. Nevertheless, it provided him with solid instruction in performance (piano and organ), theory, history, ear-training, and sight-singing which would contribute to his versatility as a musician. Gould's performance aesthetic was shaped in important ways by his new piano teacher Alberto Guerrero (1943-1952). His theoretical understanding and appreciation of Baroque repertoire owed much to the influence of his theory teacher Leo Smith (1940-47) and organ instructor Frederick Silvester (1942-49), who both hailed from an English church music tradition. Gould also benefited from the new financial health of the TCM in the early Forties (he received two scholarships while he was a student there), as well as his new social milieu. He would have had opportunities to interact with English and German war refugees, but also with leaders of Canadian musical life on the TCM staff such as Ernest MacMillan and Ettore Mazzoleni with whom Gould would later collaborate.⁷⁷ Gould achieved an impressive roster of examination successes and awards while at the Conservatory. The graded course of piano and theory

⁷⁵ Glenn Gould, "We, Who Are About To Be Disqualified, Salute You!" in *High Fidelity*, Vol. 16, No. 12 (Dec., 1966).

⁷⁶ Helen Mesaros, *Bravo Fortissimo*, 29, 39. Gould devoted afternoons to his music education and received private tuition on his school subjects in the evenings. He continued this routine throughout his school life (c. 1940-52).

⁷⁷ See Ezra Schabas, *A History of the Royal Conservatory of Music* (Toronto: Dundurn Press, 2005), 69-90. Schabas suggests the TCM's economic fortunes turned with the appointment of Floyd Chalmers as vice-president in 1935. He accomplished the unique feat of securing provincial funding for the Conservatory in 1938 (of \$15,000), which was thenceforth renewed annually. Eight years later, he persuaded the provincial government to cancel the TCM's debt of \$200,000 (Sep. 12, 1946), making a case for the competitive threat to the TCM's cultural standing posed by music institutions in Québec and the United States.

instruction that he took while at the TCM was directly modelled on the British examination system, and further testified to the colonial influence on Canadian musical life.⁷⁸

Promotional Contexts for Gould's Celebrity (1932-1945): Family Guardianship, and Community Support

Sociologist Olivier Driessens has defined celebrity as ‘recognizability, or . . . accumulated media visibility which results from recurrent media representations’.⁷⁹ One story of Gould’s early celebrity career, then, is the story of him securing the attention of an audience and gaining a foothold in Toronto’s emerging media marketplace. Gould’s multifarious performing activities, wedded to a series of exceptional musical accomplishments, provided the perfect vehicle for broad-based exposure to the local public in these formative years. First, from the age of four he performed regularly to large and sympathetic audiences at local churches, festivals, and schools in Toronto, Uxbridge, and Orillia.⁸⁰ Second, from the age of seven to twelve he won sustained media attention through his prodigious exam achievements in piano and organ performance at the TCM. Local newspapers often framed their discussion of Gould’s musical prowess in terms of his youth, his tally of medals and scholarships, and unparalleled musical success at the provincial level. These articles were often accompanied by formal portraits of the young pianist which served to emphasise Gould’s upright character and social standing.⁸¹ Third, from the age of eleven to thirteen, his string of first-prize performances at the Kiwanis Music Festivals (broadcast on local radio) earned him the respect of Toronto’s most distinguished music critics and the lay public. While musical precedent and cultural insecurity may have suggested that Gould’s mounting professional

⁷⁸ He passed the conservatory’s final exams in piano performance in 1945 with the highest marks in the dominion of Canada, aged just twelve.

⁷⁹ Olivier Driessens, “Celebrity capital: redefining celebrity using field theory” in *Theory and Society*, Vol. 42, No. 5 (2013).

⁸⁰ Orillia is a town on the northern shores of Lake Simcoe. Gould’s father built a small family cottage close to the town after Gould’s birth, on the shores of Uptergrove.

⁸¹ Anon., “Wins Three Medals” in *Toronto Telegram* (Oct. 28, 1944); “Wins New Honours” in *Uxbridge Times Journal* (Feb. 26, 1941); Graham Carr, “Visualizing ‘The Sound of Genius’”, 11.

ambitions were unrealistic (Toronto had until then produced no home-grown pianist with an international career) and presumptuous (that a ‘colonial subject’ could achieve musical pre-eminence), the domestic, collaborative, and community-oriented nature of the city’s music scene and media culture provided him with the means to achieve local fame and acclaim as a concert artist and musical personality.⁸²

Gould’s biographers make it clear that Bert and Florence Gould wished to steer a musical course for their son which was most conducive to his personal and professional development. According to Ostwald and Mesaros, Florence already considered Gould a genius at age three, comparing him to the child prodigy Mozart.⁸³ While Gould had decided on a career as a concert pianist as early as age five, both parents were especially careful not to over-expose or in any way exploit their son’s exceptional talent. It was important for them that he lead a normal childhood, especially as his musical commitments escalated in his pre-adolescent years.⁸⁴ In those performances that Gould did give, Mesaros suggests that Florence was especially keen to promote her son as a model of normalcy and decorum, and a shining example of music’s capacity to elevate the minds and habits of the young:

In public, he was known as a well-behaved and immaculately dressed child. His wardrobe was carefully designed and sewn by his mother . . . Glenn’s clothes were in the high and formal style of the day.

Elegant suits made of white satin or black velvet, crisp white shirts, polka dot ties, white knee-highs, black patent shoes . . . His mother tutored him in the social etiquette of the day to refine his demeanour.

The whole presentation of Glenn at the age of six, with both his natural and acquired charms, was that of Little Lord Gould.⁸⁵

Thus, we can identify how Gould’s tentative first steps into the world of music celebrity were beholden to a parental strategy of promotion which was itself contingent on certain material and cultural factors. In the first place, Gould’s family wealth minimised the risk of the boy

⁸² Colin Eatock, *Remembering Glenn Gould*, 42; Robin Elliott, “Toronto: The Social and Artistic Context”, 36.

⁸³ Helen Mesaros, *Bravo Fortissimo*, 45; Peter Ostwald, *Ecstasy and Tragedy of Genius*, 45.

⁸⁴ Peter Ostwald, *Ecstasy and Tragedy of Genius*, 62.

⁸⁵ Helen Mesaros, *Bravo Fortissimo*, 37.

being subject to cynical commercial exploitation by his parents, and allowed him to develop at his own pace free of financial burden. In the second, the family's ambition for their son to lead a personal and professional life in keeping with the conservative moral and social norms of Toronto's middle-class culture was conditioned and facilitated by their considerable economic and cultural wealth, providing Gould with access to material and psychological signifiers of 'bourgeois respectability' (e.g. his 'immaculate dress' and 'acquired charms').

The importance of Toronto's social organisation as a patchwork of tightly knit communities to the local dissemination of Gould's name and reputation comes through particularly strongly in these early years. In the earliest reviews of Gould's performances and achievements in the *Uxbridge Times Journal*, for example, the boy is described as 'a grandson of Mr. and Mrs. Thomas G. Gould, of town', implying a certain social competency on the part of the reader, and one which could be used to situate Gould's musical success in relation to his background.⁸⁶ Mesaros has argued for the promotional significance of Gould's participation in the musical programmes of 'local churches and social gatherings', relating that his regular Sunday performances earned him the local nickname of 'wonder child of the Beaches'.⁸⁷ At the TCM, meanwhile, Gould's involvement in student circles built him a reputation among the movers and shakers of Canadian musical life such as Ernest MacMillan and Healey Willan, and his toppling of community talent at the Kiwanis competitions also helped boost his social authority.⁸⁸

In sum, Gould's musical and psychological affinities with his mother and Wasp culture, his fortuitous material circumstances and broad-based exposure to Toronto's musical life, and

⁸⁶ Anon., *Uxbridge Times Journal* (Feb. 29, 1940).

⁸⁷ Helen Mesaros, *Bravo Fortissimo*, 3.

⁸⁸ Healey Willan (1880-1968) was a much-respected organist and composer who worked at the TCM as a performance examiner and theory teacher. Ostwald relates the story of Joyce Whitney, a girl who "had established a reputation for herself as the most outstanding child pianist in the neighbourhood" and her musical demise at the hands of Gould at Kiwanis. See Peter Ostwald, *Ecstasy and Tragedy of Genius*, 79-80.

insinuation in the city's artistic and media circles, meant that, by thirteen, he had become a 'bona fide local celebrity' and one well on the path to national stardom.⁸⁹

Part II: Gould's Celebrity Psychology (1945-1954): Toronto's Cultural Awakening, and the Maturing Artistic Ego

Glenn Gould's career as a musician and celebrity entered a new phase in 1945. Gould's professional debut as organist in Toronto's prestigious Eaton Auditorium in December of that year has been described as his 'first truly important appearance' and marked the beginning of Gould's 'organized and broad music exposure to the public'.⁹⁰ It also marked the beginning of Gould's high school education at Malvern Collegiate Institute. The school had organised the concert, and while Gould remained somewhat detached from Malvern's social and academic life, he partook in the musical life of the school as occasional performer and composer.⁹¹ Gould's awareness of his fast-emerging reputation in school and Conservatory circles as a prodigious and awe-inspiring genius fed a new self-confidence and a new attitude towards fame as a vehicle for power and musical immortality which fortified his psychology of performance in his adolescent years.⁹² On a personal level, Gould's emotional dependency on his mother was beginning to manifest in terms of peculiar habits and mannerisms which would come to define his reception as a musician and public personality. At the same time, Gould was entering the phase of adolescent individuation, and with this came a desire to move beyond the psychological, musical, and intellectual constraints imposed on him by his family and his cultural situation.

Gould's appetite for bigger and better artistic experiences was catered to by the new economic, political, and cultural conditions in post-war Toronto. The new financial prosperity

⁸⁹ Kevin Bazzana, *Wondrous Strange*, 81.

⁹⁰ Peter Ostwald, *Ecstasy and Tragedy of Genius*, 76; Helen Mesaros, *Bravo Fortissimo*, 57.

⁹¹ Kevin Bazzana, *Wondrous Strange*, 55.

⁹² Gould stated that "performing before an audience gave me a glorious sense of power at fifteen" (Friedrich, *A Life and Variations*, 36). Canadian composer Oskar Morawetz suggests that Gould's ambitions as a composer were related to his desire for immortality (Ostwald, *Ecstasy and Tragedy of Genius*, 95).

of middle-class Canadians had engendered new interest in bourgeois recreational activities such as attending classical concerts, and had fuelled the expansion and professionalisation of the performance culture and business culture of serious music in Canada.⁹³ The war effort had also given a new sense of urgency to the debate surrounding Canadian identity and national belonging. The effectiveness of Canadian war propaganda films as a tool of national cohesion and pride had contributed to the feeling that Canada's fortunes as a forward-looking, autonomous, and unified nation were inevitably tied to the role of the Canadian arts and media in civic life. A cultural milestone was reached with the report of the Royal Commission on National Development in the Arts, Letters and Sciences ('Massey Commission', 1949-1951), which had recommended that the Canadian arts be subsidised through federal grants and overseen by new institutional bodies as part of the wider effort to nurture, preserve, and promote Canadian culture.⁹⁴ The Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC), as Canada's national broadcaster, played a vital role in securing and disseminating this new national vision.⁹⁵ It provided a national platform for native musicians such as Gould, and embodied modern Canada's new spirit of cultural pluralism and adventure in its ambitious programming of contemporary works by European and European émigré composers such as Oskar Morawetz, István Anhalt, and Tāļivaldis Ķeniņš.⁹⁶ Against this backdrop of artistic radicalism, cultural optimism, and technological nationalism, Gould acquired the psychological resources necessary for his success as an idiosyncratic musician, charismatic performer, and savvy media personality.

Gould became famous not only as a Bach interpreter, but as an interpreter of modernist works. He has suggested that he 'came alive to contemporary music' at age fifteen upon

⁹³ Ezra Schabas, *Sir Ernest MacMillan: The Importance of Being Canadian*, 201-202.

⁹⁴ The full text of this important document can be found at <https://www.collectionscanada.gc.ca/massey/index-e.html> (accessed Jan. 30, 2017).

⁹⁵ Kevin Bazzana, *Wondrous Strange*, 121.

⁹⁶ See John Beckwith, "Music" in Malcolm Ross (ed.), *The Arts in Canada* (Canada: The MacMillan Company of Canada Limited, 1958).

listening to a recording of Paul Hindemith's *Matthias the Painter*.⁹⁷ It is possible that he first encountered this work (and indeed many other modern works) on CBC Radio. Founded in 1936, the CBC had greatly expanded its resources, programming, and artistic range following the war, and would have exerted a tremendous influence on the musical worldview of an avid listener such as Gould.⁹⁸ At the Toronto Conservatory (renamed the Royal Conservatory of Music in 1947), while the continued dominance of a conservative English musical outlook bred a general antipathy to modernist composers, it still played host to some of them: Hindemith lectured at the Conservatory in January 1946, and Gould attended a conducting master class by Ernst Krenek there in 1953, an event which inspired Gould to incorporate more of Krenek's repertoire in his musical programmes.⁹⁹ In the wider city, solo and chamber music recitals offered the best opportunity for listening to avant-garde music.¹⁰⁰ Gould would also have encountered some modernist works via the programming of the Toronto Symphony (confined mostly to Sibelius and English 'modernists' such as Holst).¹⁰¹ The most powerful influence on Gould's emerging taste for modernism was undoubtedly his new teacher (1943-1952), Chilean pianist and pedagogue Alberto Guerrero. Guerrero was a singular force in the musical life of Toronto – a highly cultured and respected man responsible for introducing local audiences to the works of modernists such as Schoenberg, Hindemith, Stravinsky, and Milhaud, whom he championed through his solo recitals and his 'Five Piano Ensemble' in the 1920s and 1930s.¹⁰² Guerrero left 'permanent marks' on Gould, and while Gould's later reputation for originality precluded him from ever acknowledging the direct influence of his teacher, the centrality of early music and modernist composers to his repertoire, his love of Bach, his unorthodox technique and posture, his idealistic and 'structural' approach to music and performance, his musical versatility, seriousness, and headstrong personality were all

⁹⁷ Quoted in Otto Friedrich, *Glenn Gould: A Life and Variations*, 39.

⁹⁸ Kevin Bazzana, *Wondrous Strange*, 121.

⁹⁹ Kevin Bazzana, *Wondrous Strange*, 121; Helen Mesaros, *Bravo Fortissimo*, 102.

¹⁰⁰ Robin Elliott, "Toronto: The Social and Artistic Context", 40.

¹⁰¹ Kevin Bazzana, *Wondrous Strange*, 66.

¹⁰² Helen Mesaros, *Bravo Fortissimo*, 54.

conditioned and nurtured by Guerrero and his idiosyncratic pedagogical approach.¹⁰³ Taking over the role of Florence Gould, Guerrero set Gould's musical and personal psychology on the path to maturity.

There were three other major influences on Gould's psychological development in this period. First, as argued by Mesaros, Gould's closeness to his mother begat a 'complex, clandestine psychosomatic disorder' which interfered with his personal growth in his adolescence.¹⁰⁴ Both Mesaros and Ostwald trace a direct line from the adolescent Gould's quirky dress sense, hypochondria, musical humming, emotive presentation at the piano, and hatred of competition to his mother's concern for his physical health as a youngster, his mother's habit of using singing as a teaching aid, his proximity to his mother at the piano as a baby, and his jealousy of other music students receiving his mother's undivided attention at the home.¹⁰⁵

Second, Gould's upbringing in the leafy Beaches suburb of Toronto, and his extended residence at the lake-side cottage retreat in Uptergrove from 1952-1955, bred a love of nature and wildlife that had significant implications for his later celebrity image.¹⁰⁶ Bazzana claims that 'already as a child he felt a powerful attraction to all things northern'.¹⁰⁷ As I have begun to show in Chapter I, the idea of 'North' became central to Gould's self-representations and cultural reception as an artist and personality. It provided an iconography and rhetoric that helped facilitate the communication of Gould's creative and moral thought, and positioned him in relation to discourses of genius and national identity that have given shape and permanence to his modern mythology.

Third, Canadian radio exerted a significant psychological influence on Gould as a national model of communication. Robert Fulford has suggested that the Forties' generation was 'the

¹⁰³ Quoted from Guerrero student William Aide (Ostwald, *Ecstasy and Tragedy of Genius*, 104); Kevin Bazzana, *Wondrous Strange*, 60-61.

¹⁰⁴ Helen Mesaros, *Bravo Fortissimo*, 48.

¹⁰⁵ Helen Mesaros, *Bravo Fortissimo*, 47; Peter Ostwald, *Ecstasy and Tragedy of Genius*, 43, 50.

¹⁰⁶ Kevin Bazzana, *Wondrous Strange*, 23.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*

first and last generation to be so affected by [radio]’, and Gould himself claimed that national radio had a formative impact on his early musical development and approach to music.¹⁰⁸

Gould interacted with Canadian radio not only as a listener, but, increasingly from 1950, as a performer, fuelling a life-long fascination with the medium as a vehicle for his creative ideas.

Gould’s experiences in radio led him to value the idea of communication – an organising principle of Gould’s self-representation and reception that I examine in detail in Chapter I.

Given that Canadian identity ‘takes its shape and meaning from communications systems’, Gould’s psychological embrace of the radio and other media was a crucial element of his appeal to Canadian audiences.¹⁰⁹

Material Contexts for Gould’s Celebrity (1945-1954): Masseyism, the CBC, the RCM, Stratford

Gould’s access to a variety of important musical and technological experiences in post-war Toronto was afforded by a special set of economic, cultural, and institutional circumstances. These circumstances registered the new cultural urgency around issues of Canadian identity and sovereignty. The interest of Canadians in defining who and what they were had been stoked by the patriotic fervour of war, but also by recognition of the creeping Americanisation of Canadian cultural, political, and economic life; fears around the social implications of technology and automation; and concerns over the rapid demographic changes in Canadian society. Economic historian David Crane records that the war had ‘cemented the evolution of Canada into a North American economy’.¹¹⁰ Various Canadian writers have argued that the U.S. Federal Radio Commission (from 1934, the Federal Communications Commission) drew national attention to the issue of Canadian cultural and media sovereignty when it decided to

¹⁰⁸ Robert Fulford in Rhona Bergman, *The Idea of Gould* (Philadelphia: Lev Publishing, 1999), 9; Alan Rich, “Gould in Conversation with Alan Rich”, interview with KPFA Radio, California (Oct. 25, 1959).

¹⁰⁹ Robert Fulford in Mary Vipond, *The Mass Media in Canada*, 12.

¹¹⁰ David Crane, “Canada-US Economic Relations”. *The Canadian Encyclopedia*. See: <http://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/m/article/economic-canadian-american-relations/> (accessed Feb. 2, 2017).

grant the U.S. total control over the broadcast wavelength spectrum and, in 1943, fold Canada into its technological umbrella.¹¹¹ The decade of the Fifties saw Toronto's metropolitan population grow from 1,100,000 to 1,800,000, and the influx of immigrant communities saw Canadians of British descent become a minority.¹¹² Improved access to the capital, investment, and market of the United States had transformed the Toronto cityscape, and certainly we can be sure that Gould benefited both directly and indirectly from the new advertising agencies, publishing houses, and media facilities that flourished in this golden age of Canadian manufacturing.¹¹³ At the same time, continental integration with the U.S. posed significant challenges for the ability of Canadians to define and defend their own sense of culture and identity. These issues came to a head in the mid-Sixties, when criticisms of the CBC's content and policy provisions merged with frustration at the continentalist agenda of the reigning Liberal party, and a disenchantment with U.S. social and political leadership.

Cultural historian Ryan Edwardson distinguishes between two major 'moments' of Canadianisation. The first is what he terms 'Masseyism' or 'Masseyite nationalism'.¹¹⁴ Named after the wealthy Canadian philanthropist and politician Vincent Massey, 'Masseyism' emerged in the 1920s as a discourse of post-colonialism that associated ideas of nationhood with ideas of high cultural excellence and refinement. It found its chief cultural expression through the landmark 'Massey Commission' (1951). For the Masseyites, the content of culture mattered more than its origins, though the pervasive influence of the U.S. entertainment industries on Canadian life meant that their critiques generally adopted an anti-American cast. They were elitist and Anglophilic, and they viewed all forms of mass culture as socially corrosive. A second 'moment' occurred in the mid-Sixties. This was a new form of

¹¹¹ Samita Nandy, *Fame in Hollywood North*, 39; Geoffrey Waddington, "Music and Radio" in Ernest MacMillan, *Music in Canada* (Canada: University of Toronto Press, 1955); Mavor Moore, "Radio and Television" in Malcolm Ross (ed.), *The Arts in Canada*.

¹¹² William Kilbourn (ed.), *Toronto Remembered*, 135-136.

¹¹³ *Ibid.*, 134-135.

¹¹⁴ Ryan Edwardson, *Canadian Content: Culture and the Quest for Nationhood* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2008), 9.

‘civic nationalism’ that, in its bid to resist perceived American cultural domination, embraced multibrow content, rejected Masseyite internationalism, and sought to harness the power of indigenous Canadian myths and symbols.¹¹⁵ Both the Masseyites and the new nationalists recognised the important role of the Canadian mass media, and broadcasting policy, in defining and defending cultural identity. As a vehicle for foreign mass culture, media technologies were (and still are) intertwined with debates around Canadian nationalism.

Celebrity theorist Samita Nandy has defined technological nationalism as ‘a set of cultural attitudes that reflect and reinforce predominant ideologies around the use of technologies in binding the nation of Canada’.¹¹⁶ Underpinning it is an ‘ambivalent’ and ‘bi-directional’ relationship to the free-market values of the United States: American capital at once allows for the economic development of Canada’s technological infrastructure and media institutions, and compromises them by facilitating the spread of American mass culture.¹¹⁷ As I discuss in Chapter VI, this placed the CBC in a cultural bind, as the programming of American shows provided them with the funds necessary to fulfil their mandate to produce (less profitable) Canadian programming and extend their networks of communication to the whole population, while at the same time undermining nationalist broadcasting policy directives aimed at preserving and encouraging forms of domestic cultural expression. As a popular and profitable media performer, Gould played a significant role in negotiating discourses of Canadian nationalism. In the early Fifties, the CBC’s generous financial and creative support for Canadian musicians such as Gould reflected the institutional commitment to the Masseyite high cultural vision. By 1948, serious music accounted for fifty percent of music on the CBC, and a decade later over ninety-five percent of its music programming was Canadian in origin owing in part to national content restrictions instituted by the new

¹¹⁵ Ibid., 138.

¹¹⁶ Samita Nandy, *Fame in Hollywood North*, 36.

¹¹⁷ Ibid., 41, 73.

nationalists.¹¹⁸ The emphasis on serious music programming was a form of resistance to an allegedly debased form of American mass culture, and invoked well-established national tropes of Canadian moral superiority to an American ‘Other’. Channelling the Reithian view that public broadcasting should ‘inform, educate, and entertain’, the CBC sought to affirm Canada’s identity ‘as an outpost of Europe, a sane oasis in the mad American desert’.¹¹⁹ This situation afforded Gould the opportunity to perform frequently on national radio (almost thirty times in the period 1950-1954), and appear on prestigious flagship series such as *Distinguished Artists* and *CBC Wednesday Night* in live solo recitals and in concert with the finest national orchestras and conductors. As a magnet for the nation’s best musical talent and an important champion of Canadian musical performance in all its richness and variety, the CBC provided a forum for Gould to associate with Canadian composers, instrumentalists, and conductors from across the country, and to develop his interest and proficiency in early and contemporary music.¹²⁰

The development of Canada’s post-war socio-musical infrastructure took place within the context of the debate around Canada’s national identity as an American or European nation, and reflected what technological historian Arthur Kroker has described as the dialectical movement ‘between technology and culture, between economy and landscape’ at work in the Canadian mind.¹²¹ In the highly influential Massey Commission report (1949-51), it was noted that the Canadian concert stage was dominated by American artists and American concert agencies ‘with great resources in talent, finance, and promotional skill’.¹²² This had led to improved musical standards in the cities, but had also deprived gifted Canadian artists

¹¹⁸ Kevin Bazzana, *Wondrous Strange*, 121. Mavor Moore, writing in 1958, claimed that fifty-five percent of the CBC’s output across all its services was Canadian produced. See “Radio and Television”.

¹¹⁹ John Reith (1889-1971) was the intellectual architect and first general manager of the British Broadcasting Corporation (1922). The latter quote is from Mavor Moore, “Radio and Television”, 119.

¹²⁰ On December 21, 1953, for example, Gould debuted with the CBC’s own Symphony Orchestra in the premiere Canadian performance of Schoenberg’s Piano Concerto.

¹²¹ Arthur Kroker, *Technology and the Canadian Mind*, 7.

¹²² Royal Commission on National Development in the Arts, Letters and Sciences (“Massey Commission”, 1949-51), 189.

of creative and economic opportunities and had precipitated ‘an exodus to the South’.¹²³ Similarly, it was reported that music publishing and promotion in Canada was too provincial and beholden to American interests.¹²⁴ Sir Ernest MacMillan had contributed the report to the commission, and we can assume that his attachment to English musical values and traditions, in a Masseyite mould, informed his vision of a Canadian musical culture less dependent on American industry. In his biography of MacMillan, for example, Ezra Schabas suggests that the conductor ‘considered English-trained musicians superior’, and sought to combat the ‘Americanization’ of Toronto’s musical culture by advertising for new jobs at the Royal Conservatory exclusively through the British press.¹²⁵

Toronto, in fact, as one of Canada’s most populous musical centres, was relatively insulated from these conditions. The dominance of American artists and companies could be counteracted through the efforts of local societies and clubs to sponsor performances by Canadian artists. Many of Gould’s twenty-five-or-so professional concert appearances in Toronto in the period 1947-1955 were sponsored in this way.¹²⁶ Similarly, Gould, as a Torontonian, was better placed to encounter one of the few independent professional managers working from Canada, Walter Homburger, who would exert a shaping influence on Gould’s performing career and Toronto’s performance culture from 1947 onwards. In any case, the financial control of Canada’s concert life by American firms was not an existential threat to Gould, who, unlike most Canadian musicians, was not dependent on profits made on the concert circuit for his livelihood, allowing him greater personal control over his professional development.¹²⁷

¹²³ Ibid.

¹²⁴ Ibid., 187, 188.

¹²⁵ Ezra Schabas, *Sir Ernest MacMillan: The Importance of Being Canadian*, 201.

¹²⁶ By, for example, the Toronto Heliconian Club, the East Toronto Neighbourhood Workers’ Association, and the Ladies’ Morning Musical Club. See Ruth Pincoe, *Descriptive Catalogue of the Glenn Gould Papers*, 62-65.

¹²⁷ Kevin Bazzana, *Wondrous Strange*, 106.

It is surely the case, though, that Gould benefited from the new organisational and funding structures for classical music that were slowly being put in place in Canada at precisely the time his professional career as a concert pianist was gaining real momentum.¹²⁸ The RCM's new financial health, for example, had led to the construction of a new senior school and an opera school (1945), and to the introduction of generous student grants designed to halt 'the flight of native talent . . . to the United States'.¹²⁹ Gould took part in a range of RCM activities unrelated to his piano studies – Bergman provides evidence of the pianist attending opera rehearsals, for example – so it is reasonable to speculate that the wider activities of the conservatory exerted a formative influence on Gould's musical thinking (a crucial dimension of his later media persona).¹³⁰ And as previously stated, Gould received two scholarships from the Conservatory around this time (1944-1945 and 1946-1947).

Gould also became deeply involved as performer and, later, as organiser with Ontario's summer Stratford Festival from July 1953-1964. Inaugurated in 1953 as a Shakespeare festival with music serving as an adjunct to the theatrical productions, the breadth and scope of its music programming was gradually widened to the point that its concert series attracted international acclaim, large audiences, and interest from high-profile international performers and composers. Like Marlboro and Tanglewood, the festival provided a forum for creative collaboration with a strong emphasis on chamber music performance. Gould took 'a kind of Canadian pride in the Stratford festival'.¹³¹ It provided early opportunities for him 'to try new things' and to debate issues of performance and interpretation with the finest instrumentalists of his generation.¹³² In the first two seasons, his programmes included uncharacteristic

¹²⁸ The Canadian "Music Committee" (1944) served as an initial forum to debate goals and philosophies of Canadian musical development. This then became the Canadian Music Council (1945), a member of the Canadian Arts Council (1945), which lobbied for the establishment of a Royal Commission into the state of the arts ("Massey Commission", 1949-1951). The findings of the Massey Commission resulted in the creation of the Canada Arts Council (1957), the dominant channel for federal support of the arts which exists to this day.

¹²⁹ Quote from RCM Chairman H.H. Bishop (1945) in Ezra Schabas, *A History of the Royal Conservatory of Music*, 91.

¹³⁰ Helen Mesaros, *Bravo Fortissimo*, 102; Rhona Bergman, *The Idea of Gould*, 121.

¹³¹ Ezra Schabas in Colin Eatock (ed.), *Remembering Glenn Gould*, 56.

¹³² Glenn Gould, "Reminiscence and Prediction" (1962). See *Glenn Gould*, Vol. 3, No. 1 (Spr., 1997), 10-13.

repertoire (e.g. Brahms' Piano Trio in C Minor, op. 101), and he collaborated with experienced musicians such as the violinist Alexander Schneider (formerly of the Budapest String Quartet, and a fixture also on the Marlboro circuit).¹³³ Through his early Stratford experiences, Gould 'was staking claim to his own musical territory'.¹³⁴ And Stratford itself – a reflection in microcosm of the dialectical movement of European culture (Shakespeare) and American commerce (the American music festival franchise) – was perfect testament to Canada's increasingly split personality.

Promotional Contexts for Gould's Celebrity (1945-1954): Broadcasting, Journalism

The occasion of Gould's professional organ debut in December 1945 was a transitional moment in Gould's career, marking the point at which he became not only a mature musical artist but an attractive business proposition and artistic commodity. With this new status came new professional responsibilities and a more systematic and refined approach to the cultivation of his fame and reputation. As before, Gould could derive a certain cultural capital from his qualifications (e.g. the youngest-ever graduate of the RCM), which provided opportunities to interact with distinguished people, societies, institutions, and venues which could add yet another layer of cultural authority to his musicianship. In this period, for example, Gould performed four times with the Toronto Symphony under Sir Ernest MacMillan, the former widely regarded as Canada's finest orchestra, and the latter Canada's most-feted conductor and musical personality.¹³⁵ Gould could also boast of having been congratulated by the Queen ('the little Canadian boy who is such a clever musician'), and of having caught the attention of political luminaries such as the Governor General of Canada

¹³³ Brandon Flowers, "Glenn Gould at the Stratford Festival, 1953-1964" in *GlennGould*, Vol. 5, No. 2 (Fall, 1999), 50-52; Joseph Horowitz, *Classical Music in America: A History of its Rise and Fall* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2005), 347.

¹³⁴ Brandon Flowers, "Glenn Gould at the Stratford Festival, 1953-1964", 51.

¹³⁵ Ezra Schabas, *Sir Ernest MacMillan: The Importance of Being Canadian*, 113.

Vincent Massey himself.¹³⁶ His professional organ debut was noteworthy for partaking in ‘the famous Casavant Series in Toronto’, and his professional solo piano recitals (beginning in 1947) took him to Toronto’s most prestigious performing venues: Eaton Auditorium, the Art Gallery of Toronto, and Massey Hall, to name a few.¹³⁷ Gould’s interaction with the media, however – radio, television, and recording – was a radically new development with profound consequences for his cultural production and reception as an artist. Gould’s experiences at Ontario’s Stratford Music Festival (from 1953-1963), his rising modernist credentials, his out-of-town appearances, and the emergence of a critical discourse around Gould in the Canadian press were also formative of his stardom.¹³⁸ Most important of all, of course, was the promotional expertise of Gould’s new business advisor and concert manager, Walter Homburger, who could transform these diverse elements into a coherent brand identity (see Chapter IV).

Recognising that Gould had ‘become one of their most popular stars’, the CBC provided an especially prominent platform to Gould: not only providing extensive coverage of his concerts (including all his concerts with MacMillan and the Toronto Symphony from 1950), but securing his participation in live radio recitals, and affording him the honour of performing in the very first telecast from Toronto’s flagship station, CBLT, in September 1952.¹³⁹ The frequency of Gould’s appearances on Canada’s two English-language radio networks (‘Trans-Canada’ and ‘Dominion’) spoke to the Masseyite desire to rally a sense of Canadian identity around ‘an English-Canadian ethnic culture that historically dominated the northern

¹³⁶ Telegram to Gould from Buckingham Palace (Oct. 2, 1946); Kevin Bazzana, *Wondrous Strange*, 108.

¹³⁷ Programme note for Gould’s debut Stratford concert (Jul. 31, 1953). See Brandon Flowers, “Glenn Gould at the Stratford Festival, 1953-1964”, 50; Ruth Pincoe, *Descriptive Catalogue of the Glenn Gould Papers*, 62-65.

¹³⁸ Gould’s first solo recital outside Toronto was on November 26, 1950, in London, Ontario. Gould toured Western Canada (Vancouver and Calgary) in 1951, and performed his first concert in Eastern Canada (St. John’s) in 1953.

¹³⁹ Peter Ostwald, *Ecstasy and Tragedy of Genius*, 106. Gould appeared on Canadian television four times before his American concert debut: once in 1952, and three times in 1954 in the shows *Summer Festivals* and *TV Concert Hour*. These latter broadcasts were of his Stratford appearances and performances at CBC Toronto’s studios with the CBC Symphony Orchestra. See Ruth Pincoe, *Descriptive Catalogue of the Glenn Gould Papers*, 89.

frontier'.¹⁴⁰ Classical programming was, of course, a minority taste – Gould himself suggested that the CBC's flagship arts series, *CBC Wednesday Night*, captured only four percent of the total radio audience in 1954.¹⁴¹ Nevertheless, the media granted unparalleled access to Gould and his music, drawing in far larger and more diverse audiences than could ever be attained through touring. For Bazzana, then, 'it was the CBC, more than concert appearances, that first made him a national figure'.¹⁴²

Gould's promotion in the print press was also structured around larger national discourses. In the first case, Gould was well situated to take advantage of the new ethos of Canadianism undergirding the magazine- and newspaper industry. By 1954, American magazines controlled eighty percent of the Canadian market. American dominance had stimulated the need for special economic and cultural protection of the Canadian magazine industry, particularly given the recognition that magazines were a unique 'source of information, ideas, values, and myths' and a 'vital agency of national communication'.¹⁴³ In Toronto, *Saturday Night* – edited until 1951 by the prominent local arts critic B.K. Sandwell – provided the most extensive and accurate coverage of the city's arts scene.¹⁴⁴ Gould ('the brilliant, teen-aged Glenn Gould') was reported on once in the magazine in this period on the occasion of his debut with the Toronto Symphony (January 1947), a media event which signalled his arrival as a first-rank local artist.¹⁴⁵

The newspaper industry in Toronto was particularly competitive and robust, and Gould appeared in all three English-language paid dailies in his teenage years: the *Toronto Daily Star*, the *Globe & Mail*, and the *Toronto Telegram*.¹⁴⁶ A close analysis of Gould's reception in

¹⁴⁰ Samita Nandy, *Fame in Hollywood North*, 20.

¹⁴¹ Alan Rich, "Gould in Conversation with Alan Rich".

¹⁴² Kevin Bazzana, *Wondrous Strange*, 122.

¹⁴³ Mary Vipond, *The Mass Media in Canada*, 36-38.

¹⁴⁴ Robin Elliott, "Toronto: The Social and Artistic Context", 38.

¹⁴⁵ Anon., "Australian conductor plays Toronto Symphony Orchestra as if a sensitive instrument" in *Saturday Night* (Jan. 18, 1947).

¹⁴⁶ At the mid-century, the liberal *Star* had the highest circulation at 321,000, followed by the conservative-leaning *Globe* and, in last place, the conservative *Telegram* at 178,000. See Chris Richardson and Romaine

Toronto and the wider Canadian press reveals how critics made sense of his achievements as a Canadian musician by situating them both explicitly and implicitly in relation to American cultural values and standards. In the student paper of the University of Toronto, for example, Alan Atkins suggests that the high turnout for Gould's recital deviated from normal standards of reception accorded Canadian musicians, and recalled more the kind of interest reserved for 'the flashy goings-on of the top-drawer visitors downtown'.¹⁴⁷ Gould's unique appeal as an artist, thus, partly lay in his *negation* of the Canadian-American cultural dichotomy. Bazzana considers that critics 'held him up as an argument against the cliché of the self-denigrating Canadian'.¹⁴⁸ This made Gould an attractive cultural investment for Canadian publishers looking to carve out a vision of a newly assertive and self-reliant post-war nation.

Gould also related to Canadian identity tropes in more straightforward ways. In the *Halifax Mail-Star*, for example, a retelling of Gould's musical biography is supplemented by a short personal aside about his love of animals and how he loves to 'frolic with his English setter, Nick', associating his image with nature, wildlife, and spontaneity. This foreshadows later representations of Gould as an artist of the Canadian North.¹⁴⁹ Besides this, his celebrity was allied to a rhetoric of place and space. Particularly striking is the frequency with which critics drew attention to his credentials as a 'Toronto' or 'Canadian' pianist, situating him within a network of regional and national meanings and appealing to what Northrop Frye has described as 'the Canadian sense of the close relation of the people to the land'.¹⁵⁰

Briefly, we can identify four other contexts of promotion which assisted Gould's rise to national prominence. First, Bazzana notes that Gould's series of public contemporary music recitals at the Royal Conservatory from 1951-1954 (under the aegis of his short-lived 'New

Smith Fullerton (eds.), *Covering Canadian Crime: What Journalists Should Know and the Public Should Question* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2016), 222.

¹⁴⁷ Alan Atkins, *Varsity* (Feb. 7, 1949).

¹⁴⁸ Kevin Bazzana, *Wondrous Strange*, 143.

¹⁴⁹ Anon., "Toronto teen-ager all-round musician" in *Halifax Mail-Star* (Feb. 15, 1949).

¹⁵⁰ Northrop Frye, "Sharing the Continent", 68. See, for example, Paul Roussel, "Glenn Gould: extraordinaire jeune pianiste de Toronto au Ladies Club" in *Le Canada* (Nov. 8, 1952); V. P., "Glenn Gould conquers audience in city debut" in *Vancouver Daily Province* (Oct. 29, 1951).

Music Associates' company) earned him a reputation as a modernist.¹⁵¹ His premiere Canadian performances of works by such composers as Schoenberg and Krenek were 'astonishing' for their time and place, and generated the kind of press polemic that would fan the flames of his publicity.¹⁵² Second, Gould's out-of-town concert appearances, beginning in November 1950, brought him into contact with new audiences – not only through his performances, but also through his increasingly 'intense socializing' at 'late-evening receptions'.¹⁵³ The RCM's Concert and Placement Bureau was instrumental in helping him land these gigs in other cities.¹⁵⁴ Third, his Stratford appearances helped him build a high profile among professional performers and the television-watching public.¹⁵⁵ Fourth, and most important, Gould's new agent Walter Homburger introduced the pianist to the business of public performance, arranging his concert- and media engagements through the apparatus of his 'International Artists' agency, and professionalising Gould's musical promotion by devising elaborate flyers and press books and liaising with other concert impresarios (see Chapter IV).

Conclusion

Focusing on Gould's upbringing and early Canadian career (1932-1954), this analysis has considered how the pianist derived key psychological, material, and promotional resources from Toronto's cultural milieu before and after the war. While writers have generally assumed that Toronto's conservative musical and social norms could have had no bearing on the artist's personal and creative psychology, I have followed in the example of Kevin Bazzana and Helen Mesaros and suggested otherwise. Certainly, it is true that the pianist did not exhibit any signs of the colonial mentality that predominated in the Toronto of the 1930s

¹⁵¹ Kevin Bazzana, *Wondrous Strange*, 111.

¹⁵² Ibid. See particularly George Kidd, "Babies' rhythm practice sounds better than this" in *Toronto Telegram* (Jan. 11, 1954).

¹⁵³ Helen Mesaros, *Bravo Fortissimo*, 89. See footnote 138.

¹⁵⁴ Kevin Bazzana, *Wondrous Strange*, 80.

¹⁵⁵ Otto Friedrich, *Glenn Gould: A Life and Variations*, 42.

and 1940s; in fact, his later artistic alter-egos parodied those British musicians of his upbringing who adopted paternalistic attitudes to Canadian culture. Nevertheless, the British-derived genteel morality of Toronto's pre-war cultural milieu, and Wasp work ethic, was a formative influence on him, instilled through the example of his mother and father. In his mature musical thinking and artistic self-representations, Gould pursued the implications of his mother's view that one could 'do good' through music. His close relationship with his mother explains some aspects of Gould's musical approach, and perhaps even some of the eccentricities that characterised his self-representations and reception as an artist. His developing appetite for more adventurous artistic experiences was perhaps a reaction to the perceived parochialism and traditionalism of Toronto's British-derived musical culture. This reaction might itself be explained by temperamental changes brought on by adolescence. At the same time, his openness to new experiences was, in many respects, a symptom of the age: following the war, institutions such as the CBC offered more diverse forms of high-art programming, Toronto was becoming increasingly multicultural, and Masseyite culturalists looked to international artistic norms as a model for their vision of the Canadian nation. Gould's teacher, Alberto Guerrero, was also influential on the pianist's broadening cultural appetite and developing passion for contemporary music. Finally, Gould's love of the Canadian North and technology was conditioned by his rural upbringing and relationship with CBC Radio.

Gould was fortunate to have had access to considerable material resources in Toronto. During his childhood, his parents invested large sums of money in his musical education at the Conservatory, and their social status gave them access to influential figures in the Toronto arts' scene. They took Gould to concerts, gave him opportunities to perform during church services, and entered him into high-profile piano competitions. Gould's experiences reflected the play of tensions in Canadian cultural life between European and North American values. The post-war integration of Canada with the U.S. economy had helped develop Canada's

musical infrastructure and improve standards of concert performance and musical education, but had reduced opportunities for Canadian musicians, who invariably moved South to find a living. At the Toronto Conservatory, the decision to award Gould two scholarships spoke to broader cultural efforts to incentivise Canadian artists to stay in Canada, and to combat the ‘Americanization’ of Toronto’s musical culture. Gould’s concert performances in Toronto were often sponsored by local societies and clubs: a reflection of how community-led funding of Canadian artists was deemed necessary to break the American monopoly of Canadian concert life. And, as a classical musician, Gould’s access to creative and economic resources at the CBC reflected the institution’s commitment to a public-service mandate and Masseyite cultural design, where the need to construct a national consciousness based on moral values was framed in terms of an opposition to the commercialism and perceived vacuity of American mass culture.

Finally, Toronto offered a rich promotional context for Gould to develop a national following and reputation. Before the war, Gould performed for local church congregations, and his string of exceptional accomplishments at the TCM and at the Kiwanis music festival earned him a name in the local press. Following the war, Gould performed at increasingly more prestigious venues, with increasingly more distinguished collaborators, and became known to the city’s leading opinion-formers. Beginning in 1950, his television- and radio appearances made him a national celebrity, and established him as a fixture on the Canadian cultural scene. The frequency of Gould’s appearances in the Canadian media spoke to the important cultural work performed by Gould’s identities. Answering the call of the Masseyites, he helped articulate a post-colonial vision of the nation that emphasised the sophistication and refinement of Canadian culture. And in an age characterised by new forms of cultural self-assertion, Gould could dispel the myth of Canada as a country that lacked in opportunity and talent. While he could compete with the ‘flashy goings-on’ of ‘top-drawer’ foreign artists, Gould had none of their ego or pretension, as media stories made a point of emphasising his

local connections, personal hobbies, and easy-going manner. Gould could compete with the best of them, it turned out, but still as a *Canadian*.

CHAPTER IV

GOULD'S CELEBRITY IN THE U.S. PRINT MEDIA, 1955-1964

He'll sell like crazy – thousands of albums, thousands. He's great and Columbia's got him.

Columbia Salesman, 1957.¹

Ask the Beats in 'The Purple Onion' or 'The Co-Existence Bagel' who their favorite pianist is, and they name Glenn Gould.

Alfred Bester, U.S. journalist, 1964.²

Musical Celebrity and the U.S. Print Media

This chapter resituates the role of the print media relative to Gould's celebrity via a close examination of the corporate, journalistic, and managerial press accompanying Gould's rise to musical stardom in America in the period 1955-1964. As Graham Carr has persuasively argued, the study of Gould's burgeoning North American identity is necessarily bound up with the study of the mid-century mass media as promotional intermediaries that performed important ideological work in structuring and circulating Gould's cultural appeal. For Carr, then, Gould's successful penetration of U.S. cultural markets from the time of his New York debut onwards correlates to the success the media achieved in projecting his artistic brand onto 'larger social discourses about music and the body, gender and masculinity, technology and work, privacy and fame' prevailing in America at the time.³ As well, the sheer ubiquity of his American exposure after 1955 was afforded by a special set of technological, corporate, and cultural conditions which had seen the ascendancy of music as i) a profitable business enterprise dominated by moguls, managers, and marketers; ii) a central pillar of the 'cultural appreciation' movement dominated by critics and public intellectuals; and iii) an increasingly

¹ Quoted in Otto Friedrich, *Glenn Gould: A Life and Variations*, 72.

² Alfred Bester, "The Zany Genius of Glenn Gould".

³ Graham Carr, "Visualizing 'The Sound of Genius'", 5.

seductive and subversive social and political force dominated by marginalised groups.⁴ The speed and accessibility of the new media had also engendered a new approach to advertising and promotion which now recognised the central role of *all* media to the successful cultivation of the reputation and renown of public figures of all cultural stripes.⁵ And in an era of Hollywood stardom, Gould benefited from the new wave of popular interest in the lives and work of such public figures. At once ordinary and rarefied, authentic and artificial, celebrities in the U.S. derived their power to inspire and captivate from their special appeal to myths of American capitalist democracy: anyone could be a star, and anyone could enjoy the material fruits of that stardom.⁶

The study of Gould's relationship to the print media in this period thus also serves to illuminate the connection between Gould's celebrity and its local and (inter)national contexts of production. As shown in Chapter III, Gould's early professional success in Toronto owed much to the national exposure afforded him by his regular appearances on Canadian radio and television. These were facilitated by a distinctively Canadian discourse of media production, which asserted the close ties between technology, national identity, and fame culture.⁷

By contrast, the U.S. electronic media appear to have played a lesser role in relation to the production and dissemination of Gould's American celebrity. Addressing the circumstances around Gould's U.S. career breakthrough, writers have commented extensively on Gould's print promotion, but make only very infrequent reference to Gould's radio promotion.⁸ We also know that Gould's mainstream debut on American television did not occur until January 1960, by which time he had already secured his international reputation. The American spirit

⁴ See Norman Lebrecht, *Managers, Maestros and the Corporate Murder of Classical Music* (London: Simon & Schuster, 1996); Mark N. Grant, *Maestros of the Pen: A History of Classical Music Criticism in America* (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1998); Richard Crawford, *America's Musical Life: A History* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2001/5).

⁵ Graham Carr, "Visualizing 'The Sound of Genius'", 8.

⁶ Darden Asbury Pyron, *Liberace: An American Boy* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 121.

⁷ Samita Nandy, *Fame in Hollywood North*, 13-14.

⁸ Archival records and the interview literature make clear that Gould did appear on the American radio networks in some capacity, however. He made his American radio debut on January 27, 1957, performing a Beethoven concerto with Leonard Bernstein's New York Philharmonic.

of liberal individualism and private enterprise would seem to present an obstacle to the founding of such pervasive and unified technological and cultural networks as found in more-collectivist Canada. Certainly there was no national distribution network comparable in size and reach to that of the CBC, a broadcaster that owned Canada's only national radio network, CBC Radio, and, from 1952-1958, had an effective monopoly on Canadian television viewership.⁹ Unlike in Canada, the U.S. had no public-service broadcaster, with audience share for television split between the 'Big Three' networks of ABC, NBC, and CBS, and audience share for radio split between these networks and the Mutual Broadcasting System (MBS). The fact that the ascendancy of U.S. television in the Fifties turned American radio into a niche medium with reduced audience share is further suggestive of the diminished role radio played in circulating Gould's fame in this period.¹⁰ The competition from television and the proliferation of new music genres and bandwidth frequencies had encouraged the rise of more specialised radio programming catering to smaller, regional markets.¹¹ While it is possible to trace the impact of the emerging youth markets for radio on elements of Gould's countercultural iconography in this period (and vice versa), the waning of mainstream American interest in classical music broadcasting would point to the intervention of other media in the cultivation of his mass appeal.¹² The explosion of interest in television in the mid-Fifties had also affected the economics and consumption of the magazine- and newspaper media, but the impact on print circulation was less severe owing to three key advantages print media possessed over the electronic media: 1) the 'aura of prestige' they possessed as sources of news and information; 2) their more established corporate/financial structures; and 3) their

⁹ Mary Vipond, *The Mass Media in Canada*, 60.

¹⁰ James L. Baughman, *The Republic of Mass Culture: Journalism, Filmmaking, and Broadcasting in America since 1941* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 2006), 65-66.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 67.

¹² Mark N. Grant, *Maestros of the Pen*, 222. Grant argues that "the drift of classical music away from the American mainstream" was bound up with the post-war introduction of FM radio and the concomitant segmentation of listening audiences.

stylistic adaptability and technical superiority (e.g. the use of colour printing as contrasted with television's monochrome presentation).¹³

In the popular imagination, Gould's international career was launched on the back of the momentous American reception accorded his debut recording for Columbia Records of Bach's Goldberg Variations (1956). Less well known is the role of marketers, managers, critics, and columnists in structuring and circulating that reception. As the work of Graham Carr has begun to show, press releases, flyers, newspaper editorials, magazine spreads, even the album jackets of Gould's recordings all had a crucial role to play in communicating the stylistic and semiotic contents of Gould's hugely successful media iconography at this time. This analysis probes more deeply the underlying motivations and assumptions guiding the ways in which music corporations, journalists, and Gould's personal manager Walter Homburger constructed Gould's image as genius in the U.S. print press in the period immediately preceding and following the seminal release of his recording of Bach's Goldberg Variations. New York figures prominently in my study, as the corporate, musical, and intellectual epicentre of American life to which Gould was drawn through his professional work. Not only did the city play host to the nation's two major recording companies (RCA Victor and Columbia Records), it could lay claim to a uniquely vibrant and influential newspaper- and magazine industry, and a cadre of journalists and critics who achieved heightened importance as explicators of the highbrow/lowbrow discourse of American mass culture and as champions of the American post-war liberal consensus.¹⁴ To study the ways Gould was marketed, perceived, and appreciated, then, is also to shed light on the workings of these institutions, individuals, and ideas operating at the heart of American cultural life.

¹³ James L. Baughman, *The Republic of Mass Culture*, 63-64.

¹⁴ Leonard Wallock (ed.), *New York: Culture Capital of the World, 1940-1965* (New York: Rizzoli International Publications, 1988).

The Corporate Press: i) Modes of Operation

Gould's American musical career was effectively launched with his New York concert debut at Town Hall, January 11th 1955. The following day, Gould was offered a three-year recording contract with music-industry giant Columbia Records. Signed in May 1955 under the supervision of Gould's personal manager Walter Homburger, the contract stipulated that the pianist was to produce three recordings within two years.¹⁵ Masterworks' director David Oppenheim, head of the classical division of the company, clearly saw in Gould a uniquely enticing business proposition: never before had an artist been signed on the strength of one concert, and never before a Canadian artist.¹⁶ It was a mutually agreeable relationship which endured for more than twenty-seven years. At around the same time, Gould established his formal associations with the prestigious piano manufacturers Steinway & Sons. Barring a brief flirtation with the Yamaha company in his final years, Gould remained loyal to the Steinway brand throughout his career. He developed a fondness for a number of their instruments, many of which he purchased outright, and developed close relations with the company's technical and executive staff in his capacity as a Steinway performing artist.

Gould's induction into the corporate world of classical music occurred at a time when conditions were ripe for the professional advancement of artists through the U.S. media. In the preceding two decades, the critical success of the NBC Symphony Orchestra/ 'Symphony of the Air' on American radio and television under the directorship of artists such as Leopold Stokowski, Arturo Toscanini, and Leonard Bernstein had helped rehabilitate the electronic media in the eyes of the public as a viable platform for the presentation of high art music and musicians. Enhanced public receptivity to recorded music of all types was buoyed by post-war innovations in sound broadcasting, production, and playback, as well as the emergence of exciting, new, technology-oriented musical genres such as rhythm 'n' blues and rock 'n' roll.

¹⁵ Otto Friedrich, *Glenn Gould: A Life and Variations*, 67.

¹⁶ Kevin Bazzana, *Wondrous Strange*, 149.

The new financial and recreational freedom of the post-war generation had provided the conditions for the U.S. public to invest materially and socially in these new technologies, thus laying the groundwork for the emergence of the recording industry as the entertainment juggernaut of American mass culture. Gould's signing, in fact, occurred in an 'annus mirabilis' for the industry.¹⁷ As noted by recording specialist Peter Tschmuck, 1955 marked the beginning of a 'new period of (industry) expansion'.¹⁸ From this year until 1959, there was an approximate three-fold growth in sales of recorded music in the U.S. (from \$235.2 million to c. \$600 million), which Tschmuck ascribes to a complex of musical and technological factors already alluded to in my analysis.¹⁹ Columbia Records rode the crest of this economic boom. By 1955 the company asserted a strong competitive advantage over once-dominant RCA Victor, especially in the area of classical music.²⁰ The purchase of Columbia Records by the prestigious 'Tiffany' network CBS (Columbia Broadcasting System) in 1938 had gone some way to establishing the label's high profile and reputation.²¹ Columbia enticed classical audiences and artists further with the introduction of the long-playing record (LP) in 1948, a format which promised higher fidelity and playback duration than the older 78 rpm discs, and one which rival RCA proved reluctant to adopt.²² By 1959, Gould formed part of an unmatched roster of Masterworks artists which included the likes of Rudolf Serkin, Isaac Stern, Igor Stravinsky, and Eileen Farrell, as well as some of the 'Big Five' American orchestras: the New York Philharmonic, the Cleveland Orchestra, and the Philadelphia Orchestra.²³ Columbia's financial prosperity, its market dominance, and prestige were precisely those qualities which the company's elevated cultural position afforded Gould the opportunity of cultivating for himself at this early stage in his American career.

¹⁷ Kevin Bazzana, *Wondrous Strange*, 151.

¹⁸ Peter Tschmuck, *Creativity and Innovation in the Music Industry* (Dordrecht: Springer, 2006), 91.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 91-101.

²⁰ Gary Marmorstein, *The Label: The Story of Columbia Records* (New York: Thunder's Mouth Press, 2007), 172, 224.

²¹ Norman Lebrecht, *The Corporate Murder of Classical Music*, 106.

²² Gary Marmorstein, *The Label*, 172.

²³ *Ibid.*, 246.

Despite Columbia's market strength, the rock 'n' roll insurgency of the mid-Fifties – and the meteoric rise of small independent labels on the back of it – steeled them and other major labels against economic complacency.²⁴ As the musical competition increased, so too did the need for aggressive and innovative approaches to the marketing and selling of artists such as Gould via the mass media.²⁵ This was especially true in the case of musical unknowns being showcased by the company for the first time. As scholars, biographers, contemporaneous journalists and Gould himself has noted, the pianist's debut received the full force of Columbia's promotional machinery, a crucial factor in explaining his 'overnight' American success.²⁶ The basis of this highly effective promotional infrastructure lay in Columbia/CBS's virtual stranglehold over American musical life, its significant media presence (rivalled only by the NBC network), and highly developed business- and managerial structures stemming from its position at the heart of the New York services economy.

It was the co-founder of CBS, Arthur Judson, who 'pioneered classical music in America', pulling the strings of the nation's foremost orchestras, conductors, and artists via his New York agency, Columbia Artists Management Inc. (CAMI).²⁷ Judson, and indeed many of the top executives at Columbia Masterworks at the time, such as Goddard Lieberson and David Oppenheim, were musically literate men who cut their professional teeth in the newspaper- and magazine businesses. Their backgrounds, but particularly their role as mediators of access to the 'hottest' musical talent in the business, allowed them to wield tremendous influence over profit-hungry newspapermen who appreciated that star performers made good copy. Cultivating these links was essential to the task of corporate promotion, in that the print media could bring aspiring stars into contact with diverse audiences, set the tone of public debate,

²⁴ Peter Tschmuck, *Creativity and Innovation in the Music Industry*, 94.

²⁵ Graham Carr, "Visualizing 'The Sound of Genius'", 8.

²⁶ Gould spoke of the "crazy publicity" for his debut album, which was "directed pretty wildly at a mass audience" (see Eric McLean, 1956; Alan Rich, 1959). See also Graham Carr, "Visualizing 'The Sound of Genius'", 5; Kevin Bazzana, *Wondrous Strange*, 153; Otto Friedrich, *Glenn Gould: A Life and Variations*, 72.

²⁷ Norman Lebrecht, *The Corporate Murder of Classical Music*, 142, 124. Gould, however, managed by Walter Homburger, did not join CAMI until 1968.

and expand and ‘ramify’ the meanings of their star identities by presenting them in a growing array of work and non-work contexts.²⁸ As we shall see, it was Debbie Ishlon, head of Columbia’s publicity- and creative services department, who provided this interface between Gould and the world of print journalism.

Gould’s corporate publicity demonstrated how record companies pursued niche strategies for their artists. The necessity of doing so was all the more urgent in the Fifties, a ‘watershed decade’ for music historian Joseph Horowitz, in which the American cult of performance – of great soloists and conductors – reached its apogee.²⁹ Responding to the swell in public demand for great pianists, in particular, young North Americans like Gould, Van Cliburn, Gary Graffman, Eugene Istomin, and Leon Fleisher all vied to fill the cultural space left by an ailing older generation of pianist superstars represented by Artur Schnabel, Vladimir Horowitz, Josef Hofmann, and Walter Gieseking.³⁰ A&R executives and marketing men, alert to the fact that American musical audiences responded not only to exceptional talent but to exceptional personalities, made the cultivation of their star performers’ individuality a priority (‘don’t just sell the repertoire and the sound, SELL ISTOMIN’).³¹ Gould’s striking appearance, brash self-confidence, and ready reserve of personal and musical eccentricities, of course, made him ‘the lanky god of the Columbia Records publicity department’.³² Press releases and corporate-sponsored newspaper- and magazine advertisements provided an effective vehicle for communicating Gould’s star qualities, but so too did album jackets, which, since the LP revolution, had become ‘the central focus of concentrated marketing techniques’.³³

²⁸ Graham Carr, “Visualizing ‘The Sound of Genius’”, 33.

²⁹ Joseph Horowitz, *Classical Music in America*, 349.

³⁰ Otto Friedrich, *Glenn Gould: A Life and Variations*, 99; Helen Mesaros, *Bravo Fortissimo*, 110.

³¹ An exhortation of the Columbia salespeople, quoted in James Gollin, *Pianist: A Biography of Eugene Istomin* (Indiana: XLibris, 2010), 205.

³² James Gollin, *Pianist: A Biography of Eugene Istomin*, 418.

³³ John Corbett, *Extended Play: Sounding Off from John Cage to Dr. Funkenstein* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1994), 39.

The Corporate Press: ii) Ideological Mobilisation

In the late 1950s, Masterworks artists were marketed to the public under the slogan ‘the sound of genius is on Columbia Records’. For media theorists such as Marshall McLuhan (1911-1980), the advent and popularisation of recordings had facilitated a revolution in human sensory perception, augmenting the role of sound- and listening culture at the expense of a once-dominant visual culture.³⁴ But contradicting the implications of McLuhan’s theory, Graham Carr has persuasively argued that ‘by the mid-twentieth century, audience perceptions of musicians became more, not less, bound up with visual media’.³⁵ The LP’s larger ten-inch format and the rise of self-service record shops had stimulated new interest in the retail and display opportunities afforded by graphic cover art.³⁶ Visualising ‘the sound of genius’ took on a new urgency in the context of artistic promotion. Carr’s perceptive analysis of the stylistic and semiotic contents of Gould’s album iconography, in the context of his critique of Gould’s Fifties’ celebrity, speaks to the heightened importance attached to art and design in the selling of artists in the post-war LP period. It also confirms celebrity theorist Richard Dyer’s view of the crucial ideological function stars play as a ‘structured polysemy’ of meanings and affects.³⁷ The phenomenal popular- and critical success of Gould’s debut Columbia recording of Bach’s Goldberg Variations was enabled by a new corporate elite of advertising- and design practitioners who skilfully articulated the meanings of Gould’s commercial identity to the dominant meanings, tastes, and desires of the wider culture.

Otto Friedrich’s claim that ‘Columbia was eager to publicize its boy wonder . . . not only as a splendid pianist but as a bizarre personality’ is demonstrated in the basic design aesthetic of

³⁴ “Our world shifts from a visual to an auditory orientation in its electronic technology”. See Marshall McLuhan, *The Gutenberg Galaxy: The Making of Typographic Man* (Canada: University of Toronto Press, 1962), 26.

³⁵ Graham Carr, “Visualizing ‘The Sound of Genius’”, 9.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 14.

³⁷ Richard Dyer, *Stars*, 3. According to Columbia Records’ historian Gary Marmorstein, “The profit in dressing up recordings for sale was hard to ignore” (*The Label*, 333).

the Goldberg album.³⁸ Carr suggests that the album cover (see **Fig. 1a**), consisting of thirty candid photographs of Gould taken at various stages of the recording session by photojournalist Dan Weiner, was revolutionary, not just because of the striking visual rhetoric of Gould's artistic presentation, but for the very *fact* of his presentation. Breaking with prevailing design philosophies which tended to approach the recorded music via sketches of the composer or programmatic musical typographies, the album was 'one of the first LPs, if not the first, to feature photographs of the recording artist as cover art'.³⁹ This served to draw attention to the personal dimension of Gould's artistry, while 'making the artist and recording mutually referring objects of desire' by associating the genius of the composer so strongly with that of the gesticulating interpreter in the thirty photos.⁴⁰ Gould's 'askance individualism' was further established via the self-authored liner notes printed on the back of the album jacket (**Fig. 1b**).⁴¹ For Alana Bell, these liner notes were 'an important first step in Gould's alternate construction of his genius'; through them, he introduced himself to the mass public not only as a performer, but as a thinker, scholar, and 'commentator on his own musical self'.⁴²

In the terms of cultural theory, the commodification of Gould's identity by his Columbia intermediaries meant establishing temporary 'articulations' between processes of corporate production and audience consumption by manipulating the signifying practices of his celebrity.⁴³ Trading in the affective currency of music, the meanings of Gould's visual iconography are made to mirror the meanings of his musical performances as sound objects. In the case of the Goldberg album, Gould's idiosyncrasies of interpretation provided a window onto the artist. His interpretation marked a decisive break with historical traditions of Bach performance. The speed, rhythmic drive, and contrapuntal clarity he brought to Bach's

³⁸ Otto Friedrich, *Glenn Gould: A Life and Variations*, 49.

³⁹ Graham Carr, "Visualizing 'The Sound of Genius'", 9.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 16.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 23.

⁴² Alana Bell, "The Lives of Glenn Gould", 45.

⁴³ Paul Du Gay, "Introduction" in *Production of Culture/Cultures of Production*, 5.

work negated the freer ‘Romantic’ approach to Bach playing popularised by such performers as Wanda Landowska and Edwin Fischer, and reflected the influence of modernist aesthetics.⁴⁴ His choice of instrument was novel at a time when harpsichord interpretations of Bach’s music predominated. So too was his choice of repertoire – the Goldberg Variations had a reputation for dry academicism and technical complexity which gave them a marginalised status in the musical and recorded canon.⁴⁵ Showing the pianist in casual dress and in a variety of informal poses, the album art to the recording hoped to convey the impression that Gould, like his approach to Bach’s score, was fresh, engaging, and perhaps a little bit subversive.

For musicians, much of Gould’s appeal derived from this revolutionary approach to Bach and his music. In the words of Robert Silverman, chief editor of the periodical *Piano Quarterly* (to which Gould later contributed):

I heard his 1955 Goldberg Variations and it changed my life. Here was a musician who could transform Bach, my favourite composer, in a remarkable way . . . [with] visceral excitement. . . I know people all over the world who’ve had the same experience that I’ve had.⁴⁶

Silverman’s description is one of many that defines Gould’s genius in terms of the transformative power of his art on the lives of his listeners – an example of the ‘theological’ Gould narrative that I dissect in Chapter I. Gould’s 1955 Goldberg recording is the one most often invoked in this context, and the album has served for many fans as itself something of a ‘sacred relic’ and ‘talismanic presence’.⁴⁷

As I have mentioned in previous chapters, Gould and his music have been conceived as objects of desire. Peter Ostwald notes how fans have found something ‘sexy’ in Gould’s

⁴⁴ Namely, “The structural image of Bach held by the generation standing between the dodecaphony and neoclassicism of the 1920s and 30s and the serialism of the 1950s and 60s” (Zenck, 243). Gould explicitly mentioned in media interviews that his style of Bach playing was a reaction against the “Romantic” approach of these performers.

⁴⁵ Rhona Bergman, *The Idea of Gould*, 10, 106.

⁴⁶ Quoted in Rhona Bergman, *The Idea of Gould*, 115.

⁴⁷ Kevin Bazzana, *Wondrous Strange*, 171; Arved Ashby, *Absolute Music*, 132.

playing, and were apt to associate ‘the erotic with the aesthetic’ in coming to terms with him as an artist.⁴⁸ Such meanings were clearly intended by Gould’s media handlers. He was marketed as something of a sex symbol in the print press, appearing as one of *Glamour* magazine’s ‘Men we’d like you to meet . . .’.⁴⁹ Gould’s musical representations tapped into a powerful and influential nineteenth-century musical discourse of the Romantic pianist as the ‘seductive, eroticised, virtuoso-lover’, emblematised in the figures of Chopin and Liszt.⁵⁰ This figure has now become a ‘vibrant and alluring fantasy figure’ sustained via pop-culture representation in Hollywood films, television, and mass-market recordings.⁵¹ Gould’s Goldberg iconography articulated the desire ‘to feel and be touched by music’ (and by artist?) through a combination of gestural rhetoric (facial expressions, physical poses), this generic framing (Romantic archetypes of the pianist), and more subtly through material signifiers of intimacy (his more informal dress shirt versus the standard tuxedo).⁵² The power of Bach’s composition – and Gould’s performance – to move us so is considered a function of the pianist’s intense subjective investment in the music, invoking Romantic notions of the temperamental character of artistic genius. The branding of Gould as a colourful persona, then, was not only a technique of artistic differentiation, but one of ideological assimilation, linking his identity to an alluring discourse of musical authenticity as a guarantor of cultural legitimacy. Through the signifying practices of Gould’s celebrity body, the unique and ‘visceral’ appeal of his performance is reproduced in the appeal of Gould as ‘an authentic, essential, sexual self’.⁵³

The expressive currency established through the linking of music and body is grounded in the physiological and phrenological assumptions underlying Romantic rhetorics of genius.⁵⁴ As I

⁴⁸ Peter Ostwald, *Ecstasy and Tragedy of Genius*, 145.

⁴⁹ Anon., “Men we’d like you to meet . . .” in *Glamour* (Apr., 1956).

⁵⁰ Ivan Raykoff, “Dreams of Love: Mythologies of the ‘Romantic’ Pianist in Twentieth-Century Popular Culture” (doctoral diss.; San Diego: University of California, 2002), 27.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 17.

⁵² *Ibid.*, 25.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 55.

⁵⁴ Graham Carr, “Visualizing ‘The Sound of Genius’”, 20.

have already briefly addressed here and in Chapter I, however, Gould was critical of many aspects of musical Romanticism. While his views on the creative role of the performer situated him clearly within a Romantic tradition of subjective musical interpretation, he was highly critical of the Romantic style of piano playing, abhorred the competitive concert lifestyle, and rejected the Romantic precept that the content of music was its effect on the senses. He was not a grand Romantic virtuoso in the vein of Horowitz or Van Cliburn, and so could not be reconciled fully to its myths and ideologies. The technological and corporate aspects of his identity – connoting such ideas as mechanisation and rationalised production – were also aesthetically problematic in so far as these appeared to negate Romantic ideals of spontaneity, expression, and creative autonomy.⁵⁵ At the same time, beyond the realm of music these had a currency of their own as hegemonic discourses of modern culture. To maximise Gould's appeal to musicians and a general market of American consumers alike, Columbia handlers squared this ideological circle: a) by romanticising modern aspects of his identity via a discourse of authenticity; b) by modernising Romantic aspects of his identity via American popular discourses.

As applied to Gould's Goldberg iconography, Carr sees a) demonstrated in the ideological framing of the pianist's relationship to the technology of recorded sound. While Gould is shown performing solo at the instrument in two or three shots at most, in nineteen of the shots he is shown poring over Bach's score with the record's producer Howard Scott. In another he appears to be testing the pitch of the instrument under the watchful eye of a sound engineer or piano tuner. By focusing attention on these 'extra-musical' personnel, consumers were being taught to associate the pleasures of listening to Gould's musical performance with the expertise involved in its technological production, stimulating desire in the LP as 'a superior type of canonic repertoire'.⁵⁶ In purely visual terms, the worlds of music (Bach's score) and technology (the producer) are bridged through the figure of Gould, whose attention is split

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 18.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 16.

between both, and whose repertoire of postural and facial signifiers is bound up as much with the rituals and techniques of studio recording as it is with the act of performance. Gould's technological representations in the Goldberg stills conveyed 'a new audiovisual order of the sublime'.⁵⁷ Gould, of course, gave ideological charge to this concept in his later writings, as he cultivated a view of the necessity of technological mediation for the possibility of communicating and enacting music's sublime, redemptive power.

Second, Carr suggests that the corporation's promotional emphasis on Gould's 'youthful good looks, quirky dress habits, and rebellious take on the classical repertoire' articulated dominant social trends in American popular culture.⁵⁸ Like Elvis Presley, James Dean, and Marlon Brando, his physical attractiveness in itself granted him a large and diverse following, as Hollywood- and musical celebrities were increasingly looked to as social archetypes and figures at the forefront of cultural debates around sexuality and gender.⁵⁹ At the same time, it placed him within the Romantic 'virtuoso-lover' tradition. Many of the Goldberg shots appear to play up his physical appearance – his strong jaw line and cheek bones, his aquiline nose and shock of hair – by positioning his facial profile squarely in the centre of the frame. While more subtly conveyed in this album artwork than elsewhere, his manner of dress reflected the tendency of popular performers to use clothing as a form of visual signature. More Elvis than Liberace, Gould's casual mode of dress translated a Romantic ideal of personal authenticity into the language of Fifties' youth rebellion, establishing a decisive break from the conservatism of the classical tradition much as 'The King' had done in respect of conservative 'white' rock 'n' roll. Capturing Gould seemingly unawares and at moments of greatest intimacy with his muse, the Goldberg photos appeared also to articulate the modern fascination with the private lives of stars as 'a privileged site of knowledge and truth', and

⁵⁷ Ibid., 18.

⁵⁸ Ibid., 8.

⁵⁹ Darden Asbury Pyron, *Liberace: An American Boy*, 121.

with their bodies as objects of desire.⁶⁰ At the same time, they successfully mirrored dominant Romantic aesthetic assumptions about creative spontaneity and personal freedom in their use of a dynamic photographic style ‘almost filmic in the documentary quality of its narrative form’.⁶¹

The Corporate Press: iii) Techniques of Dissemination

Gould’s debut album was released on the American market in January 1956 to popular and critical acclaim. It was the first classical album ever to make the best-seller list, and has since been hailed as the record of the decade, even of the century.⁶² In the final month of Gould’s concert career (April 1964), journalist Alfred Bester could report that the album was still selling at an ‘unheard of’ pace of 3,000 copies a year.⁶³ By the time of Gould’s death, over 100,000 copies of the album had been sold.⁶⁴ In this section I consider the initial American success of Gould and his recording as a function of the ‘visibility capital’ generated for him by his Columbia employers. The Gould example reveals how Columbia Records sought to build up brand recognition for their artists, a) by cultivating links with the print media and its opinion leaders at the corporate/departmental level, b) by harmonising and expanding relations with record retailers and distributors, and diversifying business operations at the structural level. These promotional strategies were driven by larger commercial imperatives, in that the development of efficient public-relations and advertising networks, and the broadening of the consumer base via merchandising policies and industry diversification, offered protection against ‘the traditional economic peaks and valleys of the disk business’ in the Fifties.⁶⁵

⁶⁰ Graham Carr, “Visualizing ‘The Sound of Genius’”, 30.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 15.

⁶² Kevin Bazzana, *Wondrous Strange*, 153.

⁶³ Alfred Bester, “The Zany Genius of Glenn Gould”.

⁶⁴ Kevin Bazzana, *Wondrous Strange*, 153.

⁶⁵ Anon., “Col. Names Lieberston To Top Executive Post” in *Billboard* (Jun. 9, 1956).

Gould's recording was released during the halcyon years of Columbia Records, 'when innovation combined with excellence to make it the most consistently imaginative record label'.⁶⁶ The success of the company was bound up with the new status of New York as America's 'business and media center for the arts'.⁶⁷ While the flight to the suburbs of middle-class Americans had undermined the city's once-strong manufacturing base, New York had emerged after the war as a corporate powerhouse with a flourishing services economy. Its musical pre-eminence was established with high-profile performances of, for example, the Metropolitan Opera and the New York Philharmonic under such charismatic leaders as Arturo Toscanini and Leonard Bernstein on the city's 'Big Three' radio and television networks (ABC, CBS, NBC).⁶⁸ It was also the managerial hub of the music industry, dominated by maverick impresario Sol Hurok and the media mogul Arthur Judson, as well as the birthplace of the recording industry. These developments catered to 'a new, democratised arts constituency' in post-war America, which formed 'an unparalleled consumers' market'.⁶⁹ As the economic viability of the New York music industry grew, so too did its administrative arm. Columbia Records was increasingly 'a media company where experienced business executives wanted to be'.⁷⁰

Gary Marmorstein reports that in the period 1940-1956, Columbia Records' staff increased by a factor of ten (from 16 to 160).⁷¹ As the company's professional operations grew in sophistication, Columbia required personnel with increasingly specialised knowledge and training, as well as an organisational culture which reflected this new division of labour. A new managerial elite was instated to oversee activities at the departmental level. Columbia's operations were split into four departments: engineering, sales, distribution, and creative

⁶⁶ Gary Marmorstein, *The Label*, 539.

⁶⁷ John Rockwell, "New York's Music" in Leonard Wallock (ed.), *New York: Culture Capital of the World, 1940-1965*, 214.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 218-220.

⁶⁹ Joseph Horowitz, *Understanding Toscanini* (London: Faber and Faber, 1987), 4; see 1956 quote from property developer William Zeckendorf in Leonard Wallock, *New York: Culture Capital of the World, 1940-1965*, 46.

⁷⁰ Gary Marmorstein, *The Label*, 124.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 346.

services, each divisible into further specialised areas of practice.⁷² My consideration of Gould's media visibility leads me to reflect here on the role of Columbia's creative services department, which encompassed the domains of advertising, sales promotion, design and packaging, and literary and information services.⁷³

The promotional campaign for Gould's debut album was spearheaded by Debbie Ishlon, publicity spokeswoman for the label from 1951-1962 and the label's first female vice-president.⁷⁴ Gould stood to gain tremendously from her expertise, her status, and her loyalties and devotion to himself, to incumbent president of the label Goddard Lieberson, and to the Masterworks catalogue which Lieberson had helped shape over fifteen years.⁷⁵ To jazz historian John Fass Morton, she was 'possibly the first woman working for a major label to appreciate the explosion of photography and the importance of label design for the record business'.⁷⁶ In this respect, her handiwork is clearly visible in the presentational rhetoric of the Goldberg album jacket. Yet at a time when the media had created a new general cultural marketplace, it was her ability to 'plan and promote stories and angles' to high-profile critics and publications which proved decisive.⁷⁷ Ishlon had a major hand in the massive pre-release and post-release hype of Gould and his recording. One pre-release strategy was to invite respected journalists such as *Esquire's* music critic Martin Mayer to sit in on his recording sessions (Ishlon: 'we've got this nut, and everybody's talking about how marvellous he is, you never heard anything like this').⁷⁸ Another was to disseminate widely a colourful press

⁷² Anon., "Columbia Appoints Four New Veepees" in *Billboard* (May 16, 1960).

⁷³ Ibid.

⁷⁴ Gary Marmorstein, *The Label*, 197.

⁷⁵ Ibid., 199. While the Goldberg album was produced and released under the tenure of Columbia Records' president James Conkling (1951-1956), Marmorstein makes it clear that Lieberson was the more influential figure at the label at this time. Ishlon had a closer working relationship with Lieberson than with Conkling (*The Label*, 302). Lieberson assumed the label's presidency from June 1, 1956.

⁷⁶ John Fass Morton, *Backstory in Blue: Ellington at Newport '56* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2008), 72.

⁷⁷ Richard Crawford, *America's Musical Life*, 723; Bob Rolontz, "Growing Public Interest Makes Stars Big News" in *Billboard* (Jun. 27, 1953).

⁷⁸ Ishlon quoted in Gary Marmorstein, *The Label*, 247.

release which framed Gould as an eccentric genius for the modern age.⁷⁹ Post release, Ishlon arranged for Gould to be interviewed by the leading mass-circulation publications of the time, showing the same industry nous that had helped her land jazz pianist Dave Brubeck on the cover of *Time* magazine in 1953.⁸⁰ Notable is Gould's appearance in *Life* on March 12th 1956, his first major piece in an American periodical. *Life* was the nation's most popular magazine and boasted record circulation numbers of 5.7 million in that year.⁸¹ The article was conceived as a photo essay, speaking to Columbia's project of visualising the sound of Gould's genius, and thus serving as an ideal way of mobilising opinion about Gould in the wider public discourse. All told, the role of Debbie Ishlon demonstrates how a company's culture of production writes itself into the production of culture: in this case, how advertising-oriented production becomes a constitutive component of Gould's mainstream saleability as an artistic brand.

The ubiquitous exposure of Gould and his recording was also afforded by new company policy designed to increase the label's profitability via various merchandising and sales initiatives. One such initiative was the Columbia Record Club, a mail-order subscription service introduced in August 1955 and advertised in almost every major national magazine and roughly 6,200 record outlets.⁸² The plan aimed to entice new customers into the record market by offering multi-purchase deals and bonus LPs on a specially selected range of Columbia's catalogue. At the same time, it sought to protect the economic interests of retailers by guaranteeing them a twenty-percent share of the revenue for each Club member they recruited, and granting them the exclusive right to stock and sell new Columbia releases for a six-month window.⁸³ The plan was a huge success, attracting hundreds of thousands of

⁷⁹ Bazzana considers this "the old testament of the Gould legend" (*Wondrous Strange*, 153). The entire press release is quoted in full in Bazzana's *Wondrous Strange*, 151-152.

⁸⁰ Gary Marmorstein, *The Label*, 301.

⁸¹ James L. Baughman, *The Republic of Mass Culture*, 63.

⁸² Gary Marmorstein, *The Label*, 221; Russell Sanjek, *American Popular Music and its Business: The First Four Hundred Years* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), 337.

⁸³ Gary Marmorstein, *The Label*, 222.

new record-buyers in its first few years. By 1960 it had become ‘the world’s largest single mail order club selling records or any other product’.⁸⁴ In **Fig. 2**, Gould’s Goldberg album is shown on the Club list in a *New York Times* advert, July 6th 1958. Amplifying the general trend towards industry expansion and audience segmentation in the late Fifties, the Record Club attracted a larger and more diverse base of consumers to Gould’s studio work.

The Record Club formed part of a new merchandising drive aimed at stabilising retail sales, the ‘keynote of company policy’ for label president Goddard Lieberman.⁸⁵ Columbia’s ‘buy-of-the-month’ campaign, initiated in May 1956, was another plank of this policy, a record-reduction scheme advertised widely by retailers to attract new customers into their stores. More germane to Gould’s case, though, was the implementation of ‘operation quicksilver’ from January 1956, a ‘many-faceted merchandising program’ which entailed a) lowering the price of Masterworks LPs for the consumer while cushioning the wholesale losses for Masterworks retailers, b) offering retailers sampler LPs at a reduced price, c) establishing new chains of supply between retailers and distributors.⁸⁶ While stimulating sales in the more general sense, it was also designed to provide a promotional and commercial platform for the label’s newest classical stars, of which ‘major stress’ was ‘placed on three new pianist acquisitions – Glenn Gould, Villegas, and Leon Fleisher’.⁸⁷ These initiatives provided the foreground to the more fundamental policy of industry diversification – in the spheres of music publishing, manufacturing, and distribution – pursued under Lieberman’s presidency for more explicitly pragmatic ends.⁸⁸

⁸⁴ Anon., “Adler Named to No. 2 Col. Post” in *Billboard* (Sep. 12, 1960).

⁸⁵ Anon., “Columbia History Mirrors Manifold Industry Changes” in *Billboard* (Aug. 4, 1956).

⁸⁶ I.S. Horowitz, “Col. LP Plan to Cover Pricing, Demos and Custom Service” in *Billboard* (Dec. 31, 1955).

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸⁸ His diversification policy entailed “The establishing of the Epic label, activity in the music publishing field, establishment of a complete line of phonographs and tape recorders . . . and the formation of wholly-owned manufacturing and sales operations in Argentina, Brazil and Canada”. See Anon., “Col. Names Lieberman”.

The Journalistic Press: i) Modes of Operation

Gould's name first appeared in the American print press on November 15th, 1954. Through Toronto Conservatory publicist Ezra Schabas, Gould had made contact with New York music critic and historian Harvey Olnick in a bid to publicise his 'inevitable debut' in America.⁸⁹ Attending Gould's all-Bach recital at the Conservatory on October 16th 1954, Olnick could report to the *Musical Courier* that Gould was:

. . . a new, fully developed artist. [. . .] His infallible musicianship turned every expressive device of the modern piano to account in deepening our appreciation of Bach. If his achievements in the music of Bach are matched by comparable insights into works by other masters, the public will soon be confronted with an artist in no way inferior to such artists as Landowska and Serkin.⁹⁰

Following Gould's two debut American concerts in Washington's Phillips Collection and New York's Town Hall in early January 1955, the pianist started to receive positive reviews from more influential members of the American musical establishment. Biographers have suggested that Paul Hume's review of Gould's Washington debut was a capstone of his early concert reception.⁹¹ In it, Hume extolled the unprecedented 'beauty and significance' of his performance, his 'rare gifts' for an artist so young, and his special 'regard for [the piano's] real nature and enormous literature'.⁹² With the release of his debut Columbia album in January 1956, the sphere of critical interest in Gould and his music was enlarged via influential record publications such as *American Record Guide* and *High Fidelity*, which catered to a growing audiophile market. By the late 1950s, Gould had successfully exploited the new opportunities for media networking and promotion afforded by Columbia and his personal concert manager Walter Homburger to become a figure of more general cultural

⁸⁹ Quote from Olnick in Peter Ostwald, *Glenn Gould: Ecstasy and Tragedy of Genius*, 108-109.

⁹⁰ Ezra Schabas (pseudonym), *Musical Courier*, Vol. 150, No. 12 (Nov. 15, 1954).

⁹¹ Kevin Bazzana, *Wondrous Strange*, 147; Peter Ostwald, *Ecstasy and Tragedy of Genius*, 111; Otto Friedrich, *Glenn Gould: A Life and Variations*, 43.

⁹² Paul Hume, "Postlude: Masterly recital played by pianist Glenn Gould" in *Washington Post & Times Herald* (Jan. 2, 1955).

interest in magazines and newspapers of varying readerships.⁹³ Beyond his expertise as a Bach interpreter, Gould's striking appearance and demeanour increasingly provided the context for his reception as a musical artist and star personality, as highlighted in a growing number of photo essays, personal profiles, and anecdotal reports printed in publications such as *Life*, *Atlantic Monthly*, and the *New York Times*.

Making his American concert debut in Fifties' New York, Gould could expect a high level of scrutiny from the city's important musical establishment. At the time, New York was the undisputed capital of American high culture, deriving its reputation from its perceived openness to venerable European intellectual and artistic traditions.⁹⁴ As music historian Richard Crawford records, the concert-hall tradition became the outward face of the culture of serious music in post-war America, animated by the combined economic and social power of business moguls and music critics.⁹⁵ Not only the crucible of the American concert industry, New York had been the birthplace of American music criticism, which had established its important cultural role via the long history of the country's 'music appreciation' movement.⁹⁶ As Gould's approaches to critic Harvey Olnick indicate, the pianist was aware of the critical clout that a New York debut could provide. In his study of American musical criticism, Mark N. Grant singles out the outsized discursive influence of New York's newspapers and critics, particularly the *New York Times* and *New York Herald Tribune* under the musical leadership of Olin Downes, Virgil Thomson, and Harold C. Schonberg.⁹⁷ It was in the interest of performers and corporate handlers to foster good relations with such writers in that their reviews, distributed widely across the country, could have a formative influence on wider public opinion. Gould received very positive reviews from both papers for his New York debut, owing not only to his musical 'accuracy and refinement' but to his 'great versatility' as

⁹³ Graham Carr, "Visualizing 'The Sound of Genius'", 31.

⁹⁴ John Rockwell, "New York's Music", 220.

⁹⁵ Richard Crawford, *America's Musical Life*, 693.

⁹⁶ Mark N. Grant, *Maestros of the Pen*, xvii. See particularly "Highbrow, Lowbrow, Middlebrow", 195-225.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 256, 280.

demonstrated in his ‘exquisite’ playing of more esoteric repertoire such as Webern, Sweelinck, and Gibbons.⁹⁸ Here it might be said that Gould made direct appeals to an elitist and connoisseur sensibility particular to New York, at a time when the attention of the city’s intellectual community had been drawn to the abstract expressionist works of Jackson Pollock and Mark Rothko in the world of visual arts. The breadth of critical opinion Gould engendered throughout his decade-long concert career is another reminder of how his style, image, and mass appeal fuelled broader ideological conflicts, waged here by newspaper- and magazine men for the purposes of advancing musical, social, or economic interests on behalf of themselves or their corporate paymasters.

One consequence of the coming-of-age of the recording industry in the Fifties was to enhance the cultural position of record critics, and give new legitimacy to record criticism as a discrete domain of discursive practice. Under the headline ‘Disk Business Grabs Top Magazine Space’ (1953), *Billboard* could report that all aspects of the record industry were now a matter of journalistic interest, in both highbrow and lowbrow publications, stemming from the increasing allure of American celebrity and entertainment culture to the mass public, innovations in recording technology, and the promotional efforts of corporate publicists and record agents.⁹⁹ As the extensive publicity for Gould’s Goldberg album demonstrates, the pianist was one of the ‘glamour boys’ in the sphere of classical recording, a ‘space grabber’ able to compete for attention with the most familiar stars of stage and screen.¹⁰⁰ If ‘egghead’ writers such as Harold Schonberg of the *New York Times* could discourse on the ‘skill and imagination’ of Gould’s ‘unusual’ recording of the Goldberg Variations in tones befitting a ‘newspaper of record’, then so too could critics at *American Record Guide* and *Atlantic*

⁹⁸ P. G.-H, “Concerts and Recitals” in *New York Herald Tribune* (Jan. 12, 1955); John Briggs, “Skill of Gould Shown in Debut At Town Hall” in *New York Times* (Jan. 12, 1955).

⁹⁹ Bob Rolontz, “Disk Business Grabs Top Magazine Space” in *Billboard* (Jun. 27, 1953).

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 17.

Monthly cover Gould's music in ways appropriate to their more niche readerships.¹⁰¹ As Norman Lebrecht has revealed, critics were often leaned on by corporate publicists at Columbia and elsewhere to provide good reviews for the companies' artists, a fact surely relevant to the promotion of Gould's recording through the P.R. handling of Debbie Ishlon.¹⁰² The 'interlocking relationship' of Columbia and the critical community ensured that the musical achievements of Gould as a recording artist were known to a large and diverse public throughout his career, entrenching and embellishing the reputation he had won for himself as a concert performer.¹⁰³ The critical controversies engendered by the originality of his recordings in the period 1955-1964 lodged his celebrity within broader intellectual debates and strengthened his appeal as an artist in touch with the themes of cultural conflict bubbling to the fore in American society at this time.

The forms of promotion Gould was subject to in the print media were responsive to the new social trends brought about by the explosion in American television viewing, the growth of the entertainment industry, and suburbanisation. As television cornered the market for mass entertainment, broadsheet newspapers reaffirmed their commitment to objective news coverage, while general-interest magazines sought to remain relevant as leisure media by appealing to the new social and domestic concerns of the typical suburban family.¹⁰⁴ The details of Gould's high-profile 1957 concert tour of Russia, for example, were dutifully reported by the *New York Times*, while glossy magazines such as *Vogue* and *Glamour* catered to a newly formed housewife demographic – and the American obsession with glamorous, talented, and charismatic public figures – by emphasising the singular allure of Gould's

¹⁰¹ Ibid.; Harold C. Schonberg, "Records: Complete Ravel Piano Music" in *New York Times* (Jan. 29, 1956); C. J. L., "The Record Debut of Glenn Gould: A Keyboard Genius" in *American Record Guide* (Feb., 1956); Anon., "Bach: Goldberg Variations" in *Atlantic Monthly* (Mar., 1956).

¹⁰² Norman Lebrecht, *The Corporate Murder of Classical Music*, 117.

¹⁰³ Ibid.

¹⁰⁴ James L. Baughman, *The Republic of Mass Culture*, 59-90.

personality and physical appearance through the use of emotive visual and descriptive rhetoric (see **Fig. 3** and **Fig. 4**).¹⁰⁵

The seductive allure of American stardom, wedded to the new cultural dominance of the recording industry, provided an enviable platform from which Gould could cultivate his mass appeal. Graham Carr has argued that Gould's crossover into the popular realm in the Fifties was also facilitated by broader musical trends, according to which extrovert musical performers such as Leonard Bernstein, Elvis Presley, and Liberace commanded greater media attention as 'trigger[s] for social controversies about contemporary culture'.¹⁰⁶ While also referencing tropes of eccentric genius, then, tabloid and magazine stories about Gould's pill addiction, his physiological ailments, his elaborate studio rituals, his bizarre dress, and platform manner fed into wider American debates around, for example, the boundaries of the public and the private, conformity versus rebellion, and the relationship of music and the body.¹⁰⁷ These discourses exerted a particular fascination in the public sphere, making Gould an attractive cultural investment to producers and consumers alike.

The Journalistic Press: ii) Ideological Mobilisation

Critics play an important role in the economy of consumer desire. Mediating the points of production and consumption, the record critic is valued as an ostensibly impartial and authoritative judge of the recording's merits, providing a normative-evaluative framework by which the consumer can determine whether the exaggerated claims of record publicists ring true.¹⁰⁸ As record historian Colin Symes has noted, the record review 'exhibits a distinctive narrative morphology' appropriate to its normative-evaluative function.¹⁰⁹ This morphology

¹⁰⁵ Anon., "Gould to Play in Soviet [Union]" in *New York Times* (Oct. 29, 1956); Anon., "Names to Remember" in *Vogue* (May 1, 1956); Anon., "Men we'd like you to meet . . ." in *Glamour* (Apr., 1956).

¹⁰⁶ Graham Carr, "Visualizing 'The Sound of Genius'", 8.

¹⁰⁷ E.g. Gordon Parks, "Music World's Young Wonder"; Harriett Johnson, "Gould exhibits big gifts, oddities" in *New York Post* (Feb. 15, 1959); Alfred Bester, "The Zany Genius of Glenn Gould".

¹⁰⁸ Colin Symes, *Setting the Record Straight: A Material History of Classical Recording* (Connecticut: Wesleyan University Press, 2004), 186-187.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, 185.

encompasses historical commentary on the music, an estimation of the proficiency of its performance (perhaps via comparison with other recorded interpretations), and an assessment of the technical merits of the recording.¹¹⁰ Analysing the American critical reception of Gould's debut album, we can see how these criteria serviced a highly favourable assessment of Gould and his recording.

First, a recognition of the technical complexity of Bach's music, its intellectual depth, and historical reputation for archaism and didacticism situates Gould's skills as a technician and re-creative artist. We are told, for example, that Gould 'conquer[s] the two-manual problem' the piece imposes as a work conceived for harpsichord, that the 'poise and understanding' of his playing is unusual in 'music that one expects an artist to take a lifetime' to master, and that he departs from performance conventions by interpreting the work 'as music, not as a museum piece'.¹¹¹ Against the musical-historical backdrop of the Goldberg Variations, Gould is revealed as a pianist with 'enormous technical and musical talents', 'taste and temperament', and 'courage'.¹¹² Second, an assessment of the performance's merits is further clarified by situating it within a normative framework of achievement based on authoritative editions and recordings. Gould 'had the good sense to use the excellent edition [of Bach's score] published by Ralph Kirkpatrick', while the recording itself 'is the best set of Goldberg Variations this side of Wanda Landowska'.¹¹³ This technique also served to establish the base level of his artistry by measuring it against the musical standards set by a wider canon of great pianists ('the most outstanding young pianist . . . since the late William Kapell'), and Bach keyboard specialists such as British performer Harold Samuel.¹¹⁴ Third, acknowledgement of the recording's superior sound quality, and its suitability for the music being performed,

¹¹⁰ Ibid., 186, 189.

¹¹¹ Anon., "Goldberg Variations Appear in Fine Version" in *Boston Sunday Herald* (Jan. 29, 1956); C. J. L., "The Record Debut of Glenn Gould – A Keyboard Genius" in *The American Record Guide* (Feb., 1956); Harold C. Schonberg, "Records: Complete Ravel Piano Music".

¹¹² C. J. L., "The Record Debut of Glenn Gould".

¹¹³ Nathan Broder, "'Wunderkind' among the Goldbergs" in *High Fidelity*, Vol. 6, No. 2 (Feb., 1956); Anon., "Bach: Goldberg Variations" in *Atlantic Monthly*, Vol. 197, No. 3 (Mar., 1956).

¹¹⁴ C. J. L., "The Record Debut of Glenn Gould"; Irving Kolodin, "Introducing Glenn Gould" in *Saturday Review*, Vol. 39, No. 4 (Jan. 28, 1956).

further heightens the impression of overall artistic achievement by framing the success of Gould's performance in terms of the efficacy of the techniques used in its technological reproduction.¹¹⁵

These reviews demonstrate how Gould's youth and eccentricities were ideologically inflected to support or critique a view of his musical genius. Descriptions of Gould as 'Wunderkind', for example, associated him with a line of 'prodigal genius' extending back to Mozart.¹¹⁶ At the same time, it established Gould's artistic legitimacy by identifying him as the modern inheritor of a core Austro-German musical tradition. In another example from *Newsweek*, Gould's temperamental oddities in the studio are recast, via the case of Rachmaninoff, as signifiers of an original and genuine artistic sensibility.¹¹⁷ Conversely, critics could frame Gould's youth as the negation of the wisdom and depth embodied by the composer and his music. His playing was 'very much too fast', gesturing to the superficiality of his interpretation, and the belief that there was 'an older, more mature depth in this wonderful music that is not yet realised'. 'But whatdya expect at twenty-two?', *Harper's* continues.¹¹⁸

Whether published in the back pages of the major dailies or in audiophile record publications, serious musical criticism assumed the musical literacy of its readership. This informed journalistic approaches to style, content, and rhetoric. The range of views expressed on Gould reflected the tensions between two musical ontologies, as 1) an autonomous, nostalgic, and essentially private art in the mould of Romantic idealism; or 2) a socially mediated art infused with American values. Whether Gould's eccentricities were judged an affirmation or rejection of these ontologies depended on the ideological biases of critics. These biases were

¹¹⁵ Irving Kolodin, "Introducing Glenn Gould"; Anon., "Goldberg Variations Appear in Fine Version".

¹¹⁶ Nathan Broder, "'Wunderkind' among the Goldbergs". As I have suggested in Chapter I, a Platonic conception of Gould's genius – a view of the artist as possessed by divine, mysterious, and perhaps frightening creative powers – framed his concert reception.

¹¹⁷ Anon., "Bach: The Goldberg Variations. Glenn Gould. Columbia." in *Newsweek* (Jan. 30, 1956).

¹¹⁸ Anon., "Goldberg Variations Appear in Fine Version"; Edward Tatnall Canby, "The New Recordings" in *Harper's*, Vol. 212, No. 1270 (Mar., 1956).

themselves governed by a number of complex interrelated factors, such as the critic's social position, corporate affiliation, audience demographic, and so on.

The conservative and bookish aspects of Harold Schonberg's concert- and record criticism, for example, were to some extent dictated by the highbrow European tastes of the *New York Times*' musical readership, and the paper's national reputation for high editorial standards as a 'newspaper of record'. Throughout the period 1956-1964, the tendency of Schonberg to dismiss or ridicule Gould's musical and personal idiosyncrasies as affectations, or to refer to his 'devoted following' with a nod and a wink, represented a pragmatic cleaving to a musically conservative outlook.¹¹⁹ This outlook interprets extravagant visual display and mass appeal as a double sin: a remnant of the Romantic cult of virtuosity, and as evidence of the modern 'brow lowering' of classical music via the infiltration of commercially oriented popular discourses. In the broader context of Gould's Goldberg album reception, hype, buzz, visual appeal, and media savvy are recurring themes which situate an understanding of his musical worth. While photographic depictions of Gould 'commun[ing] with Bach' acted as a powerful form of musical validation, more often the surface gloss of Gould's brand identity appeared to detract from his authenticity.¹²⁰ Ultimately, however, critical approaches to Gould which highlighted the issue of his corporate advertising only served to impress the idea of his genius in the most dramatic rhetorical fashion, as Gould was found to meet the exaggerated artistic standards set by his Columbia publicists.

If music critics transformed Gould's eccentricities into a tool of musical politicking, the broader journalistic community harnessed them to wider social politics in the popular sphere.

¹¹⁹ E.g. Schonberg commented that "the young man has more color than a circus, and that is what his concerts are developing into". See "Music: Colorful Canadian" (Feb. 14, 1959) in *New York Times*. Tied up with Schonberg's denunciations of such characters as Gould and Bernstein was a distaste for their "inauthentic" performance practices. Grant relates that Schonberg wielded "sovereign power" in New York from the mid-Sixties onwards and, more than any critic before or after him, had a "substantive effect on the actual doings of practicing musicians and musicologists" (Grant, 280-281).

¹²⁰ Nathan Broder, "'Wunderkind' among the Goldbergs". Critics were irritated by the way Columbia aggressively marketed Gould to them. One critic suggested that this overhype breeds public cynicism. See Irving Kolodin, "Introducing Glenn Gould"; C. J. L., "The Record Debut of Glenn Gould".

This is because, while musical audiences derive an evaluative framework from aesthetic codes, popular audiences, lacking the necessary cultural expertise, look to social criteria for a sense of value and meaning. Further, while the European elitist assumptions underpinning aspects of American serious music culture can mobilise support for negative interpretations of his eccentricity, American popular culture – presenting itself as anti-elitist and democratic – appears to thrive on the bizarre individuality Gould represents, diminishing the power of dissenting cultural voices. The rise of American photojournalism in this period, symptomatic of the growing national obsession with celebrity, signalled these popular trends.¹²¹ It is hardly surprising that Gould's introduction to the American mass public took the form of a photo essay (in *Life* magazine, March 1956), or that the visual element is so pervasive in these early magazine pieces (in *Vogue*, *Glamour* etc.).

As Graham Carr has persuasively demonstrated in his study of the topic, the primary reason this visual rhetoric appealed was because it channelled 'larger social discourses about music and the body, gender and masculinity, technology and work, privacy and fame'.¹²² This kind of publicity was 'nearly identical to the treatment given young pop icons'.¹²³ In the *Life* spread, for example, photos of Gould's hands, soaked in water, bemittened, gesturing expressively, formed part of a 'typology of theatrical gestures' which the pianist Liberace had done much to popularise through his weekly television series and publicity shoots.¹²⁴ Lolling on his special chair, Gould seemed to embody the ideal of carefree youth, while the visual framing of his studio session – he is observed by two male technicians and positioned next to a large illuminated signal light – reproduced dominant assumptions about a sublime technological order, and the masculine dynamics of the recording industry.

¹²¹ Miles Orvell, *American Photography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 117. Orvell situates *Life* at the forefront of American photojournalism. The content of the magazine reflected the new social priorities of post-war consumer culture.

¹²² Graham Carr, "Visualizing 'The Sound of Genius'", 5.

¹²³ *Ibid.*, 8.

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*, 25.

The insurgent nature of many of these discourses served to galvanise his cult-like following at this time. Music historian Richard Crawford has argued that ‘the decade of the 1950s established generational conflict as a major theme in American popular culture’.¹²⁵ Cultural figures as diverse as J. D. Salinger, Jack Kerouac, Elvis Presley, Leonard Bernstein, and Marlon Brando had each in their own way galvanised a youth movement by defining teenage social angst and rebellion as an ‘authentic’ response to the ‘contrived’ moral and social norms of bourgeois America. A newly enfranchised teenage demographic could read into Gould’s youth and eccentricity a vision of social progress: a cry against traditional/establishment values which the classical music business, more than any other, came to represent. In this same sense, Gould also spoke to a Leftist intellectual tradition, exemplified in C. Wright Mills’ *The Power Elite* (1956), which argued that the growth and consolidation of traditional power structures in the modern age risked undermining constitutional rights and liberties.¹²⁶ (Of course, the effect was illusory: Gould’s anti-establishment stance was packaged and marketed by the record establishment!) Tim Page thus recalls that ‘young and aspiring suburban intellectuals saw Bergman films, read Sartre and Camus, knew the “cool jazz” of Miles Davis and Lennie Tristano, and turned each other onto the Bach album covered with thirty candid snapshots of the gesticulating pianist’.¹²⁷ Gould was soon reported in the press as ‘music’s most successful hipster’, and ‘the object of a sort of James Dean cult’.¹²⁸ At his concerts, he ‘got the reception of a pop star’, while his recordings ‘sold unusually well’ for a classical artist.¹²⁹ To his admirers, Gould’s idiosyncrasies provided him with the musical authenticity of a genius, and the social authenticity of a Fifties’ Beatnik. To his few detractors, they situated Gould within hot-button aesthetic and social controversies – for example, the limits of interpretative licence, or the consequences of mass production for

¹²⁵ Richard Crawford, *America’s Musical Life*, 718.

¹²⁶ See Alexander Bloom, “8. The Social and Intellectual Life of the City” in Leonard Wallock (ed.), *New York: Culture Capital of the World, 1940-1965*.

¹²⁷ Quoted in Arved Ashby, *Absolute Music*, 132.

¹²⁸ Quoted in Kevin Bazzana, *Wondrous Strange*, 156; Donal J. Henahan, “The Eyes have it in Gould recital” in *Chicago News* (Apr. 23, 1962).

¹²⁹ Peter Ostwald, *Ecstasy and Tragedy of Genius*, 132; Kevin Bazzana, *Wondrous Strange*, 217.

modern musical appreciation.¹³⁰ Either way, they helped establish Gould as ‘the world’s most photographed [and] most written about young musical artist’ of the age.¹³¹

The Journalistic Press: iii) Techniques of Dissemination

Gould was subscribing to a press-clipping service as early as 1950.¹³² This service provided the bulk of the notices, editorials, and reviews on Gould which today make up the ‘Press Clippings’ series of his archival papers, held at Library and Archives Canada in Ottawa (LAC). The remainder of this series consists of Gould’s personal clippings, or those provided by friends and colleagues. While the collection is not a definitive guide to Gould’s American press reception, it is useful for giving a sense of when and where major newspapers and magazines were writing about him, and for identifying the broader contours of his concert reception in American towns and cities. A content analysis of the materials contributed by Gould and his friends, as compared with the rest of the collection, reveals that they were particularly interested in quirky or amusing press, and press relating to Gould’s extra-concert activities which the pianist deemed personally and professionally significant (e.g. his brief stint as a music lecturer at colleges and universities in 1963/64). I have achieved a more precise modelling of Gould’s American reception for the decade 1955-1964 by combining this data with that of two newspaper archives – www.newspapers.com, and www.newspaperarchive.com. Providing access to a much greater range of newspaper materials for each year of Gould’s professional activity, these latter resources help give a more complete picture of Gould’s U.S. print reception in this period.¹³³ From this composite data, I draw conclusions about the regional and urban concentration of Gould’s press

¹³⁰ See, for example, the types of critical discourse engendered by his 1956 recording of Beethoven’s Late Piano Sonatas (ML 5130), or the journalistic preoccupation with Gould’s Columbia publicity.

¹³¹ Walter Homburger, quoted in Graham Carr, “Visualizing ‘The Sound of Genius’”, 9.

¹³² Kevin Bazzana, *Wondrous Strange*, 108.

¹³³ As of 5/7/17, [newspapers.com](http://www.newspapers.com) claims to have archived 5,254 newspapers, and [newspaperarchive.com](http://www.newspaperarchive.com) 7,859. For the years 1955-64, [newspapers.com](http://www.newspapers.com) gives results for 776 papers. The difference in scale between the LAC database and newspaper databases is best illustrated with an example: the LAC database returns 90 results for the year 1963 in “Press Clippings” for newspapers and magazines combined. For newspapers alone, [newspaperarchive.com](http://www.newspaperarchive.com) returns 271 results, and [newspapers.com](http://www.newspapers.com) returns 682 for the search “Glenn Gould” in the same year.

coverage, the diversity of publications writing on him, and the ways these variables changed over time. The result is a more fine-grained understanding of the cultural diffusion of Gould's celebrity across America in his concert years.

In **Fig. 5**, this composite data is used to chart the number of discrete American print publications in which Gould's name appeared through the years 1954 to 1965. To avoid complication, I have chosen not to discriminate between different genres of criticism in defining what is or is not an 'appearance'. I have limited myself simply to those papers in which the name 'Glenn Gould' appears. I have included two other trend lines to contextualise my data. The first, drawn from Otto Friedrich's biographical research, records Gould's American concert activity in this period.¹³⁴ The second traces the number of original Gould recordings on the American market per year, based on Sony Classical's discographic information in the comprehensive 80-CD set 'Glenn Gould: The Complete Original Jacket Collection' (2007). Five vertical lines intersect the graph to show professional milestones reached by Gould.

The line chart suggests an interpretation of Gould's U.S. concert career in four stages: i) a primary phase of cultural ascendancy (1954-1956), ii) a secondary phase of cultural ascendancy (1957-1960), iii) a period of peak stardom (1960-1962), and iv) a period of relative decline (1962-1964). One could speculate that the aggressive and canny marketing of Gould by his record company provided the major impetus for the dramatic reception spike of stage i). Stage ii) was propelled by Gould's entry into the radio sphere (his name could now be disseminated via radio listings), a growing visibility in the record market, a mounting national concert schedule, and the increasing national prominence and perception of artists – particularly classical pianists – as cultural ambassadors.¹³⁵ The saturated coverage of Gould in

¹³⁴ See Friedrich's "concert catalogue" in *Glenn Gould: A Life and Variations*, 337-354.

¹³⁵ Gould's American fame as a classical pianist was no doubt fuelled by the extraordinary success of the Texan pianist Van Cliburn (1934-2013), who achieved a cultural-political coup by winning the first Tchaikovsky competition in Moscow in 1958, at the height of the Cold War. Gould's Russian concert tour of 1957 had

the print press in stage iii) was fuelled by a number of high-profile American television appearances in the early Sixties. These included Gould's mainstream television debut on CBS-TV's *Ford Presents* series in the telecast *The Creative Performer*, January 1960. Here Gould shared the stage with distinguished artists Leonard Bernstein, Eileen Farrell, and Igor Stravinsky (the composer also making his debut American television appearance). More popular still were a set of thirty-minute films Gould made for the National Film Board of Canada in 1959, which introduced audiences to the idiosyncratic personal and professional routines of the artist.¹³⁶ Archival records of television listings show that these were broadcast on the American airwaves seven years in a row, from 1961-1967. Gould's high visibility in this period reflected broader changes in American media ownership and consumption – particularly, the emergence of a vast, diverse, and loyal television demographic which newspapers and magazines increasingly catered to in their coverage.¹³⁷ Finally, one could speculate that the decline shown in stage iv) in part reflected a realignment of professional priorities: a winding down of his American concert commitments and a renewed engagement with the Canadian media scene after having secured the fame and fortune necessary to make a success of his future career in that country's smaller and less lucrative cultural and consumer market. It also reflected the eclipsing of Gould's stardom by other artists. In January 1963, for instance, the sixteen-year-old pianist Andre Watts found instant celebrity appearing before a television audience as performer at one of Leonard Bernstein's *Young People's Concerts*. He

aroused much enthusiasm in Canada the previous year, but had made less of an impact in the United States. Following 1958, the personal and professional similarities and differences between Gould and Van Cliburn were much commented on by the American press (e.g. John K. Sherman, "Gould Turns Attention to Atonalists" in *Minnesota Star Tribune* (Feb. 22, 1959); Anon, "Gould to Play Uconn Concert" in *Hartford Courant* (Oct. 10, 1960)). Gould's relationship to Cold War cultural politics has been scrutinised in Graham Carr, "'No Political Significance of Any Kind'"

¹³⁶ Wolf Koenig, Roman Kroitor (dirs.), "Glenn Gould: On the Record" and "Glenn Gould: Off the Record" (National Film Board of Canada, 1959).

¹³⁷ "In 1956, Americans were purchasing twenty thousand TVs a day. And by the end of the fifties, nine out of every ten American homes had a 'home screen'" (Baughman, *The Republic of Mass Culture*, 30).

found further fame in an ‘electrically charged’ performance with the New York Philharmonic later in the month, where he substituted for Gould himself.¹³⁸

While analytically suggestive, it would be wrong to claim a direct causal link between the number of different publications writing on Gould and the extent of his cultural penetration. For one, the numbers must factor in the vast population shifts from the cities to the suburbs which defined this period of American history, and the birth of new daily newspapers which did not necessarily serve new demographic communities, but merely transplanted ones.

Physical geography, population density, and economic and cultural factors all play a role in determining the patterns of distribution and consumption of American newspapers across the country. **Table B** attempts to show the geographic spread of Gould’s American newspaper reception, and its developmental trajectory, in the period 1955-1964. Regional classifications are provided by the United States Census Bureau. These are the most widely used for data collection and analysis.¹³⁹ Reception rankings based on Gould’s average yearly newspaper coverage in each state are given in order of highest to lowest per region. States ranked in the top five for newspaper coverage are underlined for the reader’s convenience.

The data shows that, in general, more populous states tended to cover Gould more frequently in their press, with implications for the way he planned his concert schedule. If this data is compared with state population statistics from the 1960 United States Census, for example, it can be observed that four of the five states in which Gould had the highest yearly newspaper saturation (California, New York, Pennsylvania, Ohio) were also four of the top five most populous states in America, comprising thirty percent of the national population – a sizeable audience demographic.¹⁴⁰ Gould appeared on numerous occasions in the highest-circulation

¹³⁸ Miles Smith, “Watts Wins Bravos” in *The Philadelphia Inquirer* (Feb. 1, 1963).

¹³⁹ Anon., “The National Energy Modeling System: An Overview 2003” (US: Energy Information Administration, 2003), 8.

¹⁴⁰ Edwin D. Goldfield, “Estimated Population, By States: 1950 to 1960” in *The Statistical Abstract of the United States: 1961*, Bureau of the Census (Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1961), 10. See <https://www.census.gov/library/publications/1961/compendia/statab/82ed.html> (accessed Jul. 10, 2017).

dailies serving these regions' major towns and cities – e.g. the *New York Times*, the *Los Angeles Times*, the *Philadelphia Inquirer*, and the *Cleveland Press*. Gould prioritised these regions on his concert tour. Comparing the data in **Table B** to **Fig. 7**, we see that states of higher population were generally visited earlier in his concert itinerary, and more frequently. Otto Friedrich's statistics concerning Gould's concert 'geography' substantiates the point. Of Gould's 146 American concerts, almost half were conducted in New York, California, and Ohio.¹⁴¹ In this top regional tier, the physical size of the state does not strongly correlate to newspaper saturation; what matters is cultural and economic development. Thus powerhouse regions such as the North East and Midwest were generally more favourable to Gould. Presumably state size becomes more consequential in the poorer region of the South, as the ability of Gould's name to reach far-flung towns and cities is undermined by rudimentary distribution networks. The data appears to reflect regional differences in reading habits associated with social class: James Baughman's observation that 'fewer southerners than midwesterners . . . read newspapers' in this period seems implicitly confirmed in the findings.¹⁴² An Eastern-cosmopolitan/Southern-provincial bias also appears reflected in regional newspaper distribution (compare, for example, New York to Alabama in **Table B**). Whether a bourgeois/elite divide is reflected in West/Northeast patterns of magazine consumption, as Baughman also contends, would provide another interesting angle on how regional audience demographics influenced the rate of Gould's cultural diffusion across the country.¹⁴³

¹⁴¹ Specifically, nineteen percent in New York, fourteen percent in Ohio, thirteen percent in California. Pennsylvania and Texas, representing just five percent of his concert schedule, are notable exceptions. Pennsylvania, at least, can be explained by his "Philadelphia phobia" – his dread of performing there owing to its associations with his orthopaedic treatment in that city in 1960 (see Otto Friedrich, *A Life and Variations*, 196).

¹⁴² James L. Baughman, *The Republic of Mass Culture*, 10.

¹⁴³ *Ibid.*, 15. Only the LAC's Gould Archives gives information for Gould's magazine reception. I have decided to exclude this data from the regional tallies of **Table B**, given the patchy nature of the sample set.

Census data for 1959 shows that the combined personal income of citizens in each of the five most populous states was the highest in the Union.¹⁴⁴ Approximately thirty-nine percent of the nation's services economy, and thirty-six percent of its wholesale and retail economy, was generated by California, New York, Pennsylvania, and Ohio.¹⁴⁵ These were fertile conditions for the creative- and newspaper industries. New York, Ohio, and Pennsylvania could boast of orchestras of world-renown and receptive musical audiences, while New York's reputation for high-quality, objective journalism generated a national readership for its print publications, disseminating Gould's name across state boundaries.¹⁴⁶ **Fig. 6** suggests how much Gould stood to gain from the New York press. Of the ten pianists held up by *Time* magazine as exemplars of 'first-rate native talent', Gould's was the second-most-cited name in the *New York Times* in the years 1954-1964, the most of any Columbia artist on the list.¹⁴⁷ Beyond high-profile national newspaper- and magazine appearances, Gould's celebrity was disseminated via local press reporting on his concerts, his recordings, and even on his appearances in the national papers and magazines. **Table B** and **Fig. 7** reveal some evidence of a reception spike in years of state concert activity (e.g. Texas in 1956, California in 1957) or in the period of pre-concert hyping (Utah in 1958), but the trend does not appear uniform. The period 1954-1964 was a turbulent time for the American newspaper- and magazine industry, as television wrested from the print media much of its audience, its allure, and social influence, and suburbanisation stretched its supply lines. Despite this, print circulation rose over the decade, and competition was often a spur to innovation.¹⁴⁸ Whether in the local- or national press, the broadsheets or tabloids, Gould found an accommodating vehicle for the promotion, cultivation, and dissemination of his star identity – as a Bach interpreter, as a

¹⁴⁴ Edwin D. Goldfield, "Personal Income, By States: 1929 to 1959" in *The Statistical Abstract of the United States: 1961*, 307.

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, "Personal Income – Major Sources, By States: 1959", 308.

¹⁴⁶ James L. Baughman, *The Republic of Mass Culture*, 12.

¹⁴⁷ Anon., "The All-American Virtuoso" in *Time*, Vol. 71, No. 20 (May 19, 1958), 58. That Van Cliburn eclipsed Gould's visibility share by roughly twenty percent suggests the sheer scale of the Van Cliburn phenomenon from the late Fifties onwards.

¹⁴⁸ James L. Baughman, *The Republic of Mass Culture*, 59.

Fifties rebel, as an eccentric genius – to a large and diverse public. The journalistic press also provided a sphere of critical discourse in which the dominant meanings of Gould's identity could be contested or rejected, and individual critics often assumed elevated responsibility as arbiters of public opinion on Gould. In these capacities, print journalism was the engine of his early fame and reputation, helping to situate a cultural understanding of the pianist somewhere between the Romantic hype of his producers and the dry criticism of New York's musical intelligentsia.

The Managerial Press: Walter Homburger

Corporate publicists and journalists contributed significantly to Gould's growing cultural presence in America. Yet it was Gould's personal manager, Walter Homburger, who exerted the greatest influence on Gould's celebrity career, facilitating his entry into the highly lucrative, competitive, and celebrated world of American concert performance. In 1947, Gould, aged just fourteen, became Homburger's first client. The two contributed to each other's success, as Gould's prodigious talent eased Homburger's transition into the role of manager and impresario of Toronto's music scene, and Homburger's savvy and resourceful approach (and later, reputation) allowed Gould to derive the greatest professional advantage from his prodigious talent.

Following the war, increased social mobility, heightened consumer interest in the creative industries, and the new accessibility and appreciation of musical culture through radio and television had all helped drive the expansion and diversification of the American concert market. Further, North American artists were newly under the public gaze, as the influx of European artists was interrupted by the post-war reconstruction effort, and as a wider sense of Americanism was galvanised by a recognition of new external threats (e.g. Soviet

communism) and the new institutional vigour of American cultural life.¹⁴⁹ In this climate, the majority of American concert performers – including most of those in **Fig. 6** – delegated their promotional, logistical, and professional needs to Columbia Artists Management Incorporated (CAMI), the largest management agency in the country which, along with its subsidiary Community Concerts Service, held virtual monopoly over America's concert circuit.¹⁵⁰ Gould was not associated with CAMI during his concert career (he joined in 1968, under company president Ronald Wilford, to build business relations in connection with his media work). While seemingly an effective promotional vehicle for its brightest stars, and a key player in bringing American live music to the mass public, CAMI has been criticised for neglecting its second-tier performers, for commercially exploiting its audiences, and for restricting local concert markets by stifling competition from independent managers.¹⁵¹

The managerial achievements of Walter Homburger can be measured against these cultural standards. As a foreign-born Canadian working independently from Toronto, Homburger's skill in promoting Gould successfully to the most prestigious CAMI conductors, ensembles, and concert managers in America's leading musical centres is all the more striking. For example, he secured concerto engagements with Eugene Ormandy and the Philadelphia Orchestra (1961), Leonard Bernstein and the New York Philharmonic (1957, 1959, 1961, 1962), and George Szell and the Cleveland Orchestra (1957); as well as prestigious appearances at Carnegie Hall and other venues in seasonal programmes which also featured

¹⁴⁹ Joseph Horowitz, *Classical Music in America*, 349; Richard Crawford, *America's Musical Life*, 696. Crawford suggests that American conservatoires, colleges, and university departments became "an independent force" in post-war musical life (p. 694). The academy also gave sovereign voice to a new cadre of American intellectuals, who channelled a similar self-assertive Americanism. In this regard, Alexander Bloom suggests that *Partisan Review's* publication of the symposium "Our Country and Our Culture" (1952) was emblematic (Leonard Wallock, *New York*, 244).

¹⁵⁰ A number of scholars have written extensively on America's concert management situation at the mid-century. See particularly Norman Lebrecht, *The Corporate Murder of Classical Music*, 107-159; Joseph Horowitz, *Classical Music in America*, 414-432; James M. Doering, *The Great Orchestrator: Arthur Judson and American Arts Management* (US: University of Illinois Press, 2013). Van Cliburn was managed by CAMI's competitor, the maverick Russian-born impresario Sol Hurok (1888-1974).

¹⁵¹ CAMI was investigated as part of the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) investigation into "chain-broadcasting practices" of the NBC, CBS, and Mutual radio networks in 1938. These proceedings formed the basis of *Time's* critique of CAMI and its founder, Arthur Judson, in its edition of Feb. 6, 1939 (James M. Doering, *The Great Orchestrator*, 169-170).

such names as Arthur Rubinstein and Rudolf Serkin.¹⁵² Gould's connection with Columbia Records appears to have facilitated Homburger's entry into this market. The record label shared with CAMI an affiliation with the CBS network, situating Gould within the orbit of business mogul and concert impresario Arthur Judson.¹⁵³ In fact, archival records demonstrate that Homburger was in regular communication with Columbia Records. He was on first-name terms with Masterworks' A&R director David Oppenheim, with whom he negotiated Gould's record contracts, and corresponded on various aspects of Gould's promotion.¹⁵⁴ Thus the one drawback of independent management – a lack of power and influence – appears not to have applied in the case of Homburger, who in any case was well-respected in America for his contributions to Canada's cultural life, as manager of the National Ballet of Canada (1951-1955) and Toronto Symphony (1961-1987), and as founder of Toronto's prestigious 'International Artist Series' (1947-1982).¹⁵⁵ To Gould's musical colleague Ray Dudley, Homburger was 'unusually clever in the way he promoted' Gould, providing the 'personal representation and *push* behind that representation' which 'the biggest management' such as CAMI could not provide.¹⁵⁶

Homburger's correspondence shows him performing a wide array of services for Gould. In addition to contractual duties, Homburger arranged accommodation for Gould on his concert travels, petitioned for Gould's American visa entry, replied to fan requests (often with signed photographs) and fielded press requests, negotiated Gould's fees for his concert- and media work, and rented and supplied score material to orchestras. In matters promotional, archival letters show fans and concert managers advising Homburger on how to improve Gould's

¹⁵² Otto Friedrich, *Glenn Gould: A Life and Variations*, 341-354; Anon., "Symphony Season to Open Oct. 19" in *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* (Sep. 9, 1956).

¹⁵³ Arthur Judson (1881-1975) co-founded CBS with the businessman William S. Paley in 1927, and founded Columbia Concerts Corporation, later CAMI, in 1930. Judson, whose background was in concert management, has been described as "supreme sovereign of all music in the whole of the United States" (Lebrecht, *The Corporate Murder of Classical Music*, 104).

¹⁵⁴ For example, Walter Homburger's letter to David Oppenheim, Jul. 30, 1956.

¹⁵⁵ Betty Nygaard King, "Walter Homburger" in *The Canadian Encyclopedia*. See <http://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/walter-homburger-emc/> (accessed Jul. 13, 2017).

¹⁵⁶ Rhona Bergman, *The Idea of Gould*, 211.

public image by tweaking aspects of his artistic presentation or his repertoire. In others, Homburger is advised of the most influential newspapers and critics of a city, or his permission is sought for tie-in radio promotion of Gould's concerts. There is also extensive correspondence between Homburger and Gould himself, which sees Homburger advising Gould on his health, the practicality of his many concert cancellations, and his dealings with flamboyant and difficult impresarios.¹⁵⁷

Homburger's private written correspondence with influential managers, agents, and journalists – much of which is presumably lost – is an important part of his promotional legacy. More accessible is the 'general purpose' promotional material – the posters, the flyers, the newspaper- and magazine adverts and commentaries, newsletters, and press books – which served as the primary means of drawing public attention to Gould, and mobilising opinion around him. This literature shows that Homburger traded on the weighty authority of select newspapers, magazines, and critics when promoting Gould in the print media. In a standard rhetorical conceit for Gould's poster- and flyer campaign (e.g. for his New York debut, **Fig. 8**), large and visually arresting shots of Gould in performance or in fixed poses are contextualised with pithy or extended concert testimonial from reputable sources likely to appeal to local concert demographics. This basic design is superimposed on an eye-catching background. A short biography often accompanies, conveying Gould's primary artistic achievements in simple language. Particularly important information – usually the artist's name, his occupation, the performing venue and date of performance – is highlighted in large or bold font. Homburger's attempts to situate Gould's value as an artist by appealing to this evaluative history appeared to be effective. Ray Dudley saw Homburger's 'unusually clever' management style exemplified in the way he drummed up critical interest in Gould through the targeted dissemination of favourable past reviews of Gould's concerts to powerful musical

¹⁵⁷ I refer here to Homburger's correspondence found in the Glenn Gould Archives, and fully cited in the bibliography. See, for example, item nos. 33 3 5; 33 6 18; 31 2 4; 33 10 14; 33 16 27.

figures. Anticipation for Gould's New York debut, for example, was built in such a way.¹⁵⁸ In **Fig. 8**, Homburger's rhetorical focus on Gould's modern musical tastes, his 'acclaim . . . from East to West', and his top-class musical education, presumably provided some ideological defence against charges of artistic provincialism, which informed the negative perception of Canadian performers on the part of American audiences and critics.

Homburger's newsletters and press books, by contrast, provided a way of disseminating more extensive biographic and professional information on Gould to local publicists involved in concert promotion or journalism, as well as highlighting effective promotional strategies. The Gould Archives at LAC possess two of Homburger's newsletters from February and September 1957.¹⁵⁹ These detail Gould's recent high-profile engagements, list reviews and recommendations from important musical centres and conductors, and emphasise Gould's huge success at the box office. Three of Homburger's press books are available for years 1951, 1956, and 1961.¹⁶⁰ In one section from the 1961 edition entitled 'Concert and Record Promotion', Homburger suggests a four-pronged approach to maximising Gould's local concert publicity which all involve piggybacking on the quality and reach of his recorded output. 'Store displays', 'disc jockeys', 'local music critics and record reviewers', and 'television programmes' are all cited as potential promotional vehicles for his recordings and, by extension, for his concerts. The subsequent sections of the press books, written at length, highlight aspects of Gould's life and work of particular promotional interest. In addition to a general 'Biography', for example, the 1961 press book has sections headed 'Recording Artist', 'Personality', 'Bach', 'Composer', 'Contemporary Music', 'Away From The Piano', 'In Russia', and 'Recent Press Excerpts'.

Homburger's efforts clearly paid off. At the height of his American concert career, Gould was earning \$3,500 per concert, and \$100,000 per year – a level of wealth which confirmed the

¹⁵⁸ Rhona Bergman, *The Idea of Gould*, 211.

¹⁵⁹ Archival item nos. 51 10 4 and 51 10 3 respectively.

¹⁶⁰ Item nos. 51 17 1; 51 10 1; 51 17 2.

pianist's star status (c. \$30,000, and \$850,000 respectively in today's money).¹⁶¹ In addition, his American concerts were considerably more profitable than his European ones, albeit lower profile.¹⁶² His concert fees were even higher than those of American pianist superstar Van Cliburn at the time, and higher still than those of the other top-flight American pianists listed in **Fig. 6**.¹⁶³ At the same time, there is something to be said for Bazzana's claim that Gould's talent 'effectively sold itself'.¹⁶⁴ As Homburger himself admitted when pressed on his laissez-faire attitude to Gould's concert programming, 'by the time his reputation had reached its heights, he could have played anything'.¹⁶⁵ Regardless, it is clear that Walter Homburger deserves a central role in the story of Gould's cultural ascendancy, if for nothing else than for being the first to negotiate a cultural space for the young unknown pianist in a large and saturated foreign concert market weaned on the myth of Canadian provincial inferiority. Gould's American concert success, engineered in large part by Homburger, not only renewed Canada's confidence in its performance culture; it bestowed on Gould the status of a Canadian cultural ambassador, from which he would benefit in his post-concert career back up North.

Conclusion

This chapter has suggested the importance of Gould's American print promotion to his cultural ascendancy during his concert years, with special attention paid to the promotional events of 1955-1956. Gould's record company, his personal manager, and the wider critical community provided Gould with the breadth of media exposure and ideological support for his growing star identity. The cultural diffusion of Gould's celebrity was facilitated by his

¹⁶¹ Otto Friedrich, *Glenn Gould: A Life and Variations*, 97. Homburger received twenty percent commission on Gould's concert appearances, fifteen percent on radio, fifteen percent on television, and ten percent on motion pictures (Helen Mesaros, *Bravo Fortissimo*, 99). This level of concert commission was on par with CAMI's (James Gollin, *Pianist*, 130).

¹⁶² Kevin Bazzana, *Wondrous Strange*, 192.

¹⁶³ Howard Reich, *Van Cliburn* (US: T. Nelson Publishers, 1993), 136. Reich cites an *Associated Press* report claiming Van Cliburn's fees were \$2,500-3,000 for the season 1958-1959 (ibid.).

¹⁶⁴ Kevin Bazzana, *Wondrous Strange*, 106.

¹⁶⁵ Walter Homburger in Colin Eatock, *Remembering Glenn Gould*, 6.

establishment of early links to New York's highly developed musical, institutional, and promotional networks. Through the promotion of his high-profile concert- and recording activities in that city, Gould soon became a ubiquitous cultural presence. His name was covered in the nation's highest-circulation newspapers and magazines, and his albums distributed to the fast-growing number of record outlets in American towns and cities. Wider cultural-historical circumstance provided the conditions of possibility for Gould's cultural breakthrough: for example, the rapid post-war growth and expansion of the American recording industry and consumer economy, the new dominance of a Hollywood-derived star culture, newly receptive attitudes to home-grown musical talent founded on a growing national self-confidence, and the ascendancy of North American pianists, in particular, as the standard-bearers of a politically engaged culture of performance.

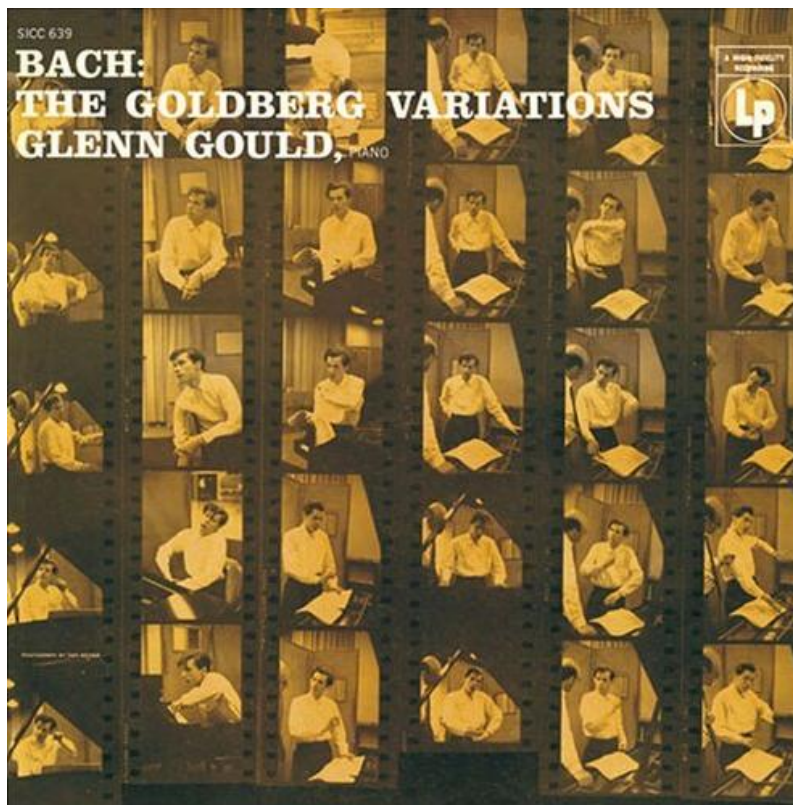
Beyond this, Gould's concert- and record publicists – the former represented in Walter Homburger, the latter in Columbia Records' Debbie Ishlon – nurtured his popular appeal by tailoring an understanding of his 'unique genius' to broader trends in American society and culture. The style, scope, and influence of these campaigns was beholden to a variety of personal, commercial, and material factors influenced by the publicist's professional background, social network, intended audience, and so on. Homburger's desire to appeal to an audience of middle-class New York concert-goers, for example, was reflected, visually, in the use of more formal portrait rhetoric (at least at first), and, discursively, in the emphasis on Gould's cosmopolitan musical interests. Columbia's desire to appeal to a mass market of record consumers encouraged the deployment of more 'modern' typographies of genius which exploited the semiotic ambiguity of Gould's 'eccentricity' to situate him halfway between the worlds of Romantic musical performance and Fifties' Beatnik culture. Still, with the rise of American photojournalism, both these campaigns were united in their respect for the enormous publicity value of photography, and coordinated extensively with the American newspaper- and magazine industries to ensure Gould's likeness was familiar to audiences in a

growing array of work and non-work contexts. By the late Fifties, these initiatives had helped transform Gould from an ‘altar boy of high culture’ to an ‘apostle to the masses’; from a ‘subject of critical adulation’ to an ‘object of popular consumption’.¹⁶⁶ Gould, for his part, distanced himself from his Fifties’ image, describing it as a ‘media concoction’ for which he shared little responsibility.¹⁶⁷ With the passing of his concert career in 1964, Gould returned permanently to Canada, and undertook to engage more meaningfully with the contents of his celebrity through a new programme of professional commitments in the electronic media.

¹⁶⁶ Graham Carr, “Visualizing ‘The Sound of Genius’”, 33, 5.

¹⁶⁷ Norman Snider, “Glenn Gould at 45”.

Fig. 1a and 1b



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BACH
THE GOLDBERG VARIATIONS
GLENN GOULD
Piano

ML 5060



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■ *The Goldberg Variations*, one of the monuments of keyboard literature, was published in 1742 while Bach held the title of Polish Royal and Saxon electoral court-composer. That his apparent apathy toward the variation form (he produced only one other work of that cast—an unrepentant set in the "Italian manner") did not prevent his indulgence in an unrepentant set in the "Italian manner" provokes considerable curiosity as to the origin of this composition. Such curiosity, however, must remain unquenchable for any data extant in Bach's time has long since been obscured by his romantic biographers, who succumbed to the allure of a legend which, despite its extravagant caprice, is difficult to disprove. Briefly, for those who may not be acquainted with this lore, the story concerns a commission which was tendered to Bach by a Count Kaizerling, the Russian ambassador to the Saxon court, who had as his musician-in-service Johann Gottlieb Goldberg, one of the master's most accomplished pupils. Kaizerling, it seems, was frequently troubled with insomnia, and requested Bach to write some reposeful keyboard pieces which Goldberg could perform as a soporific. If the treatment was a success, and though we harbour no illusion as to Bach's workmanlike indifference to the restrictions imposed upon his artist's prerogative, it is difficult to imagine that even Kaizerling's 40 Louis d'or could in-

duce his interest in an otherwise distasteful form.

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

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

■ However, the vast majority of significant contributions to this form cannot be

accurately allotted to either of these general classifications, which, to be sure, rather describe the extremities of the working premise of the variation idea, wherein the coalescence of these qualities constitutes the real challenge to the composer's inventive power. A definitive textbook example could be found in Beethoven's *Eroica* variations, where each of these formulative elements is treated separately, their ultimate merger being consummated in a fugue in which the melodic motive acts as counter-subject to the "tema del basso" of the variations.

■ The present work utilizes the *Sarabande* from Anna Magdalena Bach's notebook as a *passacalle*—that is, only its bass progression is duplicated in the variations, where indeed it is treated with sufficient rhythmic flexibility to meet the harmonic contingencies of such diverse contrapuntal structures as a canon upon every degree of the diatonic scale, two *fughettas*, and even a *quadrille* (the superposition of street-song popular in Bach's times). Such alterations as are necessary do not in any way impair the gravitational compulsion which this masterfully proportioned ground exerts upon

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

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

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 174)



Ex. 1 - Aria - Ground

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PAGE ONE

Fig. 2

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3. Beethoven: Quartets 7 and 11
4. Mozart: Requiem
5. Finlandia, Swan of Tuonela, etc.
6. Beethoven: 3 piano concertos
7. Beethoven: "Eroica" Symphony
8. Verdi: The Seasons
9. Tchaikovsky: "Fata Morgana" Symphony
10. Stravinsky: "New World" Symphony
11. Bach: Goldberg Variations
12. Schweitzer: Plays Book, Vol. 1
13. Rameau: Nuits de France, etc.
14. Strauss: Willan Tell Overture, etc.
15. Mendelssohn: Midsummer Night's Dream, Schubert: "Erlkönig" Symphony, Flaklud, Babes and Toys
16. Verdi: Aida
17. Verdi and Bach: Violin Concertos
18. Ravel: "Bolero", "Dance of the Hours"
19. Brahms: Symphony No. 4
20. Parsifal
21. Debussy: La Mer; Ervyl; La Valse, etc.
22. Bach: Brandenburg Cons. 1, 2, 3
23. Paganini and Saint-Saens: Concertos
24. Strings of Philadelphia Orchestra
25. Shostakovich: Violin Concerto
26. Copland: Appalachian Spring, etc.
27. Mozart: "Le Nozze di Figaro"
28. Songs of Faith and Devotion
29. Brahms: Violin and Fugue
30. Lalo and Bruch: Violin Concertos
31. Great Love Duets
32. Mendelssohn: Scotch, Reformation Sym.

Fig. 3 and Fig. 4

**MEN
WE'D LIKE
YOU TO MEET...**

GLENN GOULD, considered at 23 one of the finest pianists around, has in one year built the kind of reputation that starts legends. A frail, loose-jointed Canadian with a bumper crop of light-brown hair, he bolsters legend with idiosyncrasies: carts around pills, bottled spring water, a special chair; has views on diet. (A friend: "What did you eat that disagreed with you, Glenn? Food?") Recording for Columbia, he slumps chin-high to the keys, singing passionately. Says his recording director, "That guy plays great piano."



GLENN GOULD

NAMES TO REMEMBER—

NED ROREM, an American composer with a grave seraphic charm, has written one symphony, a TV opera, and more than a hundred songs, poignant, positive, and set to the poetry of everyone from Sappho to Gerard Manley Hopkins. In the past eight years, while living mostly abroad—in France and in Morocco, he has won half a dozen nicely faded musical awards and commissions. Now thirty-two, Rorem is back in the U.S.—"Americans are the only people who always think they should come home."

GLENN GOULD, a twenty-three-year-old Canadian pianist, has caused this year a glow of jubilant bores among American critics; his two U.S. concerts and one Columbia LP have had much the same effect on audiences. Tense, enraptured, with blueberry-blue eyes, Gould approaches his piano as he might an unbroken horse, bringing forth a tone both strong and lyrical.

ANTHONY FRANCIOSA, pioneer-jawed and springy-muscled, plays the good-hearted brother in Michael Caine's play, *A Hatful of Rain*. A convincing, vigorous craftsman, he had his first flure in acting off-Broadway, appearing in Shakespeare, Pirandello, and Gertrude Stein. Later he worked as a waiter on luxury liners to the Orient, a phase he refers to as "my Shanghai period." Now the movies want him.

MICHAEL GAZZO wrote *A Hatful of Rain*. A frightening, powerful, yet often funny story of a dope addict, it began earning money for its sixty-odd backers after the phenomenally short period of two months. (During the tryouts, *Fareye* called it non-commercial.) Before that, Gazzo, a laddish thirty-two, had an involved career which included a trial run at a machine shop, sculpting, and a few months as a shoeshine man in Miami. He also managed three off-Broadway companies, acting, directing, and earning annually \$61 to \$84. Now, Shelley Winter, the show's star, says, "Give him two Martinis, and he talks in verse."

PAUL RUDOLPH, who won the "outstanding young architects award" two years ago at the international competition at São Paulo, Brazil, began his architectural career fixing up old parsonages. (He is the son of a Methodist minister.) Since then he has designed, among other buildings, the U.S. Embassy in Jordan, and the shapely beautiful plans for the new Jewett Art, Music, and Drama Center at Wellesley College. In the last five years, he has been visiting lecturer in architecture at fifteen universities, including Harvard, Yale, and Princeton. He lives in Sarasota, Florida.

GEORGE PLIMPTON edits, with a shifting staff of other young literary types, *The Paris Review*, a "little" magazine devoted mainly to fiction and poetry. He also teaches English at Barnard College and juggles with serene elegance his own writing projects—seven at the moment. Whipped-cream, with an engaging placidity and a radar-wave mind, Plimpton helped found the *Review* in 1953. Its circulation has spiraled amiably upward to eight thousand, partly because of its "Art of Fiction" interviews; these are Plimpton's special editorial province.

FRITZ WEAVER this season nipped off the plum part of the butler in the Broadway hit, *The Chalk Garden*. A narrow, melancholy-looking man, linear as scaffolding, Weaver has seventeen-year comedy timing and a subtle, tily way of building character. He, too, came to the plummy life through off-Broadway theatre. The son of a Pittsburgh economist and an Italian opera singer, he went to the University of Chicago, where he wrote a thesis on Einstein's theory of relativity.

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Fig. 5

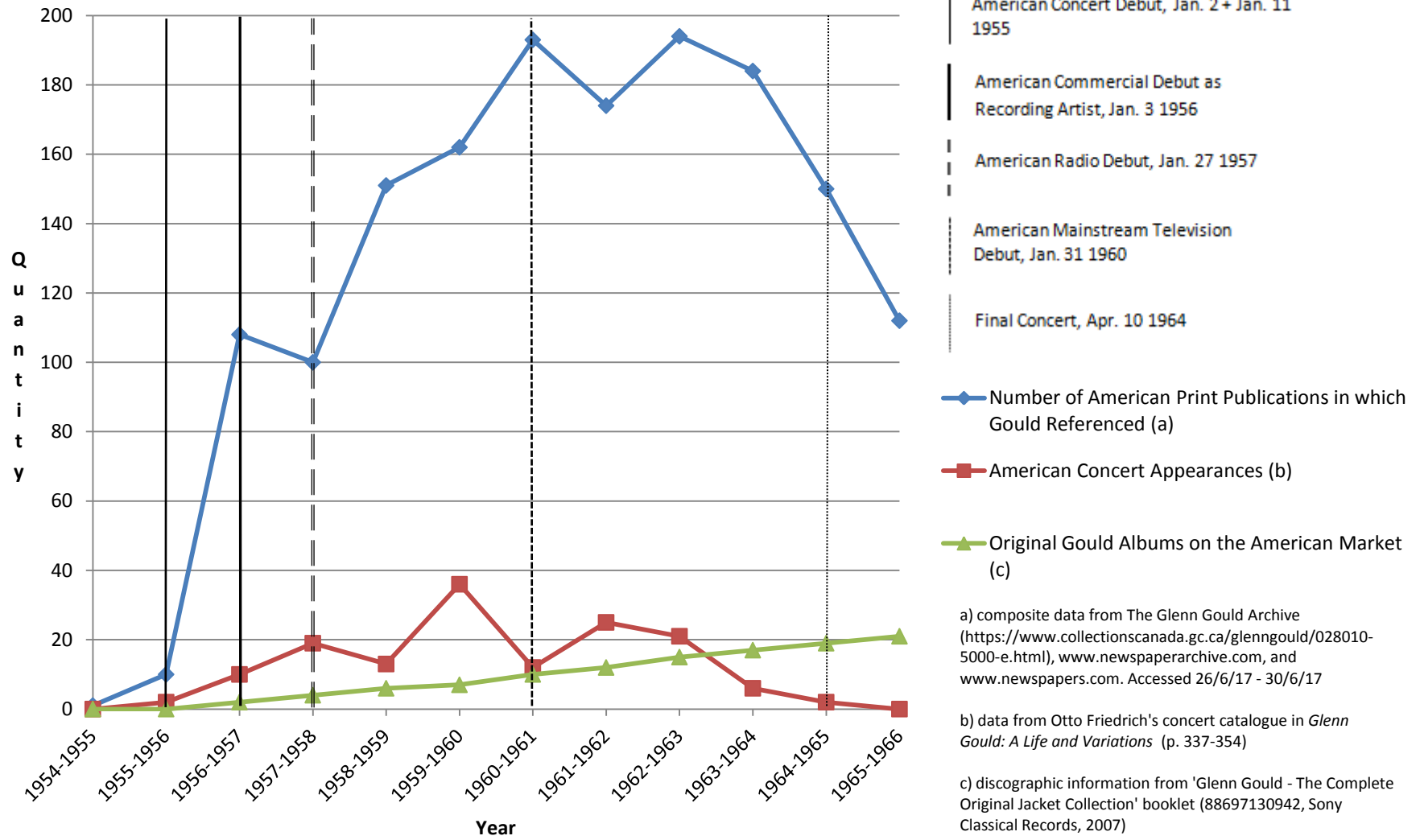


Table A**Data for Fig. 5 Line Graph**

Year	Number of American Print Publications in which Gould Referenced	American Concert Appearances	Gould Recordings on the American Market
1954-1955	1	0	0
1955-1956	10	2	0
1956-1957	108	10	2
1957-1958	100	19	4
1958-1959	151	13	6
1959-1960	162	36	7
1960-1961	193	12	10
1961-1962	174	25	12
1962-1963	194	21	15
1963-1964	184	6	17
1964-1965	150	2	19
1965-1966	112	0	21

Table B (a) Gould's Regional Newspaper Reception in the United States, 1955-1964¹

	Year/Number of Statewide Newspapers in which Gould Referenced										Average Number of Statewide Newspapers in which Gould Referenced (per year)	Reception Ranking (x/47)
	1955	1956	1957	1958	1959	1960	1961	1962	1963	1964		
North East - New England												
Massachusetts	*	2	3	4	1	4	3	2	3	3	2.5	15
Connecticut	*	1	2	*	2	7	2	3	2	2	2.1	19
Vermont	*	1	1	1	*	1	1	1	1	1	0.80	34=
New Hampshire	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	1	1	0.20	44=
Maine	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	1	0.10	46=
Rhode Island	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
North East - Mid-Atlantic												
<u>New York</u>	2	10	11	13	14	14	16	16	15	10	12	2
<u>Pennsylvania</u>	*	7	7	12	8	13	12	16	10	23	11	3
New Jersey	*	*	*	*	*	2	1	4	5	3	1.5	25=

¹composite data from The Glenn Gould Archive (<https://www.collectionscanada.gc.ca/glenngould/028010-5000-e.html>, www.newspaperarchive.com, and www.newspapers.com). Accessed 26/6/17 - 30/6/17. An asterisk in the table indicates that no data is available for that entry.

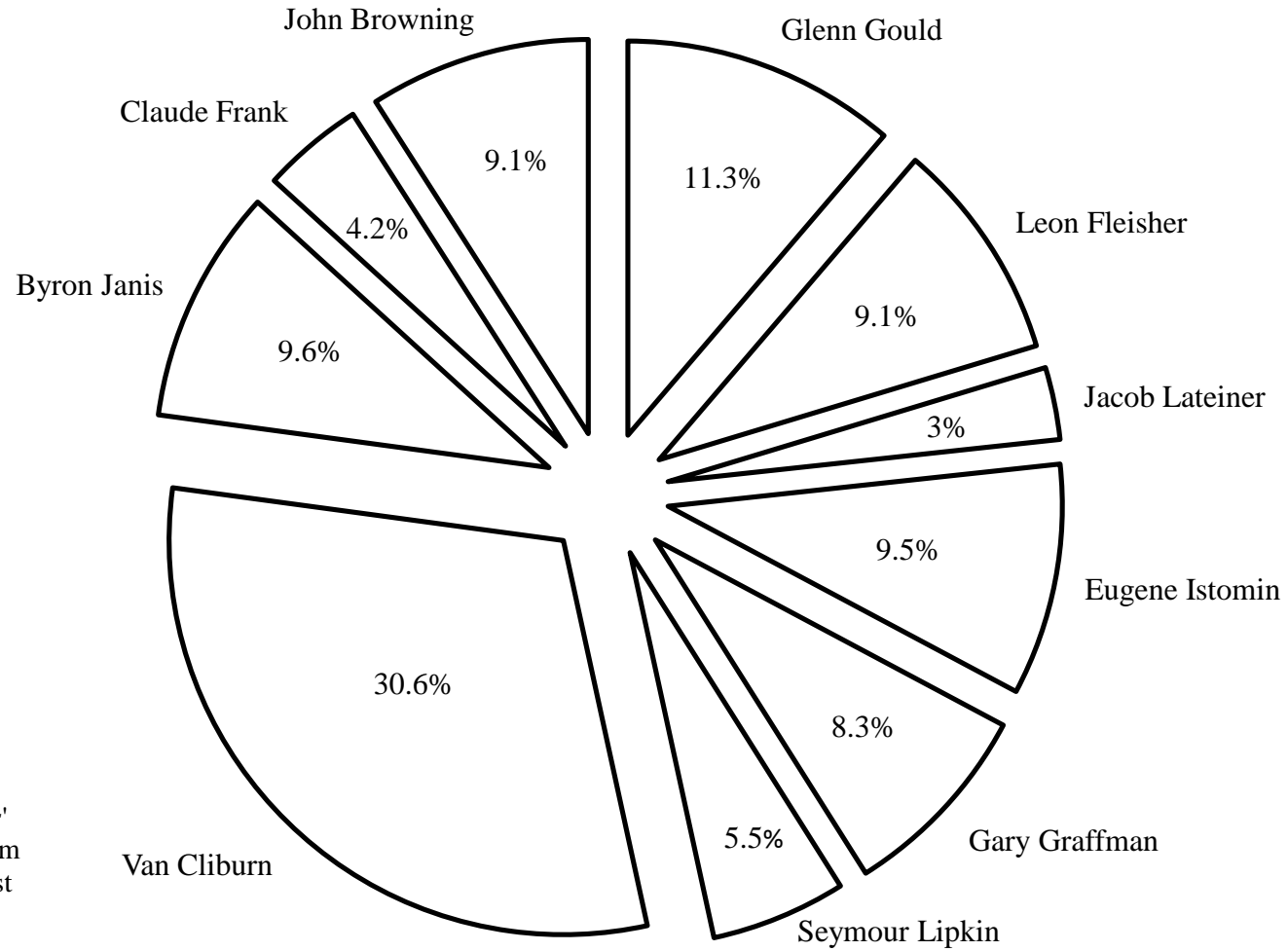
Table B (c)

	Year/ Number of Statewide Newspapers in which Gould Referenced										Average Number of Statewide Newspapers in which Gould Referenced (per year)	Reception Ranking (x/47)
	1955	1956	1957	1958	1959	1960	1961	1962	1963	1964		
South - South Atlantic												
Florida	*	1	6	3	2	5	7	4	5	3	3.6	10
North Carolina	*	3	*	2	3	4	3	2	6	3	2.6	14
Maryland	*	2	1	2	4	5	2	3	2	3	2.4	16
Virginia	*	1	1	1	1	3	1	4	3	1	1.6	24
District of Columbia	1	*	3	1	3	3	3	*	1	*	1.5	25=
West Virginia	*	*	*	2	3	5	2	*	1	1	1.4	28
Georgia	*	*	*	*	2	1	2	2	*	*	0.70	37=
South Carolina	*	*	*	1	2	*	1	*	*	1	0.50	39=
Delaware	*	*	*	1	1	1	*	*	1	1	0.50	39=
South - East South Central												
Tennessee	*	2	*	1	3	3	2	2	3	1	1.7	22=
Kentucky	*	*	1	3	1	1	1	3	1	1	1.2	29=
Mississippi	*	1	*	3	*	1	1	2	1	*	0.90	33
Alabama	*	*	*	*	*	1	2	2	2	*	0.70	37=
South - West South Central												
Texas	*	14	4	9	9	8	12	10	13	8	8.7	5
Louisiana	*	1	1	6	1	3	1	2	2	2	1.9	20
Oklahoma	*	1	1	1	2	2	3	*	2	3	1.5	25=
Arkansas	*	1	*	1	*	*	*	1	1	*	0.40	42

Table B (d)

	Year/Number of Statewide Newspapers in which Gould Referenced										Average Number of Statewide Newspapers in which Gould Referenced (per year)	Reception Ranking (x/47)
	1955	1956	1957	1958	1959	1960	1961	1962	1963	1964		
West - Mountain												
Arizona	*	3	3	3	2	2	3	2	4	1	2.3	17
New Mexico	*	1	*	1	2	3	3	1	4	3	1.8	21
Utah	*	*	*	7	2	1	2	*	3	2	1.7	22=
Colorado	*	*	*	*	3	2	2	1	4	*	1.2	29=
Nevada	*	*	1	*	*	*	*	1	2	1	0.50	39=
Montana	*	*	*	*	3	*	*	*	*	*	0.30	43
Idaho	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	1	1	*	0.20	44=
Wyoming	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
West - Pacific												
<u>California</u>	*	6	18	16	18	14	15	21	21	14	14	1
Oregon	*	2	2	3	1	3	4	3	4	*	2.2	18
Hawaii	*	*	*	1	1	2	2	2	*	2	1.0	31=
Washington	*	3	1	3	*	1	*	*	*	*	0.80	34=
Alaska	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	1	0.10	46=

Fig. 6 'Visibility Share' of 10 Pianists in the *New York Times*, 1954-1964 (% of 2,327 Total Print Appearances)*



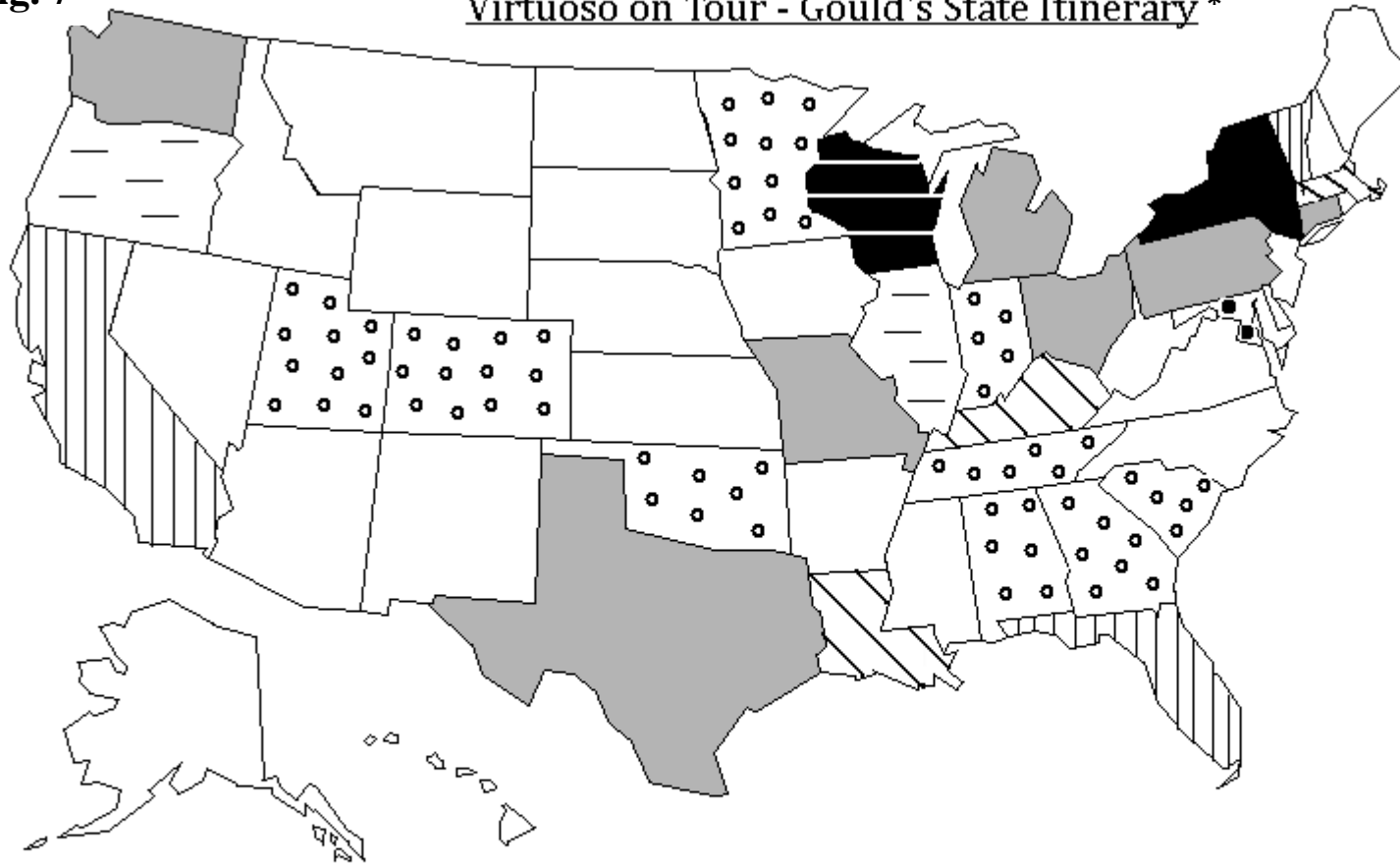
*Based on *New York Times*' archival data, retrieved from the digital archive 'ProQuest Historical Newspapers'

Table C**Data for Fig. 6 Pie Chart**

	Glenn Gould	Leon Fleisher	Jacob Lateiner	Eugene Istomin	Gary Graffman	Seymour Lipkin	Van Cliburn	Byron Janis	Claude Frank	John Browning
Year/NYT Appearances										
1954-1955	0	11	12	2	14	12	10	26	5	1
1955-1956	7	16	18	16	5	3	0	6	6	6
1956-1957	14	12	5	17	4	10	1	13	12	13
1957-1958	15	2	3	16	14	6	1	21	11	0
1958-1959	24	13	2	34	4	19	171	15	5	13
1959-1960	26	13	11	21	8	29	82	6	24	23
1960-1961	24	10	2	20	26	19	69	22	13	23
1961-1962	39	25	3	16	15	12	86	28	3	32
1962-1963	37	32	4	42	31	11	128	32	5	44
1963-1964	40	31	3	9	34	8	91	28	3	37
1964-1965	36	46	6	28	37	0	72	27	10	19
Total NYT Appearances (1954-1964)	262	211	69	221	192	129	711	224	97	211
% of 10-pianist total NYT appearances (1954-1964)	11.30%	9.10%	3.00%	9.50%	8.30%	5.50%	30.60%	9.60%	4.20%	9.10%

Fig. 7

Virtuoso on Tour - Gould's State Itinerary *



Key (State Debut)


- 1955 (1 state)
- 1956 (7 states)
- ▨ 1957 (3 states)
- ▧ 1958 (3 states)
- 1959 (9 states)
- 1960 (1 state)
- ▬ 1961 (1 state)
- ▬ 1962 (2 states)

Total States Visited = 27

* data from Otto Friedrich's concert catalogue in *A Life and Variations* (p. 337-354)

Fig. 8a and 8b

GLENN GOULD



It seems almost paradoxical to say that he plays in moderation.
Chiefs Journal, Feb. '53

"Mr. Gould has a rare gift for doing some of those things that you expect but they never expect to come off."
CBC—Mont., '53

CANADIAN PIANIST

"A marvellous recital, a great revelation! take good note of his name, you will hear it much talked about in the future."
Montreal Le Canada, Nov. '52

Town Hall, Tues. Jan. 11th, 8.30 p.m.

TICKETS: \$2.30, 1.75, 1.15. Loges seating six: \$17.28 (All tax incl.)


Program: Fantasia for Organ-Sweelinck; 5 Sinfonias and Partita No. 5 in G Major-Bach; Sonata in E Major, Op. 109-Beethoven; Sonata Opus 1-Berg; Variations-Webern.

GLENN GOULD was born in Toronto in 1932 where his great musical promise soon attracted considerable attention. In 1940 he began his studies with Alberto Guerrero and the following year he became an Associate of the Royal Conservatory of Music, the youngest student ever to do so. During the next few years, while attending High School, he initiated his career with several Toronto recitals and five appearances with the Toronto Symphony Orchestra. In the past three seasons he has performed from coast to coast in recital and as soloist with the leading Canadian orchestras.

Although his extensive repertoire is all-inclusive the music of the Baroque, Bach in particular, and of the twentieth century usually predominate his programmes. His great enthusiasm for the music of Arnold Schoenberg and the modern Viennese School has perhaps been influenced by his profound interest in the compositional art of earlier epochs. Recently Mr. Gould recorded the piano sonata by Schoenberg's most famous pupil—Alban Berg—for Hallmark Records.

CRITICS ACCLAIM GLENN GOULD FROM WEST TO EAST

Vancouver 53: "Glenn Gould won the hearts of everyone."
 Calgary 53: "It does in a more exciting musical personality in Canada today he has yet to come our way."
 Toronto 52: "One can only admit superlatives after hearing Glenn Gould."
 Kingston 53: "I for one shall be very surprised if his name is not a household word and a household word within the next decade."
 Montreal 53: "It is quite clear that he is to become one of the great musical personalities of this generation."
 Saint John 53: "He amazed and delighted his audience with a virtuosity seldom surpassed."



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CHAPTER V

THE SOUNDS OF GENIUS: LISTENING TO GOULD'S CELEBRITY, 1964-1982

. . . this page of Arctic . . . reads and writes me. I am its text, impressionable, inscribable, desirous of contamination, a page open to its tattoo, marking.

Aritha van Herk.¹

This was much more than a set of reflections on the self, and ranged well beyond a philosophy of music; understood in its totality, it was a philosophy of sound.

Richard Cavell, Gould scholar.²

Gould's Performances of Self through the Electronic Media

This chapter examines Gould's use of radio and recording as a form of experimental self-representation, focusing on his media works created after his concert retirement in 1964. Based on my theoretical understanding of Gould's identity as set out in Chapter I, the chapter considers how Gould was able to structure the wider cultural reception of his life and achievements by relaying his personal philosophy of creativity and morality through rhetorics of North and technology in his experimental radio documentaries and recordings. I consider how links between creativity and isolation, morality and communication, which have orientated the three reception narratives I identify in Chapter I, are established through his experimental studio practices, in his approach to sound media as i) discursive texts, ii) formal structures, iii) sound texts. My approach is premised on the understanding that Gould sought to represent himself through his ideas, rather than the raw facts of his biography, and that these ideas are manifested in the three categories I outline above. These three categories

¹ Aritha van Herk, *In Visible Ink: Crypto-Frictions* (Edmonton: NeWest, 1991), 5.

² Richard Cavell, "Gould, McLuhan, and the Fate of the Acoustic" in *Glenn Gould*, Vol. 10, No. 1 (Spring, 2004), 45.

underpin the new philosophy of recording which Gould developed through his writings and media work following his concert retirement. Scholars have examined Gould's experimental media work as an expression of his artistic philosophy, and his radio documentaries as an expression of Canadian national identity, but little work has been done which considers these works as an expression of Gould's own self-identity.³ A notable exception is Alana Bell, who has considered in depth how the discursive content of Gould's radio documentaries served Gould's self-identity as an 'elusive, multiple and fragmented' subject and Canadian citizen.⁴ Bell has also suggested that the documentaries are 'self-representational formally', and manifest aspects of Gould's identity by 'exploring the potential for speech as music'.⁵ Bell, then, accounts for my first category in her analysis, but only hints at my other two, which she nevertheless acknowledges are important in coming to terms with the nature of Gould's 'auto/biographical' play through the media. My work completes what Bell has started, drawing together the large body of work that analyses the creative and moral principles informing Gould's studio practices with my own theories of Gould's media identity.

Discoursing through the Media

As my study of Graham Carr's work has shown (in Chapter IV), Gould's celebrity has been conceived of in terms of its discursive function. The post-structuralist view that 'intersecting and antagonistic discourses, practices, and positions' constitute a 'fragmented and fractured' selfhood has been embraced most recently by Gould scholar Alana Bell.⁶ She argues that the way Gould develops the themes of his radio documentaries through techniques of

³ Kevin Bazzana, "Recording Technology" in *Performer in the Work*; Kevin McNeilly, "Listening, Nordicity, Community: Glenn Gould's 'The Idea of North'" in Sherrill Grace (ed.), *Essays on Canadian Writing: Representing North*, Vol. 59 (1996); Friedemann Sallis, "Glenn Gould's 'Idea of North' and the Production of Place in Music" in *Northern Perspectives on Music and Culture*, Vol. 25, No. 1-2 (2005).

⁴ Alana Bell, "The Lives of Glenn Gould", 188.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 277.

⁶ Stuart Hall, "Introduction: Who Needs Identity?" in Stuart Hall & Paul Du Gay (eds.), *Questions of Cultural Identity* (London: SAGE Publications, 1996), 4; Paul Kroskrity, "Identity" in *Journal of Linguistic Anthropology*, Vol. 9, No. 1/2 (Jun., 1999). See also Eline Versluys, "The Notion of Identity in Discourse Analysis: Some 'Discourse Analytical' Remarks" (2007) in *Internationalt Tidsskrift for sprog og kommunikation*, Vol. 26 (2007).

juxtaposition and negation provides an allegory for the instability of the meanings underlying his identity and that of the nation.⁷ For Kevin Bazzana, the fact that one can ‘hear important intellectual and critical discourses in Gould’s playing’ has been ‘a major source of [his] posthumous reputation’.⁸ The author frames Gould’s performance practices as a tool of ‘exegesis’, rather than ‘interpretation’ in the more limited (and classically understood) sense advanced by philosophers such as Jerrold Levinson and Göran Hermerén.⁹ As Bazzana suggests, performance was not merely an act of musical translation for Gould; it was, instead, a means to analyse and critique the aesthetic and moral pretensions of a work as filtered through the individual worldview of the interpreter. By ‘speaking about music in the process of playing it’, Gould was really speaking about himself, his ideas, his prejudices.¹⁰ Rejecting notions of authorial intent and high-modernist objectivity prevalent among pianists of the time, Gould’s proto-post-modernist advocacy of ‘the birth of the reader’ in matters of performance carried the discursive construction of his identity into the stuff of music itself – its sounds and rhythms.¹¹

Briefly to recap the argument of Chapter I, I claim that Gould’s writings, media commentaries, and performances – not to mention the secondary literature that these have engendered – give grounds for thinking about Gould’s cultural identities as structured around a set of discourses on creativity and morality. I argue that Gould enhances the persuasive power of these discourses – and thus the persuasive power of himself as artist and thinker – by couching them in terms of rhetorics and iconographies of North and of technology. At the heart of Gould’s thinking is a dialectical tension between expressions of the individual and the

⁷ Alana Bell, “The Lives of Glenn Gould”, 190.

⁸ Kevin Bazzana, *Wondrous Strange*, 11.

⁹ Kevin Bazzana, “Performance as Discourse: The Performer in the Work” in *Performer in the Work*, 85-127. Levinson makes the distinction between “performative” and “critical” interpretation, arguing for the more limited hermeneutic scope of performance as opposed to, say, literary criticism. Gould, Bazzana claims, frustrates these ontological assumptions.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 86.

¹¹ A phrase coined by critic Roland Barthes in his famous essay “The Death of the Author” (1967). Gould’s affinities with the French “Nouvelle Critique” of the 1960s, in his advocacy of a more self-conscious engagement with the materials of music on the part of performer and listener, have been noted by Nattiez (“Gould as Precursor of Postmodernism?”, 1992) and Bazzana (*Performer in the Work*, 1997) in particular.

collective. Gould asserts the duty of the artist to realise his or her own creative potentialities by relating to art in a private, isolated, and contemplative manner. At the same time, he emphasises that the artist has a duty to the community: to improving the lives of others through his or her music by taking advantage of the modern mass media as a vehicle of meaningful communication. The association of creative self-expression with isolation, and morality with communication, in Gould's thought, has underpinned three narratives of his reception: as a redemptive artist, a rebellious artist, and a mad artist. The insider/outsider tension in Gould's thought, and as codified in his representations as Northerner and as technologist, has led biographers and critics to assume that Gould 'must be constructed rather than represented'.¹² This is reflected in the diversity of the modern debate around Gould's status as a genius and Canadian icon. Gould's creative independence and personal eccentricity has informed his reception as the iconoclastic genius in the Longinian mould. His communitarian ethos has put him in contact with a nineteenth-century discourse of the genius as mediating contact with the universal sublime. Similarly, I have considered how ideas around Gould's individuality have spoken to the role of the frontier in Canadian discourses of national identity, and how his views on the relationship between morality and community have intersected with a Canadian discourse of technological nationalism and myths of the Canadian 'garrison mentality'. In these latter examples, the need to rally a sense of Canadian communal identity is pitched in terms of the moral or existential threat posed by an outside force – either American commercial programming, or a hostile and unforgiving wilderness.

At the most fundamental level, interpreting Gould's media identity as the dialectical expression of solitude and community accords with current understandings of celebrity as a 'contained contradiction' embodying 'the simultaneous construction of [social] collectivities and modern individuality'.¹³ Theorist Sean Redmond alludes to the important social function Gould's conflicted identity might play, when he speaks of celebrity culture as that which 'sits

¹² Alana Bell, "The Lives of Glenn Gould", iv.

¹³ P. David Marshall, *Celebrity and Power*, 61.

at [the] center of [a] contest over companionship and loneliness’, for him a ‘dialectic[al] relationship’ which underpins the crisis of membership and belonging characteristic of late-modern society.¹⁴

As I have suggested, the work of Canadian sociologists, cultural theorists, and communications’ specialists provides further justification for thinking about Gould’s media identity in terms of this dialectical movement. For Nandy, the dialectic of celebrity identity is productively analysed as a dialectic of *national* identity disseminated via the ideological apparatus of the mass media and sustained via audience participation. Much as American celebrity establishes its regime of desire through the paradoxical appeal to myths of American individual enterprise and American democracy, to American exceptionalism and American ‘melting pot’ uniformity, Canadian celebrity does so by drawing together myths of the frontier and myths of the garrison.¹⁵ For Nandy, the metaphor of the frontier articulates a view of the nation as culturally marginalised, and perhaps even as a cultural wilderness, unable to compete with American financial and artistic resources; competing with this view is the myth of the garrison and Canadian ‘moral superiority’ (as incarnated in Masseyite broadcasting policy, for instance). Debates around technology and North have galvanised the project of Canadian identity, for reasons historical-political and cultural. Historical-political, because it was originally ‘an attempt to overcome the problem of geographic isolation [for national integration] that made Canada so dependent on communications technologies’.¹⁶ Cultural, because the mobilisation of ‘nature symbolism’ in the Canadian mass media, as part of a state-sponsored ethos of ‘technological nationalism’, is said to have provided a form of ideological resistance to American culture.¹⁷ While some theorists have situated debates

¹⁴ Sean Redmond, “Celebrity Companions” in P. David Marshall & Sean Redmond (eds.), *A Companion to Celebrity* (UK: John Wiley & Sons, 2016), 10.

¹⁵ Nandy, *Fame in Hollywood North*, 78. Frye (“View of Canada”, 1976) defined the “garrison mentality” as “defensive and separatist. Each group walls itself off and huddles inside, taking warmth and reassurance from numbers, but keeping its eyes fixed apprehensively on what’s outside”.

¹⁶ Paul Théberge, “Counterpoint: Glenn Gould and Marshall McLuhan” in *Canadian Journal of Political and Social Theory*, Vol. 10, No. 1-2 (1986), 125.

¹⁷ Samita Nandy, *Fame in Hollywood North*, 73.

around North and technology at the opposite ends of a nature/culture binary to frame Canadian identity, positively, as an effect of its geographic isolation, and negatively, as an effect of continentalist integration with the United States and its communications' systems, I have argued that the dialectic of solitude and community operates not only *across*, but *within* these categories.¹⁸ Thus, Gould's North is not only a place of creative isolation, but of communal engagement; he values the recording studio as a vehicle for a newly democratised and participatory musical culture, but also one which allows him a degree of solitude and anonymity beyond the public spectacle of concert performance.

In Bell's view, Gould's interest in dialectical forms of experimental media self-representation was motivated by his promotional needs. By representing his identity as a discourse of competing ideas, he was able to reconcile 'his conflicting needs for privacy and self-narration'.¹⁹ She argues that he was unable to square this circle through usual forms of artistic representation. Music 'increasingly seemed to lack a sufficient amount of concrete self-representational possibility', while traditional biographical writing was too revealing of the artist.²⁰ The dialectical view of Gould's identity, now dominant, is perhaps best summarised by journalist Colin Eatock, who writes:

Gould was friendly and charming, or he was an isolated misanthrope. He loved public attention, but he hated audiences. He was humble; he was egotistical. He was selfless; he was selfish. He was hard to work with; he was a good collaborator. He had a cool, rational mind; he was a bundle of superstitions and phobias. He was a profound thinker; his ideas were often naive and sophomoric. He was clever and witty; his humour was forced and lame. He was unworldly and impractical; he was down-to-earth and businesslike. He was ingenuous and without guile in his dealings with the world; his public image was a deliberately contrived sham. He was a good and loyal friend; he used people and then discarded them. He

¹⁸ This "ecological" view of Canadian identity has been championed by Frye, who writes "Everywhere we look today we see the conquest of nature by an intelligence that does not love it, that feels no part of it, that splits its own consciousness off from it and looks at it as an object" ("Canada: New World Without Revolution" (1975)).

¹⁹ Alana Bell, "The Lives of Glenn Gould", 279.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 298.

was shy with women and shunned intimacy; he was an ardent heterosexual male. He was an austere Puritan; he was a sensualist and an ecstatic. He was a regular guy; he was as mad as a hatter.²¹

Scholars have pursued the implications of Gould's conflicted identities within the terms of post-structuralism and post-modernism, media theory and celebrity theory, sociology, and cultural studies. For semiotician Jean-Jacques Nattiez, for example, Gould's technological discourse fleshed out a 'systematic culture of isolation' which situated the pianist midway between the worlds of modernism and postmodernism by marrying a structuralist aesthetics of music with anti-teleological conceptions of musical history and musical value.²² In line with Bell's thesis, Robin Elliott has suggested that the ambiguities surrounding Gould's sexuality and psychology were self-contrived and a strategy of self-promotion in an industry known to thrive on the gossip and speculation around the private lives of its star performers.²³ Elliott's view of Gould's identity as a 'blank slate' is shared by musicologist Arved Ashby, who defines Gould's appeal in terms of 'mysteries of personality[,] intertwined inseparably with disquieting and uncategorizable musicianship'.²⁴ More recently, Graham Carr has argued that Gould was a 'liminal figure in the world of cultural production' who created a new order of musical authenticity by integrating modern and Romantic rhetorics and iconographies (e.g. in Gould's image as a recording artist searching for a 'technological sublime').²⁵

Sound Media as Technical Process and Structure

Through his pragmatic engagement with the technical and formal challenges of working in radio and recording, Gould demonstrated his creative and moral premises in his studio practices. Gould's working method is thus implicated in his cultural formation as an artist. He used his studio techniques to establish new forms of interaction between the content and

²¹ Colin Eatock, *Remembering Glenn Gould*, x.

²² Jean-Jacques Nattiez, tr. Jonathan Dunsby, "Gould Out of Time" (1987) in *The Battle of Chronos and Orpheus: Essays in Applied Musical Semiology* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 94.

²³ Robin Elliott, "Constructions of Identity".

²⁴ Arved Ashby, "Digital Mythologies" in *Absolute Music: Mechanical Reproduction*, 134.

²⁵ Graham Carr, "Visualizing 'The Sound of Genius'", 18.

concept of individual media works (e.g. between the subject of the Canadian North and the concept of solitude in his *Idea of North* radio documentary). His techniques became a kind of technological signature, lending coherence to Gould's identity as expressed in terms of an artistic corpus (e.g. a discography).

Gould's radio and recording techniques have been much discussed in the literature.²⁶ Gould discussed them himself in numerous interviews, writings, and broadcasts.²⁷ Gould gives fullest theoretical treatment to the topic of his radio documentary technique in his essay 'Radio as Music' (1971).²⁸ The memoirs of Gould's long-term CBS record producer Andrew Kazdin have provided some of the most detailed insights into the pianist's post-production editing procedures as a recording artist.²⁹ Bazzana identifies studio technology as the creative engine of Gould's mature musical approach, and an important element of his 'radical and conspicuously modern contribution to performance practice'.³⁰ Gould's technical procedures in radio have also come under increased scrutiny as his works in this medium have become better known and appreciated with the rise of the Internet.³¹ This body of scholarship suggests that the creative and moral premises of Gould's working method are audible in his media works in two respects: 1) as abstract technical processes, made meaningful through the creative and moral discourse of Gould's writings on technology; 2) as contingent formal processes, meaningful in so far as they organise, idealise, and dramatise semantic signifiers of creativity and morality within Gould's media texts.

²⁶ E.g. E. Jones-Imhotep, "Malleability and Machines: Glenn Gould and the Technological Self" in *Technology and Culture*, Vol. 57, No. 2 (Apr., 2016); Jonathan Alexander, "Glenn Gould and the Rhetorics of Sound" (2015); Howard Fink, "Glenn Gould's 'Idea of North': The Arctic Archetype and the Creation of a Syncretic Genre" in *Glenn Gould*, Vol. 3, No. 2 (Fall, 1997).

²⁷ E.g. Norman McLaren, "Glenn Gould in Conversation" (1969); Tim Page, "Glenn Gould Interviewed" (1981); Glenn Gould, "The Prospects of Recording" (1965); Glenn Gould, *A Glenn Gould Fantasy* (1980).

²⁸ "Radio as Music: Glenn Gould in Conversation with John Jessop" in *The Canada Music Book*, No. 2 (Spr.-Sum., 1971).

²⁹ Andrew Kazdin, *Creative Lying*.

³⁰ Kevin Bazzana, *Performer in the Work*, 252.

³¹ E.g. Friedemann Sallis, "Glenn Gould's 'Idea of North'"; Howard Fink, "Glenn Gould's 'Idea of North': The Arctic Archetype and the Creation of a Syncretic Genre" in *Glenn Gould*, Vol. 3, No. 2 (Fall, 1997).

Gould began to take a serious interest in the processes and techniques of recording and broadcasting from the mid-Sixties onwards.³² He famously conceived of the recording medium as an autonomous and creative ‘art form with its own laws and its own liberties, its quite unique problems, and its quite extraordinary possibilities’.³³ In his seminal essay on the subject, his ‘Prospects of Recording’ (1965), Gould argued for an interventionist approach to studio recording on artistic grounds. Versus the irregular and ‘cavernously reverberant’ acoustics of the concert hall or ‘live-concert’ recording, he argued, strategic positioning of studio microphones allowed him to manipulate and enhance the soundstage of the recording to flatter the characteristics of the repertoire he performed, and interpret it with greater clarity, nuance, and freedom.³⁴ Whereas the performance of music in a live setting was inevitably marred by finger slips and inconsistencies of interpretation, the tape splice and stopwatch provided the means for him to stitch together an ideal event in the privacy and comfort of the editing booth.³⁵ Gould summarised his aesthetic position in his essay ‘Music and Technology’ (1974), where he enjoins the reader to recognise technology’s ‘capacity for dissection, for analysis – above all, perhaps, for the idealization of an impression’.³⁶

Gould expanded his repertoire of studio techniques as his familiarity with the equipment grew, as he assumed greater control over the production process, and as new sound technologies made possible new creative combinations.³⁷ Beyond the techniques mentioned, Gould also experimented further afield: with tape regeneration to create exact musical repeats; with reverb effects to accommodate a particular musical affect, tempo, or articulation; with overdubbing and multi-tracking to clarify heavy textures and to perform four-hand duets with himself; and, more radically still, with acoustic perspective to dramatise structural or

³² Dale Harris, “Private Performer” (1981); Ulla Colgrass, “Glenn Gould” (1981).

³³ Glenn Gould, *Glenn Gould on Recording*.

³⁴ Glenn Gould, “The Prospects of Recording”, 48.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 51.

³⁶ Glenn Gould, “An Epistle To The Parisians: Music and Technology Part I”, 18.

³⁷ Gould secured his own office at the CBC in 1965. He began renting studio space at “Film House” in the same year, an integrated technical centre for filmmaking which shared facilities with the CBC. He began editing his own CBS recordings in 1966. In 1976, he acquired private studio facilities at the “Inn on the Park”, a luxury hotel in the Toronto suburbs.

emotional relationships in the music (something to which I will return).³⁸ His experiments in the studio – a central theme of his press interviews – reinforced the notion of Gould as the *sui generis* original. They could also frame Gould as an outlier of the classical tradition specialising in artistic perversity, a mad scientist misusing technology to generate Frankenstein interpretations.³⁹ However exaggerated the views of his critics, technology was at the centre of his creative vision, and whether through a sensationalistic headline or an engaging anecdote or metaphor, his thinking on the subject quickly became known to the wider public.

For Gould, the creative uses of studio technology were justified not only on aesthetic grounds, but on moral and quasi-religious grounds too. ‘I believe in “the intrusion” of technology’, he wrote, ‘because . . . that intrusion imposes upon art a notion of morality which transcends the idea of art itself’.⁴⁰ Gould’s moral code seems to have set what he saw as the pragmatism, risk, and materiality of concert performance against the idealism, control, and abstraction of the recording process. He valued the alienating effects of technology, believing that solitude was the necessary precondition for creativity and ‘ecstatic experience’.⁴¹ ‘Technology exercises great charity on our lives’, he argued, because it ‘remove[s] people from the very things – the self-conscious things, the competitive things – that are detrimental to society’.⁴² Free of external pressures to conform, the artist can engage more deeply and meaningfully with the work on its own terms and cultivate ‘a strongly biased conceptual viewpoint’ which reflects the more personal nature of his involvement with it.⁴³ As philosopher Georges Leroux and others have claimed, Gould’s philosophy of technological alienation was also ‘at the

³⁸ Kevin Bazzana, *Performer in the Work*, 245.

³⁹ Kazdin writes, “His recording sessions became publicized as . . . laboratory experiments wherein Frankenstein monsters were assembled from scraps of carnage; they weren’t.” (*Creative Lying*, 19-20).

⁴⁰ Glenn Gould, “Music and Technology”, 18.

⁴¹ Glenn Gould, *The Age of Ecstasy*. CBC Telecast, Feb. 20, 1974.

⁴² Glenn Gould, “Rubinstein” in *Look*, Vol. 35, No. 5 (Mar. 9, 1971), 58.

⁴³ Glenn Gould, “The Prospects of Recording”, 51.

behest of a new kind of proximity'.⁴⁴ This proximity was manifested in terms of the 'one-to-one relationship between performer and listener' which the 'private and concentrated circumstances' of home audition appeared to make possible.⁴⁵ In another way, it reflected what Gould saw as the closing social gap between composer, performer, and listener, as recording technology had dissolved the traditional hierarchies of creative responsibility. Further still, it reflected Gould's belief in the increasing ubiquity of music in the electronic age, music 'as colloquial and utilitarian as language', and freed from its aura of occasion.⁴⁶ Recording technology held out the promise of a newly democratised and participatory musical culture, in which the 'restorative, placative therapy' of art could be had by all.⁴⁷ The solitude of the studio was 'a base from which [Gould] could address himself . . . to that perfect community he wanted to help build'.⁴⁸

Gould's enduring relationship with the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation – and particularly with its radio division, CBC Radio – gave him the financial and creative wherewithal to develop his experimental, philosophically charged approach to media production. Given the fundamental role of the CBC in binding a collective cultural consciousness, Gould's more than 150 radio broadcasts for the institution served early on to link Gould's achievements to his identity as a Canadian.⁴⁹ Beginning in 1950, Gould became widely known to national audiences through live radio concerts and recitals, at least fifteen radio documentaries, three radio series which he himself hosted and wrote, interviews, various promotional skits, and one-off shows.⁵⁰

⁴⁴ Georges Leroux (tr. Donald Winkler), *Partita for Glenn Gould: An Inquiry into the Nature of Genius* (Québec: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2010), 150.

⁴⁵ Ulla Colgrass, "Glenn Gould"; Glenn Gould, "The Prospects of Recording", 51.

⁴⁶ Glenn Gould, "An Argument for Music in the Electronic Age", 127.

⁴⁷ Glenn Gould, "The Prospects of Recording", 63.

⁴⁸ Georges Leroux, *Partita for Glenn Gould*, 152.

⁴⁹ Helen Mesaros, *Bravo Fortissimo*, 367.

⁵⁰ Gould hosted and wrote two series called *The Art of Glenn Gould* (1966-67 and 1969), in which he played and commented on his recordings. He also produced a ten-part series on the life and works of Arnold Schoenberg for the CBC's *Music of Today* series (1974).

Canadian radio broadcasting was established early on as a ‘cultural instrument for national enrichment’, and reflected the high-cultural designs of the Masseyites.⁵¹ The CBC, as Canada’s national broadcaster, received generous state subsidy, and fortified its position in Canadian national life with the cultural reforms of the post-war era set in train by the Massey Commission (1949-1951). From the late Forties onwards, the corporation’s music department was especially well-resourced and ambitious in its programming. The belief of CBC music director Geoffrey Waddington that music was ‘the highest of the fine arts [and] one which more than any other ministers to human welfare’, seemed to speak directly to the Royal Commission’s call to renew ‘the spiritual foundations of [Canada’s] national life’.⁵² Gould benefited from and contributed to the musical successes of the CBC, as demonstrated in Chapters III and VI. Scholars have argued that the CBC’s radio documentary and drama tradition was an important influence on Gould’s studio approach.⁵³ Described by Canadian writer Mavor Moore as ‘possibly the most important native artistic movement of its time’, and brought to its peak of development by Andrew Allan and his CBC *Stage* dramas of the 1940s, the genre provided Gould with a model for a socially committed art ‘in which the didactic documentary message is reinforced by dramatic techniques’.⁵⁴

From 1962-1979, Gould produced at least fourteen radio documentaries. Half of these were conceived in a more traditional vein. Gould would find interview subjects relevant to his project, record their comments, and combine them in a way that would serve as a primer on a given topic – whether the life and work of a composer, the social and musical implications of recording technology, or the merits of the Moog synthesiser.⁵⁵ His most experimental works

⁵¹ Knowlton Nash, *The Microphone Wars: A History of Triumph and Betrayal at the CBC* (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1994), 10.

⁵² Geoffrey Waddington, “Music and Radio” (1955) in Ernest MacMillan (ed.), *Music in Canada*, 132; Anon., “Introduction” in *Royal Commission on National Development in the Arts, Letters, and Sciences 1949-1951*, 271.

⁵³ Kevin Bazzana, *Wondrous Strange*, 302; Howard Fink, “Glenn Gould’s ‘Idea of North’”.

⁵⁴ Mavor Moore, “Radio and Television”, 121; Howard Fink, “Glenn Gould’s ‘Idea of North’”, 39; Gould notes the influence of Allan in “Radio as Music”.

⁵⁵ E.g. Arnold Schoenberg: *The Man Who Changed Music* (1962); *Dialogues on the Prospects of Recording* (1965); *On the Moog Synthesiser* (1968).

were his seven ‘contrapuntal’ radio documentaries, which writers consider his most important work in the medium.⁵⁶ The term ‘contrapuntal radio’ was Gould’s own, and reflected his desire to bring musical techniques and concepts to bear on extra-musical forms and ideas. In his comments on the genre, Gould related his desire to explore ‘the play of consonance and dissonance’ between vocal textures within ‘the totality of [a] structure’ in ways analogous to polyphonic and fugal writing.⁵⁷ Using montage techniques, Gould wove together elements of music, sound, and speech in ways capable of producing ‘new forms, effects, and emotional connotations’.⁵⁸ Gould viewed his work apart from that of most other documentary producers. With a nod to the influence of Andrew Allan’s *Stage* productions, he preferred to think of his works as ‘documentary-dramas’.⁵⁹ They eschewed traditional ‘linear’ approaches to narrative and form, and their effects derived from the (highly mediated) interactions of his interview subjects, as *dramatis personae* in a play.⁶⁰ Developed in the late Sixties, the technique encapsulated broader transformations in sound production and playback precipitated by the advent of open-reel magnetic tape. Gould’s ‘contrapuntal radio’ has led some to herald him ‘the greatest’ radio artist in North America’, and his works in this vein have been cited as important early examples of ‘acoustic art’, conversant with tendencies in *musique concrète* and electronic music, with a German *neue Hörspiel* tradition of experimental radio drama, and, as stated, with Canadian docu-drama production.⁶¹ The documentaries provide unique insight into the nature of Gould’s artistic self-representation. He considered his so-called *Solitude Trilogy*, a set of three thematically unified contrapuntal radio documentaries, his

⁵⁶ In order of creation, these documentaries were: *The Idea of North* (1967); *The Latecomers* (1969); *Stokowski: A Portrait for Radio* (1971); *Pablo Casals: A Portrait for Radio* (1974); *Schoenberg: The First Hundred Years – A Documentary Fantasy* (1974); *The Quiet in the Land* (1977); and *Richard Strauss: The Bourgeois Hero* (1979).

⁵⁷ Glenn Gould, “‘The Idea of North’: An Introduction”.

⁵⁸ Kevin Bazzana, *Wondrous Strange*, 300.

⁵⁹ His *Idea of North* was “a documentary which thinks of itself as a drama” (“‘The Idea of North’: An Introduction”).

⁶⁰ Gould: “We come from a long and splendid tradition of radio, but it has always been a tradition that was very, very linear”. See interview with Tim Page, “Glenn Gould: Bach’s Bad Boy” (1980).

⁶¹ Richard Kostelanetz, “Glenn Gould as a Radio Composer” (1982) in *Three Canadian Geniuses: Glenn Gould, Marshall McLuhan, Northrop Frye* (Canada: Colombo & Company, 2001), 30, 45; Kevin Bazzana, *Wondrous Strange*, 304, 312.

most personal artistic statement out of all his works.⁶² In them, we find ‘the essence of Gould’s communications aesthetic, the range of his broadcasting principles, and the accomplishment of his social project’.⁶³

Gould’s contrapuntal radio technique gave aural expression to the creative and moral premises underpinning his celebrity image. Most obviously, by subverting the generic codes of the traditional radio documentary format, Gould articulated his theoretical ideal of artistic independence through critical and reflective judgment. His technique was a corollary of his much-publicised calls to ‘remain deeply involved with the processes of your imagination’ and to renounce ‘the lemming-like tendencies that artists in general assume’ under the weight of musical tradition.⁶⁴ Edward Jones-Imhotep has argued that Gould ‘increasingly saw the splice as one of the ultimate exercises of judgment’, and we should see Gould’s ‘contrapuntal’ technique in the context of his view of studio technology as the true seat of creative activity; it demonstrated that his documentary editing procedure was, for him, a mode of composition.⁶⁵ The notion of counterpoint itself acted as a potent creative metaphor for Gould. On more than one occasion he asserted the superiority of contrapuntal writing, as music with ‘an explosion of simultaneous ideas’, and the multivalent principles of which he felt could be applied to a range of activities: not only composition (both musical and non-musical), but listening and musical appreciation as well.⁶⁶

Gould’s documentaries also testify to Bazzana’s claim that the pianist saw contrapuntally worked-out forms as superior ‘not just aesthetically but ethically’.⁶⁷ Juha Markus Mantere’s work on Gould’s ‘technological ethics’ has illuminated how the pianist ascribed a moral function to counterpoint, influenced by the aesthetic and technological idealism of Catholic

⁶² “They’ve come with the most personal stamp I can put on anything”. See Andrew Stephen, “A Rare Meeting”.

⁶³ Georges Leroux, *Partita for Glenn Gould*, 157-158.

⁶⁴ Glenn Gould, “Advice to a Graduation” (Nov., 1964), 3; Tim Page, “Glenn Gould: Bach’s Bad Boy”.

⁶⁵ E. Jones-Imhotep, “Malleability and Machines”, 308. For Gould’s comments on radio as composition, see the CBC telecast *The Well-Tempered Listener* (1970).

⁶⁶ See “On Bach’s Goldberg Variations: Glenn Gould in conversation with Tim Page” (1982) in *Glenn Gould*, Vol. 7, No. 1 (Spr., 2001), 19.

⁶⁷ Kevin Bazzana, “Counterpoint” in *Performer in the Work*, 142.

theologians Jean Le Moyne and Pierre Teilhard de Chardin.⁶⁸ It drew on a utopian and metaphysical discourse of counterpoint dating from the seventeenth century.⁶⁹ Gould's advocacy of multi-voiced music (i.e. polyphony) as an embodiment of democratic, egalitarian, and pluralistic ideals versus the 'tyrannical' and 'authoritarian' character of single-voiced music (in this case, homophony) recalls, for Mantere, Adorno's sociology of music, which invests ethical significance in counterpoint and chamber music as a form of stylistic and generic resistance to the conditions of modern industrial capitalism.⁷⁰ Counterpoint, and fugue in particular, served in Gould's thought as a model of musical logic and abstraction. This idealism clearly associates him with the sacralising discourse of a Romantic aesthetic tradition guided by such figures as Kant and Hanslick.⁷¹ Like Hanslick, Gould drew an ethical distinction between the ideal and the sensuous aspects of music, establishing a framework for valorising compositional technique and rhetoric, performance practices, and even the social institutions of musical life. For Mantere, Gould's conception of abstract contrapuntal writing as a form of spiritual purity bears affinities with the historical view of counterpoint as 'an investigation of God's order', and with Le Moyne's conception of fugue as a form of spiritual healing and an intimation of Christ's Second Coming.⁷² Both Le Moyne's anti-Darwinian vision of technology as a protective shield, and Teilhard's prophecy of the morally enlightened 'ultra-human' forged through the unification of humanity and the machine informed Gould's view that the moral mission of counterpoint was best pursued

⁶⁸ See "Gould's Technological Ethics" and "The Shadow of Hanslick" in Mantere's "The Gould Variations". Gould appears to have made first contact with Montreal theologian Jean Le Moyne (1913-1996) in 1968, when both were awarded the Molson Prize, a prestigious award from the Canada Council (1957-). He appeared on Gould's *Art of Glenn Gould* radio series a year later. Gould never met the French priest Teilhard (1881-1955). We know that Gould had six books by Teilhard in his personal library, and he is referenced briefly by Gould in Jim Aikin, "Provocative Insights" (1980). For consideration of Teilhard's influence, see Matthew McFarlane, "Common Visionaries: Glenn Gould, Jean Le Moyne, and Pierre Teilhard de Chardin" in *Glenn Gould*, Vol. 8, No. 2 (Fall, 2002); Elizabeth Angilette, *Philosopher at the Keyboard* (1992); Kevin Bazzana, *Wondrous Strange* (2003); Juha Markus Mantere, "The Gould Variations" (2012).

⁶⁹ Juha Markus Mantere, "The Gould Variations", 201.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 202.

⁷¹ Kevin Bazzana, "Aesthetics and Repertoire" in *Performer in the Work*, 12.

⁷² Juha Markus Mantere, "The Gould Variations", 126, 201.

through the medium of recording.⁷³ Indeed, through the format of contrapuntal radio, argues scholar Matthew McFarlane, ‘Gould created. . . his own concept of spirituality’.⁷⁴

I would suggest that Gould’s editing procedures could be heard against the creative and moral discourse of his writings, and in some sense independent of the content to which they were applied. ‘I was always fascinated with the notion of process’, he once commented in a promotional advertisement for CBS Masterworks, adding that the prominence he gave to the technical dimension of recording in his writings was a way of drawing public attention to this fascination.⁷⁵ He suggested that his work in the studio shared affinities with contemporary trends in avant-garde filmmaking in its self-conscious defiance of generic and stylistic norms, and he argued for a view of recording ‘as a film-like process’, constructed from multiple takes and exploiting the ‘sheer dynamic language of positioning in relation to the subject’ which the microphone, like the camera, could creatively afford.⁷⁶ In this light, scholars have argued that Gould’s recordings possess something of a Brechtian ‘alienation effect’, drawing the listener’s attention to the technical unfolding of narrative elements through the disruption of aesthetic expectations, and thereby inviting the listener’s greater critical reflection and intellectual engagement.⁷⁷

It was Gould’s use of studio technology as a means of organising, idealising, and dramatising the semantic and thematic content of his documentaries which has provided the primary context for these works’ reception. At the most basic level, he claimed that all his documentaries ‘have had to do with isolation’ and ‘the relationship of isolation and solitude to

⁷³ Le Moyne broached the idea of the “Christification of the machine” in a CBC radio interview with Gould (*On the Moog Synthesiser*, Nov. 10, 1968). Gould subsequently referred to Le Moyne’s explanation of this idea as “one of the most moving passages I’ve heard in my life” (Jim Aikin, “Provocative Insights”, 1980). Matthew McFarlane claims that Gould’s contrapuntal radio “reflect[ed] Teilhard’s vision of networked machines” (see his “Common Visionaries”).

⁷⁴ Matthew McFarlane, “Common Visionaries”, 78.

⁷⁵ Glenn Gould, *Glenn Gould on Recording*.

⁷⁶ Jim Aikin, “Provocative Insights” (1980); Norman McLaren, “Glenn Gould in Conversation with Norman McLaren” (1969) in *Glenn Gould*, Vol. 8, No. 1 (Spr., 2002), originally recorded for “Take 15” of the CBC radio series *The Art of Glenn Gould* (Aug. 24, 1969).

⁷⁷ Kevin Bazzana, *Wondrous Strange*, 251; Richard Cavell, “Gould, McLuhan, and the Fate of the Acoustic”, 47. The Brecht analogy appears first to have been made by Jonathan Cott in his 1974 interviews with the pianist (Cott, 1974), to which Gould responded positively.

one's productive capacity . . . to one's life in the world'.⁷⁸ This motive influenced the discursive format of the recorded interviews he conducted for his documentaries, and provided a template of themes and subthemes from which he derived his documentaries' basic formal layout and editing schemes. Gould conceived of the sections for his documentaries in musical terms, using language such as 'ternary form', 'fugue', 'trio sonata', 'aria', and 'recitative' when writing about his work.⁷⁹ For Friedemann Sallis, Gould's musical rendering of the material, at least in his most famous trio of contrapuntal documentaries – the so-called *Solitude Trilogy* – provides the proper context for assessing its pretensions to drama. He argues that there is ultimately 'no action, no central conflict and no denouement' as would typically be expected from a dramatic work.⁸⁰ Rather, it is 'through the composition of sound and silence, the polyphonic manipulation of voices and the interaction of musical parameters with the semantic content of the text' that it delivers its emotional effects. Using techniques of splicing, multitracking, volume and EQ control, and spatialisation, Gould created a new 'multiplicitous music . . . at which many voices and "ideas" [and sonic effects] coalesce, antagonise, support, subvert, mingle, and separate' to provide comment on the underlying documentary message.⁸¹ As we shall see, Gould used these techniques to dramatise the discussion of creativity and morality, solitude and community, in his Northern documentaries, and in certain of his musical recordings.

Sound Media as Sound Texts

An issue which I think has significant bearing on the issue of Gould's self-representation is that of his basic approach to sound, or to sound media as *sounding* media. For scholar Richard

⁷⁸ Jonathan Cott, *Conversations with Glenn Gould*, 99; Glenn Gould letter to Helen Whitney, Sep. 3, 1971.

⁷⁹ Glenn Gould, "Radio as Music: Glenn Gould in Conversation with John Jessop" in *The Canada Music Book*, No. 2 (Spring/Summer, 1971); Thérèse Salviat, "Glenn Gould, Composer of Communications" (1988) in Ghyslaine Guertin (tr. Denis G. Coupal), *Glenn Gould: Universe of a Genius* (Québec: Momentum Publishing, 2007).

⁸⁰ Friedemann Sallis, "Glenn Gould's 'Idea of North'", 122.

⁸¹ Kevin McNeilly, "Listening, Nordicity, Community: Glenn Gould's 'The Idea of North'" in Sherrill Grace (ed.), *Essays on Canadian Writing: Representing North*, Vol. 59 (1996), 87.

Cavell, Gould's significance rests on his status as a 'philosopher of sound'.⁸² Associating the visual in music with the egotism and exhibitionism of the live concert – i.e. with 'worldly' values counter to art's moral mission – Gould's aesthetic held up the oral/aural, and sound media, as the ideal vehicle of creative expression and appreciation. He regularly spoke of radio as his favourite medium, as something more 'pure' and 'abstract' than the visual media, and championed critical listening as heralding the birth of a creatively and spiritually awakened musical public.⁸³ What has been variously termed Gould's 'new philosophy' or 'phonographic paradigm' of recording had at its core the social, aesthetic, and even moral emancipation of sound through technology, while his many media commentaries and projects speak to his fascination with the material properties of sound, both musical and non-musical.⁸⁴ This links him to the 'acoustic turn' in mid-century compositional practice which found eclectic expression in the works of, for example, Pierre Schaeffer, Karlheinz Stockhausen, and John Cage. It also links him to a sophisticated and wide-ranging North American discourse about the role of oral/aural culture in modern society, and the role of technology in fomenting new social attitudes and responses to sound.⁸⁵ Gould was familiar with such musical and technological developments in sound culture, largely through professional and casual interactions with artists, technicians, broadcasters, and thinkers at the CBC, but also through his reading of the serious literature on the subject. Gould's work in radio and recording asks us to confront sound and voice as 'materialities with their own

⁸² Richard Cavell, "Gould, McLuhan, and the Fate of the Acoustic".

⁸³ See comments in Kevin Bazzana, *Wondrous Strange*, 284-285; also Glenn Gould, "An Argument for Music in the Electronic Age".

⁸⁴ Payzant (1978) employed the term "New Philosophy", and Mantere used "phonographic paradigm" (2012). In his CBC radio documentary "Dialogues on the Prospects of Recording" (1965), Gould related the story of a technologically minded amateur composer, Dick Riikmayer, whose works he found "relatively uninteresting as music, but absolutely fascinating as controlled sound".

⁸⁵ A technological discourse grounded in the work of Lewis Mumford (1895-1990), whom Gould read, and developed by Walter Ong (1912-2003), and Marshall McLuhan (1911-1980).

particular rhetorical and affective affordances and dimensions’, and as a form of commentary on issues of representation, embodiment, and identity.⁸⁶

Scholars have tended to approach Gould’s philosophy of sound through the Canadian media theorist Marshall McLuhan, whose technological writings and ideas exerted a powerful influence on the pianist’s intellectual development from the mid-Sixties onwards. The two thinkers shared a lively personal correspondence from 1965-1975, engaged each other’s assistance in various literary and media projects, and became high-profile champions of each other’s work at a time when popular recognition of their achievements – Gould’s music, McLuhan’s communications’ theory – had crested among the North American public.⁸⁷ The claim that McLuhan’s ideas ‘provided a philosophical scaffold of support’ for Gould’s post-1964 media theory and practices has premised numerous studies into Gould’s aesthetic.⁸⁸ While Gould found much to criticise in McLuhan’s work, and his basic arguments in favour of recording technology and against live performance appear to predate his contact with the theorist, Gould’s mature line of reasoning, style of discourse, and pretensions to intellectualism as an artist were fundamentally influenced by McLuhan.

Gould’s approach to sound production is best situated through McLuhan’s dialectic of ‘visual and acoustic space’, and ‘eye and ear’ orientation.⁸⁹ Following McLuhan’s central thesis that ‘modes of communicating affect social organization through shifts in perception’, the communications theorist held that print-based cultures and aural/oral cultures experience and

⁸⁶ Richard Cavell, “Gould, McLuhan, and the Fate of the Acoustic”; Jonathan Alexander, “Glenn Gould and the Rhetorics of Sound”.

⁸⁷ The Gould Archives at LAC hold eleven letters sent between Gould and McLuhan in this period. Cavell notes that McLuhan edited Gould’s original “Prospects of Recording” article for publication in McLuhan’s *Explorations* sub-journal in the University of Toronto’s *Varsity Graduate* magazine, 1965 (Vol. 11, No. 5). Gould read McLuhan’s work, often sent to him by the theorist himself, and recommended it to friends. McLuhan cited Gould in numerous of his texts, declaring in his *Counterblast* (1969) “Bless Glenn Gould for throwing the concert audience into the junkyard”.

⁸⁸ Colin Eatock (unpublished paper), “McLuhan and Gould: From Theory to Practice” (c. 2011); Paul Théberge, “Counterpoint: Glenn Gould and Marshall McLuhan” (1986); S. Timothy Maloney, “Gould, McLuhan, and the Recording Studio” (2008); Junichi Miyazawa, “Gould, McLuhan, and Soseki: A Japanese Resonance” in *GlennGould*, Vol. 13, No. 1 (Spr., 2008).

⁸⁹ McLuhan’s *Gutenberg Galaxy* (1962) examines the rise of visual culture (“eye orientation”) via consideration of the print press; his *Understanding Media* (1964) addresses itself to, among other things, oral/aural culture (“ear orientation”) and its recrudescence under the influence of recording technologies.

rationalise the world in distinct ways owing to the effect of their dominant media on the interaction of the five human senses (the ‘sensorium’).⁹⁰ He believed the advent of the printing press to be a seminal historical moment, amplifying the visual sense and the values of linearity, causality, and rationality he associated with ‘visual space’ and the characteristics of movable type.⁹¹ The amplification of the visual sense he saw as having broader social ramifications such as the rise of deductive science, individualism, and specialisation.⁹² Another equally seminal moment was the rise of electronic culture at the onset of modernity. Technologies of recording had elevated the status of sound culture, and had led to new modes of aural perception based on the properties of acoustic space, which privileged discontinuity, multi-modality, and simultaneity.⁹³ Reversing the effects of visual culture, McLuhan saw in electronic culture – and in radio and recording, particularly – the potential to restore preliterate forms of sociability and selfhood, to ‘retribalize mankind’ in a ‘global village’.⁹⁴ He valued the privacy and intimacy of radio, ‘with its power to turn the psyche and society into a single echo chamber’.⁹⁵ So too the ‘depth approach to musical experience’ afforded by the high-definition, ‘wrap-around’ sound of stereo playback.⁹⁶ These recording media created and demanded new forms of sensory involvement – ‘a striving toward the union of the audile and tactile . . . of multiple facets and planes in a single experience’ – in an age of acoustic space.⁹⁷

⁹⁰ Robert E. Babe, *Canadian Communication Thought: Ten Foundational Writers* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2000), 298. The thesis is more aphoristically expressed in McLuhan’s famous adage, “the medium is the message”, introduced in *Understanding Media*.

⁹¹ Marshall McLuhan, *The Gutenberg Galaxy: The Making of Typographic Man* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1962).

⁹² For example, he wrote of science’s “unconscious acceptance of the assumptions or dynamic of typography”, that is, of “homogeneity and lineality”. He described print as “the technology of individualism”, and set out a theory of pre-modern “visual specialization” (McLuhan, 1962).

⁹³ Marshall McLuhan, *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1964).

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 24, 34.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 299.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 282.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*

Yet a central theme of his work was that societies lacked awareness of the far-reaching effects of new media. It was the duty of the artist ‘of integral awareness’ to:

. . . keep people tuned to the present. . . to tune their sensibilities and their perceptions [by] rearrange[ing] the focusing of their perceptions. . . If you want to tune in on your time and know where it’s at, the artists’ new rhythms, new images will show you how’.⁹⁸

Gould couched his recording philosophy in McLuhanesque terms, arguing that technology had transformed the conditions of art’s production and reception, and that the ‘reluctance to accept the consequences of a new technology’ was demonstrated in the widespread tendency to judge a recording by the standards of the concert hall.⁹⁹ As others have suggested, Gould’s theory of music history also parallels McLuhan’s theory of technological history: both conceived of a pre-Renaissance golden age of communal participation, interrupted by a long period of specialisation and fragmentation, and subsequently revived with the advent of recording technologies.¹⁰⁰ Both valued the new media as complicating notions of authorship, and foregrounding notions of agency and process.¹⁰¹ And Gould’s most radical theory, that the concert hall would be rendered obsolete by the broadcast media, channelled McLuhan’s ideas about the eventual overthrow of visually ordered perception with the rise of an oral/aural culture of communications.

Gould’s interest in the material properties of sound found support in McLuhan’s theories of acoustic space. McLuhan used the analogy of cubism in the arts, and of the ‘labyrinth figure’ developed in his literary criticism, to describe the capacity of the ear to adapt to multiple sonic perspectives at once.¹⁰² We see this principle applied in imaginative ways in Gould’s contrapuntal radio works and in his more experimental recordings. Indeed, his contrapuntal

⁹⁸ Quoted in Robert E. Babe (from CBC radio interview (1980)), *Canadian Communication Thought*, 290.

⁹⁹ Glenn Gould, “The Prospects of Recording”.

¹⁰⁰ John P. L. Roberts (ed.), *The Art of Glenn Gould*, 237; E. Jones-Imhotep, “Malleability and Machines”, 300.

¹⁰¹ McLuhan (1964) argued that new recording technologies had created a “depth approach” to musical experience, characterised by “a mental involvement in process that makes the content of the item seem quite secondary”.

¹⁰² The analogy of cubism is made in *Understanding Media*. The notion of the “labyrinth figure” is developed in his early essay “Joyce, Aquinas, and the Poetic Process” (1951).

documentaries have been described (with obvious reference to McLuhan) as ‘cubist soundscapes’ and ‘labyrinth[s] of perception’.¹⁰³ Here, the impression of multiple perspectives is achieved in discursive and musical terms: through the overlay of multiple narrative voices of differing timbres.¹⁰⁴ Gould’s ‘musicking’ of spoken-word material in these documentaries may have taken inspiration from McLuhan, who once commented to Gould that ‘the spoken word is music, pure music, at any time. It is a form of singing’.¹⁰⁵ Gould treats the pitch, cadence and metre of the spoken word like a composer, exploiting the registers, articulations, and rhythms of his vocal material to further the ends of characterisation, as lines in a fugue. But it was Gould’s interest in modifying the timbral properties of sounds through the ‘choreographing’ of close and distant microphone perspectives that speaks most directly to McLuhan’s influence. ‘There is a relationship of the sound to the various envelopes of space you’re placing it in that adds immeasurably’, Gould once commented, and archival records show McLuhan sharing his theories of sensory space (‘tactile, audile, osmic, proprioceptive . . . visual, and so on’) with the pianist in written correspondence.¹⁰⁶ The technique of ‘acoustic choreography’ – also termed ‘acoustic orchestration’ and ‘sonic choreography’ – formed part of Gould’s wider efforts to transcend the ‘linearity’ of traditional approaches to the recording of serious music and documentary by making novel use of spatial perspective as a creative parameter.¹⁰⁷ Théberge has analysed it as a form of ‘mobile perspective’, an interpretation suggested by Gould himself when he describes the technique in the context of his desire to restore the link between ‘thoughts’ and ‘actions and movements’ in his documentary-dramas.¹⁰⁸ Fink has suggested that this simulation of spatial movement imparts a visual dimension to Gould’s sound compositions,

¹⁰³ Paul Théberge, “Counterpoint: Glenn Gould and Marshall McLuhan”, 56, 62.

¹⁰⁴ I am referring particularly to his *Solitude Trilogy*.

¹⁰⁵ In Gould’s CBC radio documentary *Dialogues on the Prospects of Recording* (1965).

¹⁰⁶ Jim Aikin, “Provocative Insights”. For Gould-McLuhan on space, see McLuhan letter to Gould, dated Jan. 2, 1970 (GGA 34 30 1).

¹⁰⁷ For McLuhan, linearity was a characteristic of visual space, persisting into the acoustic age owing to the “blindness”/“numbness” of most to the rationales of the new media. As part of Gould’s investigation into spatial dynamics, the pianist also experimented with techniques of quadraphonic playback, apparently pushed in this direction by CBS A&R rep. Paul Myers (see Rhona Bergman, *The Idea of Gould*, 46).

¹⁰⁸ Paul Théberge, “Counterpoint: Glenn Gould and Marshall McLuhan”, 61; Glenn Gould, “Radio as Music”.

which would seem to accord with McLuhan's view of ear-based perception as more diffuse and synesthetic than the eye with its linear and particularist logics.¹⁰⁹

I would suggest that Gould's exploitation of 'the sense of area . . . of space and proximity' in his broadcasts and recordings helped communicate a dialectic of solitude and community underpinning his identity as a creative and moral artist, and Canada's identity as a northern nation united through technology.¹¹⁰ 'With four million square miles', wrote Northrop Frye, '[Canada] has naturally been a country more preoccupied with space than with time, with environment rather than tradition'.¹¹¹ Gould regarded his use of distant microphone perspectives as the musical analogy of the cinematic 'long shot', recalling something of the vastness of Canada's northern landscape, of human insignificance (aleness) in the face of an all-powerful nature.¹¹² By contrast, we can regard his general preference for close mic perspectives as a metaphor for human closeness, of the Canadian 'garrison mentality'.¹¹³ These claims would appear supported by Gould's own writings and his critical reception: he regularly contrasted the impersonal acoustics of the concert hall with the directness and intimacy of studio sonorities, and the metaphor of space was a favourite of critics, used to situate ideas of his life and work as an effect of his Canadian nationality.¹¹⁴ Norman Snider, for example, suggested that Gould's 1977 recording of Sibelius' piano music sounded like it was 'calling from northern mountain to northern mountain, a disembodied voice echoing

¹⁰⁹ Howard Fink, "Glenn Gould's 'Idea of North'". Gould's recording assistant, Lorne Tulk, has suggested that intimations of visuality and kinesis are in fact a special affordance of the radio medium: "it's a tapestry on your imagination and allows you to move in any direction you may want to move . . . radio is the only medium which allows you to do that" (Bergman, *Idea of Gould*, 1997).

¹¹⁰ Glenn Gould, "Radio as Music".

¹¹¹ Northrop Frye, "Canada: New World Without Revolution" (1975).

¹¹² Kevin Bazzana, *Performer in the Work*, 251. For Gould's discussion of his theories of microphone perspective, see Andrew Marshall, "CBC Radio Script" (1978); Jim Aikin, "Provocative Insights"; Jonathan Cott, "The Rolling Stone Interview".

¹¹³ Gould also hinted at the relationship between his view of recording and the "garrison mentality" when he referred to the "womb-like security" of the recording studio and the "protective shield aspect to technology". See Elyse Mach, *Great Contemporary Pianists*; Glenn Gould, *Glenn Gould on Sport* in the series *The Scene*. CBC Radio (Oct., 1972).

¹¹⁴ Gould argued that "recorded music should try to create a one-to-one relationship between performer and listener" (Ulla Colgrass, "Glenn Gould"). For references to Northern space in Gould's critical reception see Peter Goddard, "Glenn Gould is a conjurer"; Norman Snider, "Glenn Gould at 45"; David Dubal, "Glenn Gould: A Last Interview" (1982) in *Piano Quarterly*, Vol. 22, No. 127 (Fall, 1984); and posthumously Rhona Bergman, *The Idea of Gould*; Kevin Bazzana, *Wondrous Strange*; Colin Eatock, *Remembering Glenn Gould*.

across vast spaces in magnificent isolation'.¹¹⁵ Bazzana compares the relationship between sound and space in Gould's recordings to 'scattered stands of trees dotting a Northern landscape'; his 'sparse' playing evokes 'the melancholy of a thinly-settled country under a bleak northern sky'.¹¹⁶

In another sense, Gould's soundscapes provide comment on themes of materiality and abstraction, embodiment and disembodiment, thus illuminating the dual face of the Canadian North as both material reality and mystical idea, and Gould's status as at once pragmatic sound sculptor (creator) and 'Platonic ideal' (moralist).¹¹⁷ This aspect of Gould's identity has been explored by scholars through consideration of the signifying power of miscellaneous noises in his recordings: namely, his humming, inhalations, creaking chair, and piano mechanism. For Laura Grey, for example, Gould's humming enhances his credentials as an idealist. It shows that 'the real music is going on inside Gould's head'.¹¹⁸ Such a view is deconstructed by sound scholars Paul Sanden and Jonathan Alexander. Citing Philip Auslander's theories of performativity, both authors argue that these mediated sounds provide 'very tangible traces of corporeality', that 'to listen to them is to hear a body performing'.¹¹⁹ The result is to dislodge Gould's 'mind-centered persona' and recover an idea of the physicality and 'liveness' underlying his musicianship.¹²⁰ However Gould's sonic identity is interpreted, there is no doubt that it is *Gould's* identity. This appears to contradict one of the central tenets of Gould's philosophy: that technology serves the ends of artistic anonymity and a pure form of aesthetic contemplation devoid of historical or social premise.

¹¹⁵ Norman Snider, "Glenn Gould at 45", 133. See *Three Sonatinas for Piano*. Columbia LP M 34555 (1967).

¹¹⁶ Kevin Bazzana, *Wondrous Strange*, 294.

¹¹⁷ A phrase used by Rhona Bergman (*Idea of Gould*, 1997).

¹¹⁸ Laura Grey, "The Idea of North".

¹¹⁹ Paul Sanden, "Hearing Glenn Gould's Body: Corporeal Liveness in Recorded Music" in *Current Musicology*, No. 88 (Fall., 2009); Jonathan Alexander, "Glenn Gould and the Rhetorics of Sound".

¹²⁰ Paul Sanden, "Hearing Glenn Gould's Body", 27.

Mantere has summarised these issues best when he writes:

Even though he fancied his recordings to be . . . devoid of live presence or personal display of the musician, one could argue that his technological innovations (such as acoustic choreography), humming, and distinctive interpretations bring to the fore a new kind of agency: Gould's own mediated presence in our ears. [. . .] The fascination and merits of most of [his recordings] derive from the particular musical presence – Gould's personal presence – and musical vision that they display.¹²¹

'Musical vision' here takes on a double meaning: the sight of sound which is implied by these processes and techniques of musical embodiment. In addition to the sounds of music and speech, then, the sound of 'fingers, lips, legs, and nose' also 'foreground(s) the visual' in Gould's broadcasts and recordings, in another nod to McLuhan's aural poetics.¹²²

In Gould's self-representations, North and technology have served as autonomous conceptual vehicles for the full extent of Gould's creative and moral thought. However, traditionally, Gould's 'Nordicity' is more likely to be associated with ideas of creativity and isolation, and technology with ideas of morality and community/communication. This is for two reasons. First, because of the way these categories have functioned in nationalist discourse. In nationalist mythology, geography has been conceived as a barrier to national integration; this can nevertheless be overcome by extending a communications network across the country. Second, because of the discursive emphases of Gould's own writings and works. Gould pitched his *Idea of North* radio documentary as 'a very dour essay into the effects of isolation', and its guiding theme is 'the relationship of isolation and solitude to one's productive capacity'.¹²³ And the central ambition of Gould's moral philosophy – the redemption of mankind through music – relied on a conception of technology as a vehicle for

¹²¹ Juha Markus Mantere, "The Gould Variations", 129-130.

¹²² Sanden quotes musicologist John Corbett ("Free, Single, and Disengaged", 1990): "The sound of fingers, lips, legs, and nose are all traces of the performer, the absent performer, and they foreground the visual".

¹²³ Glenn Gould, "Glenn Gould In Conversation with John McClure"; Glenn Gould letter to Helen Whitney (1971).

meaningful communication. The following brief analysis addresses these themes in the context of Gould's media work: first, his 1967 contrapuntal radio documentary *The Idea of North*; second, his Columbia recordings of the mid- to late Seventies. They provide particularly interesting and revealing examples of how Gould articulated discourses of creativity and morality through his self-representations as a Northerner and a technologist. By doing so, he could mobilise his mythic identity in line with tropes of genius and Canadian nationality.

The Northern Artist: Radio as Discourse, Technique, and Sound

Beginning in 1967, Gould began to align an understanding of his artistic identity with a discourse of the Canadian North, through his interview commentaries, writings, and works. He made public statements to the effect that his documentaries dealing with themes of North and solitude were 'autobiographical statement(s)', and his 'most personal' works for which he would most like to be remembered.¹²⁴ He first approached the subject through his CBC radio documentary *The Idea of North* (1967).¹²⁵ It was his first extra-musical media project, and one promoted heavily by Gould and the CBC in the context of wider cultural efforts designed to commemorate Canada's 100th year of confederation.¹²⁶ Alana Bell has suggested that his *Idea of North* 'forever tied Gould, the North, and Canada together for his national audiences'.¹²⁷ It apparently 'enjoyed considerable popularity with audiences'.¹²⁸ After its initial airing in 1967, it was rebroadcast for a northern audience the following year. It was re-adapted for CBC Television in 1970, released on vinyl in 1971, and on CD in 1992.¹²⁹ Moreover, it helped cement the importance of 'isolation' as a theme in discourses of national identity. The very

¹²⁴ See Kevin Bazzana, *Wondrous Strange*, 300; Andrew Stephen, "A Rare Meeting with the Bobby Fischer of Music" in *Sunday Times Magazine* (Mar. 16, 1980).

¹²⁵ Gould was commissioned to produce a programme on Canada's northern regions by the Public Affairs division of the CBC, as part of Canadian Centennial celebrations. It premiered on the CBC *Ideas* series on CBC FM on December 28, 1967.

¹²⁶ A 1967 promotional poster for *Idea of North* is reproduced at the Glenn Gould Archives website. See <https://www.collectionscanada.gc.ca/obj/028010/f1/nlc003823-v6.jpg> (accessed Apr. 10, 2018).

¹²⁷ Alana Bell, "The Lives of Glenn Gould", 179.

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*, 192.

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*

phrase ‘idea of North’, introduced by Gould, has become influential in nationalist discourse.¹³⁰

Gould’s new interest in the North as a focus for questions of his own cultural identity articulated growing trends in Canadian society and culture, fired by the Centennial celebrations, which increasingly asserted the value of national myths and symbols in the quest for self-understanding (and self-promotion).¹³¹ As cultural historians have argued, the emphasis on unifying national symbols at this time served an important ideological purpose: to mask and diffuse the social and political grievances of Québécois separatists and First Nations’ peoples, but also to assert Canada’s cultural distinctiveness and sovereignty in response to the perceived homogenising and domineering influence of the United States.¹³² The decline of an elitist, Anglo-centric conception of Canadian identity provided the space for more tolerant attitudes to popular culture to grow. Accessible and engaging, pop culture commanded a new kind of cache to the extent that it could distil nationalist myths for the wider public, and secure their participation in the cause.¹³³

Since the late nineteenth century, the myth of North has played a vital role in the Canadian national consciousness, being used to mobilise popular attitudes to race, sex, gender, and class (for example), through discursive representation across a range of disciplinary practices.¹³⁴ Gould’s oral/aural representations as Northerner share in this broader historical lineage, while also forming part of a more immediate post-war cultural context. In the 1950s and 1960s,

¹³⁰ In homage to Gould, Sherrill Grace’s study of the mythology of the Canadian North is titled *Canada and the Idea of North* (2001).

¹³¹ Ryan Edwardson, *Canadian Content*, 138.

¹³² L. B. Kuffert, “The Long Long Weekend: Centennial and Expo 67” in *A Great Duty: Canadian Responses to Modern Life and Mass Culture, 1939-1967* (Canada: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2003); Véronique Darwin, “Expo 67 – An Image of Unity, An Image of Diversity” in *The Atlas: UBC Undergraduate Journal of World History* (2011).

¹³³ L. B. Kuffert, “The Long Long Weekend”, 218.

¹³⁴ See Sherrill E. Grace’s survey of the terrain in *Canada and the Idea of North*.

northern issues had become part of the broader political conversation, and more sophisticated attempts were made to develop a theory and criticism of North.¹³⁵

First, to summarise Gould's conceptual understanding of North. He describes the 'physical fact of [northern] country' as a metaphor for the boundless creative vistas of the mind opened up to those who make the journey north ('if only in their imagination').¹³⁶ The social and geographic isolation of the northern traveller provides a model for individual empowerment through rejection of 'urban oriented and spiritually limited' values (e.g. competition, conformism) associated with southern living.¹³⁷ While the circumstances of northern existence appear bleak – he spoke of the 'woebegoneness' of northern landscape, of his documentaries as confronting 'the dark night of the human soul' – these challenges are justified by their ameliorative effect on the human character.¹³⁸

As I have suggested in Chapter I, Gould mined the ideological significance of North in Canadian popular discourse to situate an understanding of the creative and moral bases of his artistic identity. Canadian artistic traditions of representing North, of course, drew heavily on Romantic assumptions regarding the sublime, terrifying powers of nature, and Gould himself acknowledged the influence of 'romanticized, art-nouveau-tinged Group of Seven paintings' on his approach to landscape as metaphor.¹³⁹ For Gould scholar Laura Grey, three central themes connect the pianist to the Canadian myth of North: solitude or isolation, wilderness, and inwardness or interiority.¹⁴⁰ This analysis can be further refined by connecting Grey's three themes to Canadian critical traditions of North as highlighted by Sherrill E. Grace in her authoritative study of the subject. First, the idea of isolation, which has been described as a

¹³⁵ Ibid., 31. In 1958, John Diefenbaker won the largest majority government in Canadian history with his pledge to implement his vision of "a new Canada – a Canada of the North". A department for Indian and Northern Affairs was established in 1966.

¹³⁶ Glenn Gould, "'The Idea of North': An Introduction" (1967).

¹³⁷ Ibid.

¹³⁸ Gladys Houck, "Glenn Gould: Talking about television"; *Glenn Gould: Concert Dropout* (Columbia Masterworks LP, BS 15 (1968)).

¹³⁹ Glenn Gould, "'The Idea of North': An Introduction".

¹⁴⁰ Laura Grey, "The Idea of North".

‘liturgical Canadian theme’, associates Gould with the idea of personal struggle by invoking the physical and psychological travails of those who attempt to make the journey north alone.¹⁴¹ It references a history of ill-fated expeditions to the Canadian Arctic, dramatised in Canadian adventure writing.¹⁴² Second, and closely connected, is an idea of the Canadian wilderness as deadly bush-garden, a ‘sinister and menacing’ environment in which one must struggle to survive, or become its victim.¹⁴³ For many of his critics, Gould lived in an artistic wilderness, struggling to survive in a world that lacked the fame, fortune, and glamour of the concert business.¹⁴⁴ Gould’s view of himself as an ‘anti-hero’ spoke to the Canadian inferiority complex, and a Canadian discourse of ‘anti-fame’ which defines itself in opposition to archetypal standards of Hollywood celebrity.¹⁴⁵ The idea of a wild and untrammelled nature also gives meaning to Gould’s identity as a rebellious and mad genius by suggesting the presence of an over-abundant creative faculty unencumbered by custom or tradition (or reason). Third, Gould’s view of the psychological effects of North – that Northern travellers become ‘philosophers’ – invokes Frye’s conception of the frontier as an imaginative principle that organises the Canadian’s relationship to the world around him/her.¹⁴⁶ The idea of North as inner contemplation – and thus for Gould a conduit to the sublime – draws on the idea of North as ‘pure [. . .], white, silent, spiritual, as opposed to material, or bodily, presence’ explored in the work of playwright Herman Voaden and artist Lawren Harris.¹⁴⁷

¹⁴¹ “. . . the notion of isolation as a liturgical Canadian theme, which in a sense makes Gould’s preoccupation with it a validation of his citizenship” (Théberge, 1986).

¹⁴² For example, Stephen Leacock’s *Adventures of the Far North* (1920).

¹⁴³ Northrop Frye, *The Bush Garden*.

¹⁴⁴ See Atwood’s *Survival: A Thematic Guide to Canadian Literature* (Ontario: House of Anansi, 1972). For Nandy (2015), the Canadian “myth of lack” and inferiority complex underscore Canada’s identity as a creative and financial periphery to a hegemonic American centre.

¹⁴⁵ John McGreevy (dir.), *Glenn Gould’s Toronto*; Samita Nandy, *Fame in Hollywood North*, 185-186.

¹⁴⁶ Glenn Gould, “‘The Idea of North’: An Introduction” (1967); Northrop Frye, “Conclusion to a ‘Literary History of Canada’” (1965).

¹⁴⁷ Herman Voaden, *Six Canadian Plays* (1930). Harris’ painting “Lake and Mountains” (1928) captures this aesthetic visually.

Gould's *Idea of North* amounts to a sixty-minute metaphorical commentary on the pianist's self-identity. The narrative is organised around the opinions and interactions of five characters, each of whom has experience of the North, and each of whom represents a different viewpoint on the question of how Northern isolation affects human psychology. The 'action' is set on a train, which journeys from Winnipeg to the northern region of Churchill, Manitoba, over the length of the documentary. Gould interviewed his five subjects separately on topics chosen by him personally, then re-edited this material to generate five character archetypes: an idealist, a cynic, a government budget-watcher, a disillusioned anthropologist, and a narrator who combines aspects of all these viewpoints.¹⁴⁸ Organising the work into a number of scenes, each dwelling on a different aspect of northern identity, Gould then presents these characters in conversation and in simultaneous dialogue. Their opinions are played off against each other, thereby creating new thematic relationships and emotional connections through a kind of dramatic vocal counterpoint. In ways analogous to fugal writing, Gould created complex polyphonic textures made up of voices that, while responsive to each other, still manage to maintain a relative degree of independence.

Alana Bell's analysis of the documentary provides a window onto how *Idea of North* works as a form of artistic self-representation. By framing the documentary as autobiographical, and by defining North, through it, as a complex play of ideas, Gould performs an 'elusive, multiple and fragmented self'.¹⁴⁹ In this way he also represents himself as an archetypal Canadian: identity is conceived in terms of 'process . . . not so much finding so much as seeking'.¹⁵⁰ The thematic similarities between Gould's thought and a politics of Canadian nationality are here explicitly manifested through the speech of his Northern characters. The North as a social and psychological condition, as solitude versus as community, as a creative

¹⁴⁸ Glenn Gould, "'The Idea of North': An Introduction".

¹⁴⁹ Alana Bell, "The Lives of Glenn Gould", 188.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid.

and moral metaphor – these form part of an inquiry into the defining qualities of Canadian identity.

Gould's working method in the studio mediated this inquiry into self and nation. In private correspondence he wrote of his 'North' documentary as 'a study in radio techniques' and one which 'exploit[s] electronic resources to the utmost'.¹⁵¹ Operating on multiple levels and invested with creative significance, 'contrapuntal' radio technique was, for Gould, analogous to the Canadian North, encouraging a listener with 'a different sort of awareness . . . who will not think in terms of precedence, in terms of priority'.¹⁵² As a commentary on his self-identity, Gould's contrapuntal technique 'force[s] the listener to encounter sound in ways that resemble how Gould reportedly did'.¹⁵³

Scene two of *North*, which deals specifically with the challenges and implications of northern isolation, provides opportunity to reflect on Gould's technical procedures as a vehicle for dramatising aspects of his identity. According to Gould's editing plan, the scene is composed of four sections, two of which are structured as dialogues (or 'duets'), the other two as monologues (or 'arias').¹⁵⁴ The central theme is that of how to confront the psychological challenges of solitary northern existence ('can a man get along with himself . . . in this solitary life of . . . the hermit North?').¹⁵⁵ Gould has his characters describe these challenges: a sense of paranoia and claustrophobia, feelings of worthlessness and insecurity, a descent into madness – all possible consequences of the reckoning with North as physical and social environment. To conquer these challenges, through mental fortitude, through cultivating a pragmatic relationship to the land, is to develop one's virtuous character: to appreciate 'the value of another human being', the 'sense of community', and non-materialist perspectives.

¹⁵¹ Letter from Gould to Klaus Mehrlander (May 21, 1968); Letter from Gould to Robert Skelton (May 23, 1972).

¹⁵² Glenn Gould, "Radio as Music".

¹⁵³ Alana Bell, "The Lives of Glenn Gould", 277.

¹⁵⁴ Reproduced as "Act II" in Plate 1a of Sallis, "Glenn Gould's 'Idea of North'", 120.

¹⁵⁵ I have consulted a transcript of the documentary for the purposes of this analysis. It can be found at <https://sites.google.com/site/ggfminor/home/idea-of-north-transcript> (accessed Nov. 9, 2017).

Using splicing and multi-tracking techniques, Gould creates dramatic tensions between his characters by counterpointing and complementing their perspectives in simulated dialogue. In section three, the character of Frank Vallée is made to dispel the notion of the restorative power of northern landscape by identifying this landscape with mortal danger, and thus fulfils the role of ‘cynic’ allocated by Gould. Vallée’s later scepticism concerning the patriotic motivations of northern travellers clashes with the view expressed a moment earlier by the ‘government budget-watcher’ Robert Phillips. At the same time, both can agree that the North develops personal character.¹⁵⁶ This is redolent of what Gould later described as the ‘Webern-like continuity-in-crossover’ of ideas in his documentaries, and provides an example of the musical assumptions guiding his technical approach.¹⁵⁷

In producing ‘North’, Gould also describes tailoring his technical approach to the acoustic limitations of monaural sound. He felt it important to emphasise the ‘interplay of the vocal lines, and the relationship between principal and subordinate voices’ through equalisation, compression, and a kind of dynamic choreography.¹⁵⁸ In ‘Radio as Music’, he recalls applying these techniques to motivically important words spoken by his characters to create foreshadowing and ironical effects, for example, or to emphasise character differentiation. More significant for the present purposes is their role in conveying a sense of distance, proximity, space and place.¹⁵⁹ Sallis, for example, has suggested how Gould’s use of low-dynamic train sounds throughout the work ‘provide[s] realistic [and impressionistic] effects and . . . establish[es] a convincing locus within which the characters are portrayed’.¹⁶⁰ These are complemented by filtered vocal textures designed to simulate the acoustical properties of the train compartments through which the characters move in the course of their journey north (an example of the ‘mobile perspective’ which Théberge suggests led from Gould’s

¹⁵⁶ All citations in this section are from pages 7-9 of the transcript.

¹⁵⁷ Glenn Gould, “Radio as Music”.

¹⁵⁸ Letter from Gould to Stephen Cummings (Dec. 17, 1974).

¹⁵⁹ Gould analyses this practice in “Radio as Music” (1971). See page 385 in Page’s anthology of Gould’s writings (*Glenn Gould Reader*).

¹⁶⁰ Sallis, “Glenn Gould’s ‘Idea of North’”, 119.

experiments with spatial dynamics). In other contexts, Gould's use of dry and reverberant acoustics serves to poeticise the semantic meaning of the text: 'to suggest that a very distant experience was being recalled' (reverberant), for example, or to contrast lofty Romantic conceptions of North (reverberant) with the 'down-to-earth' realities of daily life in the north (dry).¹⁶¹ Jonathan Alexander has even suggested that the sonic qualities of the characters' voices are mobilised to convey a sense of northern identity; 'their embodiment was palpable in the grain of the voices', he writes, 'you could almost hear them shiver'.¹⁶²

To summarise and conclude, these techniques and effects demonstrate how Gould achieved new forms of self-representation through his innovations in 'contrapuntal' radio. The contrapuntal technique itself provided a metaphor for northern creative possibility, while it has also been analysed as 'a metaphor for disassociation from the social collective'.¹⁶³ The effect of solitude on the human condition is a theme which underpins the large-scale coherence of his documentary, and informs Gould's approach to the patterning of motivic ideas at the sectional level (as I have shown in my consideration of scene two). The theme of North as psychological trauma, as inner cultivation, and so on, is dramatised through the interaction of opinionated 'northern' characters constructed by Gould by applying techniques of splicing and multitracking to his original interview material. By doing so, Gould maps his image onto the broader contours of Canadian national identity. Soft dynamic levels, combined with echo and reverb effects, amplify the rhetoric of isolation and detachment presented in the text, while the use of train sounds evokes the metaphor of North as personal journey. Finally, the affective affordances of the 'grain of the voices' are also brought into play, providing insight into the north as a set of embodied traits – for instance, of hardiness, courage, and sacrifice.

¹⁶¹ The quote is from "Radio as Music".

¹⁶² Jonathan Alexander, "Glenn Gould and the Rhetorics of Sound", 85.

¹⁶³ Juha Markus Mantere, "The Gould Variations", 188.

The Technologist: Recording as Discourse, Technique, and Sound

Popular representations of Gould as Northerner, in both the visual and aural media, have tended to privilege one side of the dialectic of solitude and community undergirding his identity. Gould's northern isolation gives quintessential expression to his identity as creative artist, a credo of anti-conformism and of individual cultivation through personal sacrifice. This places him in contact with Romantic and nationalist strains of thought. Yet Gould's North also channels ideas of communal participation which inform an alternate view of his identity: of Gould as communicator. 'Solitude is meaningful only when it is accompanied by a commitment to the community', writes Georges Leroux, and both Gould's personal artistic vision and 'North' documentaries have been cited as examples of the artist grappling with 'the paradox of community'.¹⁶⁴ Just as the northern traveller reconnects to the community through his or her self-imposed isolation, Richard Kostelanetz could report of Gould's 'paradox' as:

. . . a reclusively private person who lives, via the media, an extremely public life, in constant "touch" with the world community; for not only do his records become the intimate possessions of millions of people but the world's activities are also immediately present to him.¹⁶⁵

Gould's technological thinking advanced the narrative of self-cultivation through creative isolation – the 'cloistered' environment of the recording studio encouraged new forms of individual expression.¹⁶⁶ The darker elements of his reception stem from the idea of his creative isolation: the hermit of the North is transformed into the hermit of the studio, the sacrifice of material comfort for 'Northern' wisdom becomes a vision of the unworldly artist who sacrifices the glamorous virtuoso lifestyle to fulfil his vocation in media.¹⁶⁷ I have suggested that his discourse of technology, compared to his discourse of North, places greater emphasis on the idea of community and communication, on the social good achieved through

¹⁶⁴ Georges Leroux, *Partita for Glenn Gould*, 173, 178.

¹⁶⁵ Richard Kostelanetz, "The Glenn Gould Variations".

¹⁶⁶ *Glenn Gould: Concert Dropout*.

¹⁶⁷ As quoted by Laurence Shames in "Glenn Gould: Music by an Offbeat Pianist".

artistic mediation. This provides a firmer basis for his reception as a spiritual and redemptive figure.

As we have seen, Gould's technological discourse rested on a belief in the moral power of the new media. Technologies of mass communication played a vital role in his mission to 'redeem the musical self' in that they could remove the barriers to creative expression and individual judgment which 'post-Renaissance specialisation', formalised in the institution of the live concert, had constructed.¹⁶⁸ Gould rejected the pessimistic and dystopian views of technology common in the musical and cultural discourse of the time. On the contrary, it was 'an answer to alienation and the terrible uninvolvedness of the public today', building bridges of communication between people and eliciting new forms of musical engagement and appreciation.¹⁶⁹ These he counted as 'the greatest achievement(s) of the recording industry'.¹⁷⁰ Developing this theme, Gould used his media platform to mobilise an understanding of himself as technologist: his friends were 'mostly in communications', he was familiar with the most recent communication theory, and he described the power of radio in terms of its power of communication.¹⁷¹ The posthumous literature has underscored this reputation, in descriptive accounts of the man and studies of his aesthetic.¹⁷²

Mantere, Imhotep, and others have suggested how Gould's technological preoccupation mined deeper cultural and ideological resources.¹⁷³ His thinking finds an immediate context in the Canadian technological discourse of the 1960s and 1970s, particularly that of McLuhan and his theories of the participant consumer and 'global village'. More broadly, it contributed to ongoing debates around creative agency and authorship fuelled by the work of such diverse

¹⁶⁸ E. Jones-Imhotep, "Malleability and Machines", 291.

¹⁶⁹ Quoted from Columbia recording *Glenn Gould: Concert Dropout*.

¹⁷⁰ Glenn Gould, "The Prospects of Recording", 59.

¹⁷¹ Richard Kostelanetz, "The Glenn Gould Variations"; *Glenn Gould: Concert Dropout*.

¹⁷² E.g. Robert Fulford has claimed "the idea of communicating over distances excited him", and Lorne Tulk, that "communication was important to Glenn" (Bergman, *Idea of Gould*, 1997). Scholar Thérèse Salviat's essay of 1988 was entitled "Glenn Gould, Composer of Communications" (Ghyslaine Guertin, *Universe of a Genius*, 2007).

¹⁷³ Juha Markus Mantere, "The Gould Variations", 93; E. Jones-Imhotep, "Malleability and Machines", 300; Kevin Bazzana, *Wondrous Strange*, 257.

cultural figures as Umberto Eco, Roland Barthes, and John Cage. Cavell has suggested how Gould's social vision of music might intersect with Adorno's view of art as social praxis.¹⁷⁴ And as a technological utopianist who believed in the 'charity of the machine', Gould's technological 'theology' channelled the writings of Le Moyne and Teilhard, connecting the pianist to a Francophone philosophical tradition underpinned by Catholic moral teaching.¹⁷⁵ Gould's communications philosophy drew upon, and contributed to, a nationalist discourse of technology in Canada. His belief that technology would bring about the reunification of music's social roles, for instance, or that technology would expand the audience for music, tapped into the Canadian view of technology as a force for communication and integration, fundamental to Canada's founding as a nation (with the construction of the Canadian Pacific Railway in 1881), and as reflected in the elevated position of public broadcasting in national life.¹⁷⁶ As with the discourse of North, Gould's technological discourse was an authentication of his Canadian citizenship, while his frequent media appearances were themselves a statement of 'technological nationalism', of Canadian cultural resistance to the American mass-entertainment juggernaut. Gould's moral conception of technology shared affinities with a Masseyite discourse of Canadian broadcasting. Gould and the Masseyites both believed that the mass media performs an important social role in so far as it can provide access to morally and spiritually uplifting content.¹⁷⁷ By couching his philosophy of communication in moral terms, Gould was performing important cultural work, reinforcing Canada's identity as a nation morally superior to the American Other across the border.

¹⁷⁴ Richard Cavell, "Gould, McLuhan, and the Fate of the Acoustic", 46.

¹⁷⁵ Le Moyne's concept of the "charity of the machine" articulated the idea that technology is able to remove us from our competitive, Darwinian surroundings; that the technological network has become a "second nature". It was a concept invoked by Gould in his polemic against the live concert, for example in his essay "Music and Technology" (1974/5). Gould owned a copy of Le Moyne's *Convergence* (1966), a collection of essays on themes musical, technological, and theological.

¹⁷⁶ "Communication has remained central to both the material and the mythological definition of Canada" (Mary Vipond, *Mass Media in Canada*, 2011).

¹⁷⁷ The Massey Commission, as part of its pledge to address "the spiritual foundations of . . . national life", recommended that national broadcasting should provide "resistance to the absorption of Canada into the general cultural pattern of the United States" (see <https://www.collectionscanada.gc.ca/massey/index-e.html>, accessed Nov. 18, 2017).

Gould's recording philosophy provided a focus for his ideas on communication, morality, and spirituality. As Geoffrey Payzant and Timothy Maloney have suggested, the close microphone perspectives which were a hallmark of his recording style aimed to promote an 'intensely shared attentiveness to the music'.¹⁷⁸ This explains the 'powerful connection to him many people have felt when listening to his discs'.¹⁷⁹ As a moralist, he valued the ability of technology to restore agency to his listeners and to democratise the musical experience. His beliefs regarding the 'limitless possibilities of the broadcasting and recording media' informed his prediction, in 1966, that the great moral evil of his time – for him, the live concert – would 'no longer exist a century hence'.¹⁸⁰

One important way that Gould mobilised his moral identity was by situating his studio approach in relation to a moral discourse of live and recorded performance. As Imhotep has argued, Gould's vision invoked the idea of recording technologies as at once a destructive and constructive force: an alleged threat to the very existence of live music on the one hand, and an aid to musical education, proficiency, and creativity on the other.¹⁸¹ Gould's new philosophy of recording sought to challenge the assumption that live music, as a spontaneous and 'natural' event, was in some way morally superior to recorded music, through an extended critical reflection on the nature of temporality and authenticity in music. At the centre of this debate was the use of the editing splice. Gould advocated for the splice with increasing vigour as his technical procedures in the aural media grew in scope and sophistication. One of Gould's most significant statements on the topic was made during a CBC radio show of 1978 devoted to consideration of '[recording] techniques which enhance the communication with the listener from the artist'.¹⁸² Commenting on his splicing plan for

¹⁷⁸ Geoffrey Payzant, *Music and Mind*, 45; S. Timothy Maloney, "Gould, McLuhan, and the Recording Studio", 25.

¹⁷⁹ S. Timothy Maloney, "Gould, McLuhan, and the Recording Studio", 25.

¹⁸⁰ Quoted in Helen Mesaros, *Bravo Fortissimo*, 367; Glenn Gould, "The Prospects of Recording", 47.

¹⁸¹ E. Jones-Imhotep, "Malleability and Machines", 289.

¹⁸² Gould in conversation with Andrew Marshall, produced for CBC radio series *From The Masters* (May 7, 1978). Script reproduced as "CBC Radio Script from 1978" in *Glenn Gould*, Vol. 2, No. 1 (Spring, 1996).

his 1976 recording of Hindemith's *Das Marienleben*, Gould developed some core themes: the ontological and phenomenological similarities between film-making and recording, the moral equivalence of live and recorded music *qua* real and simulated temporal objects, and the inherent creative and 'spiritual' virtues of recording as a perfectible aesthetic experience. Elsewhere, he described the reluctance to apply technological procedures to music as an 'immoral' act.¹⁸³ Highly visible across the media as the concert dropout turned 'philosopher of the recording', it is not unreasonable to suggest that Gould and his idiosyncratic recordings were heard against this wider discourse concerning the morality of technological mediation.

Finally, Gould's 1977 recording of Sibelius' piano pieces provides a unique comment on the pianist's technological identity, as the only one released in his lifetime to make use of his technique of 'acoustic orchestration'.¹⁸⁴ It was the first classical recording to describe and acknowledge the mixing process as a contributory art. This process amounted to 'a bold and fascinating statement on the appropriateness of space to music'.¹⁸⁵ Basing his decisions about microphone deployment on 'the structure of the music itself', Gould makes musical signifiers of proximity and distance (i.e. tonal and formal relationships, rhythmic and motivic affects) meaningful in terms of 'close-up', 'medium shot', and 'long-shot' aural perspectives.¹⁸⁶

Gould never fully explained his reasoning for debuting the technique with his Sibelius album. However, his discussion of the technique in relation to other projects suggests that he saw it as a way to represent his view of the composer more faithfully.¹⁸⁷ Gould's championing of Sibelius as 'passionate but anti-sensual', his use of the composer's music in his *Idea of North* documentary, and evocative northern caricatures of Gould's Sibelius recording in the print media, suggests that the composer had broader ideological significance: as an embodiment of

¹⁸³ "Glenn Gould Interviewed by Tim Page" in *Piano Quarterly*, Vol. 29, No. 115 (Fall, 1981).

¹⁸⁴ Comments on "acoustic orchestration" can be found e.g. in Kazdin, *Creative Lying*, 137-140; Mach, *Great Contemporary Pianists*, 97-98; Cott, "Rolling Stone", 87-95.

¹⁸⁵ Andrew Kazdin, liner notes for M34555 (1977).

¹⁸⁶ "CBC Radio Script from 1978", 11.

¹⁸⁷ See his comments on his recording of Scriabin's Third Piano Sonata and Scriabin preludes op. 57 (in "CBC Radio Script from 1978").

a northerly aesthetic underpinned by a dialectic of solitude and community.¹⁸⁸ The album did represent a notable departure from some of Gould's recording principles, however. The choreographing of acoustic perspectives mitigated against those values of intimacy, immediacy, and impartiality that he sought in his other, 'drier' recordings as a way to foster that 'one-to-one relationship between performer and listener'.¹⁸⁹ However, as the only recording of Gould's released in his lifetime to apply McLuhan's theories of acoustic space to musical performance, it contributed a new dimension to Gould's artistic identity that could still be situated within the broader dialectical framework of his self-representations.

Conclusion

This analysis has suggested how Gould mobilised an understanding of his artistic identity through sonic representation in his radio and recording work. Gould's promotional and ideological repurposing of the electronic media at this time can be understood against the backdrop of his concert retirement in 1964, and his need to derive a new model of musical authenticity which challenged the social and cultural authority of live performance. His ideological challenge to a hegemonic culture of live performance saw the pianist rebranded as musical intellectual and philosopher who addressed himself to issues surrounding the creative and moral dimension of art and human experience in the modern age. The connection Gould drew between creativity and isolation, and morality and community/communication, in his philosophical writings was given formal expression in his works for radio and recording which addressed northern and technological themes. Given Samita Nandy's assertion that Canadian celebrities are produced and consumed in association with national symbols and myths, I have argued that these works drew upon the broader ideological significance of 'North' and technology within Canadian nationalist discourse to situate the pianist's

¹⁸⁸ Quoted in Glenn Gould, "His Country's 'Most Experienced Hermit' Chooses a Desert Island Discography" in *High Fidelity*, Vol. 20, No. 6 (Jun., 1970), 29.

¹⁸⁹ Ulla Colgrass, "Glenn Gould".

authenticity as a Canadian musician.¹⁹⁰ At the level of discourse, of technical process and structure, and of sound itself, his works articulated a dialectical tension which appealed not only to the conflicted role of celebrity within North American culture, but to the fundamental paradoxes of Canadian identity as at once a nation of ‘solitudes touching other solitudes’ and a garrison united by a strong sense of moral purpose.¹⁹¹ To this end, Gould’s celebrity also performed a vital cultural function in negotiating competing definitions of Canada as a place and space distinct from the United States. The renewed currency of Northern and technological themes within the context of Canada’s Centennial celebrations and post-war cultural criticism suggests a degree of personal calculation on Gould’s part, reflecting his new sense of professional engagement with the Canadian cultural scene.

My analysis has further suggested how Gould’s interest in the aural/oral media as distinct modalities of communication, derived from Marshall McLuhan’s theories of acoustic space, was instrumental in helping listeners successfully ‘decode’ his aural/oral identity. It also established the kind of rapport between him and his listeners which was crucial to the maintenance of his celebrity. This could be interpreted as Gould’s attempt to recover the sense of immediacy lost through traditional forms of mediation. A further reckoning with the problems and affordances of the electronic media for celebrity production is evidenced in his work for television, the topic of my final chapter.

¹⁹⁰ Samita Nandy, *Fame in Hollywood North*, 2.

¹⁹¹ Northrop Frye, “Sharing the Continent” (1977), 59.

CHAPTER VI

‘INFOTAINMENT’: THE CBC, *TELESCOPE*, AND GOULD’S AUDIO-VISUAL CELEBRITY, 1964-1982

Glenn Gould, as we all know by now, is television’s pianist.

William Littler, critic.¹

My clothes do seem to command an inordinate amount of attention. But then I’ve always been repulsively sure of myself.

Glenn Gould.²

Self-Representation or Self-Deception?

Of all the great classical performers of the twentieth century, Gould stands out for the depth of his engagement with the aural, visual, and audio-visual media as distinct technological forms with their own meanings, logics, and potentialities. As the previous chapter began to address, he departed from the keystone discourse of classical recording by redefining the relationship between technology, performance, and the listening experience. Borrowing from Marshall McLuhan, he believed that different media forms had different social and psychological affordances and effects. The question of how to bring sound, image, and media modality into an effective union so as to communicate his ideas more effectively was a core concern which he addressed in his experimental studio works. In radio, we have already seen the example of his ‘contrapuntal’ technique. In television, too, Gould redefined the boundaries of musical presentation through the use of innovative split-screen and lighting effects, and on-screen graphic notational renderings of complex musical material.³ Not merely

¹ William Littler, “Pianist Glenn Gould a television hit” in *Toronto Daily Star* (Dec. 10, 1970).

² Quoted in Jock Carroll, *Glenn Gould: Some Portraits of the Artist as a Young Man* (Toronto: Stoddart Publishing Ltd., 1995), 11.

³ His “somewhat McLuhanesque TV essay” *The Well-Tempered Listener* (1969) used split-screen effects to delineate voices in a Bach fugue. Some of his most experimental procedures can be found in his *Music in Our*

a blank canvas, technology was, for Gould, a creative force, and his criticism of fellow performers largely amounted to a criticism of their willingness to accept or reject this crucial premise.⁴ Gould's unusually bold theories and practices of technological mediation clearly are one important context for assessing how Gould was able to differentiate himself from other star performers in the cultural marketplace of classical music.

Alana Bell suggests that Gould's experimental studio practices underpinned a radical form of media self-representation through which the pianist codified an understanding of his achievements.⁵ 'Can you think of another pianist', asks Gould scholar Jacques Drillon, 'who had such strong contact with the contemporary media, who was so able to use them, to control them, and to make them serve his own ends?'.⁶ In his writings and interviews, Gould contrasted the passivity and compliance of the concert performer with the creative independence and authority of the studio artist. At Columbia Records and the CBC, he apparently had the freedom to choose his own creative projects, while, on the concert circuit, the economic contingencies of live performance meant that he was obliged to conform more to the popular tastes of his audience in his repertoire. Moreover, citing constraints imposed by his touring schedule, he made a qualitative distinction between recordings made before and after his concert retirement, in terms of their production standards and their relative adherence to key aesthetic and philosophical premises.⁷ The implication is that these former works are less identifiably his. Whereas his celebrity persona in the 1950s was, in his words, a 'media concoction', he felt he had a greater stake in his post-concert image given the greater control

Time programmes (1974-1977) for CBC Television's *Musica* series. Here, kaleidoscopic lighting effects and abstract on-screen animations are used to clarify formal and stylistic elements in music by Scriabin and Webern. (The "McLuhanesque" quote is from Kevin Bazzana, *Wondrous Strange*, 290.)

⁴ See his comments on Leonard Bernstein, for example, in "Oh, for heaven's sake, Cynthia, there must be something else on" in *High Fidelity/Musical America*, Vol. 19, No. 4 (Apr., 1969).

⁵ Alana Bell, "The Lives of Glenn Gould", 25.

⁶ Jacques Drillon, "Gould's Gould Cult", 79.

⁷ See Gould's discussion of his recording career in Andrew Marshall (1978/96) and Ulla Colgrass (1981/99).

over artistic parameters afforded him by the studio technology to which he now devoted himself as a media artist.⁸

But Gould spoke polemically, and it is necessary to regard his views on his self-presentation as themselves dictated by a concern for self-presentation (and self-preservation): to reinforce a narrative of personal authenticity by claiming a disengagement from the dynamics of commercial mass culture, for which the American publicity industries provided the most visible outward sign. His claim that he never had direct contact with publicity agents, for example, is simply false: his correspondence reveals that he had a close relationship with his concert manager and promoter Walter Homburger, with CBC publicist Linda Litwack, and with Columbia publicists Debbie Ishlon and Susan Koscis.⁹ Besides the issue of Gould's self-interestedness, the modern view of the relational nature of cultural production (e.g. Hall's 'circuit of culture' model) would problematise the easy distinction Gould makes between the 'passive' fame of the concert artist and the 'active' fame of the recording artist. Gould's charisma, musical accomplishment, and performance psychology are constants throughout his career, and implicate the pianist in the processes of his own cultural formation, however inflected by issues of media ownership and control. Following Hall, a more nuanced reading might consider Gould's post-1964 celebrity in terms of a temporary 'articulation' model: the forging of new links between processes of cultural production and cultural consumption by dint of Gould's experimental approach to media self-representation. It suggests that the meanings generated by Gould's media interventions are in some sense more constitutive of his celebrity than those of institutions or audiences.

Yet just as Gould underestimates his agency as a concert performer to intervene in his public image, might it be said that he overestimates his ability as a studio artist to package his media

⁸ Quoted in Norman Snider (1978).

⁹ The claim is made by Gould in Alan Rich (1959).

messages in entirely his own terms?¹⁰ This is not to deny the importance of Gould's new discourse of technology after 1964 (first formalised in his article 'An Argument for Music in the Electronic Age', 1964), his newly privileged responsibilities as editor and producer of his media works, or his new approach to self-presentation through dissemination of personal 'position papers' in the media. As argued in the previous chapter, Gould manipulated the semantic, technical, and sonic affordances of recording technology to personalise his media texts, and these interventions were bound up with his desire to reify an idealised vision of himself. But three issues immediately present themselves.

First, Gould was inconsistent when addressing questions of musical authorship, identity, and authority relative to the recording process. While his radio documentaries were 'autobiographical' and meant to be heard as such, he also praised what he saw as the decentring of the recording artist's identity under the collaborative conditions of studio production.¹¹ Second, Gould's blanket championing of technology as a form of creative empowerment and emancipation bypasses the issue of how one's ability to intervene creatively is modulated by the specific conditions of a medium's production.¹² Gould's level of interaction with radio and television, for example, was shaped by: Canadian content regulations; the technical constraints of each medium; the economic viability of each medium as determined by its ability to attract advertisers, audiences, and governmental subsidies; the status of arts programming and 'serious music' in the wider culture, and so on. Third, although Gould assumed greater creative responsibility as editor and producer of his media works after 1964, the meanings of Gould's media works are still inflected with institutional values at various points in the cultural circuit, denying the possibility that he could entirely fix

¹⁰ In the Rich interview, Gould suggested that performers are unable to "block" the kinds of publicity they receive from record companies.

¹¹ Quoted from Gould in Bazzana, *Wondrous Strange*.

¹² "Gould was an optimist, a Utopian, a transcendentalist when it came to technology [. . .] Gould believed that technology had an infinite capacity for emancipating people and bettering human society" (Bazzana, *Wondrous Strange*, 268). This Utopian strain is apparent in his essays "An Argument for Music in the Electronic Age" (1964), "Prospects of Recording" (1965/6), and "Music and Technology" (1974/5), for example.

how his identity is perceived. When Gould theorised media technologies as synonymous with human creative potential, he was giving definition to his status as a recording artist in line with Romantic tropes of the genius as transcendental subject, reworking the discourses of high art culture to authenticate his identity as a modern performer. A sociological, rather than purely ideological, view of his subjectivity and creative agency would complicate this narrative by emphasising the contingency and constructedness of Gould's position within the play of discursive and non-discursive practices, and the diffuse character of meaning production beyond the influence of individual actors. The following analysis attends to these practices and meanings through consideration of the CBC television show *Variations on Glenn Gould* (1969), with particular focus on the CBC as an institutional site with a high stake in issues of identity and culture at the time of the show's release. The aim is to generate a more nuanced account of the development of Gould's mature celebrity that questions some of the self-serving assumptions which identify Gould as the master manipulator of his public image, while still acknowledging the important contributions Gould made to that image in his capacity as professional media artist.

CBC-TV and the Politics of Media Regulation

Since September 1952, when Gould appeared on Toronto's first-ever telecast, the pianist had become known to Canada's television audiences through live televised concerts and on-screen interviews for CBC-TV, and a set of successful fly-on-the-wall films for Canada's National Film Board (NFB).¹³ From 1961, Gould undertook more creative work in television, combining the roles of musical performer, interlocutor, and educator in a series of thematic specials for the CBC. This work culminated in the acclaimed three-part series *Glenn Gould plays Bach*, released a year after his death.¹⁴ He also participated in at least two major

¹³ His first television appearance was on Toronto's CBLT station, on September 8, 1952, in a star-studded variety show. The films referenced are *Glenn Gould: On the Record* and *Glenn Gould: Off the Record* (1959).

¹⁴ The shows were a co-production of the European film company Clasart, and the CBC. They were filmed in the period 1979-1981, under the direction of Bruno Monsiegeon.

personality profiles: the aforementioned *Variations on Glenn Gould* (1969), and *Glenn Gould's Toronto* (1979). According to Kevin Bazzana, his music specials (numbering at least twelve in the period 1961-1982) 'had no precedents in Canada'.¹⁵ They also 'became increasingly ambitious' following his concert retirement in 1964: he began to explore repertoire beyond his familiar recorded output, and developed radical new, anti-realist solutions to the problems of presenting music on screen.¹⁶ That Gould could produce so many sophisticated works for television, pioneer a new genre of 'talk-and-play' music television in Canada, and dabble in experimental studio techniques, certainly suggests that he had a greater creative stake in the CBC's artistic culture than did other performers of his day. Other famous Canadian classical artists such as singers Lois Marshall and Maureen Forrester performed frequently for CBC-TV, but, whether through choice or lack of opportunity, never fronted their own shows. These cases demonstrate that, while Gould defined his creative empowerment in terms of the new possibilities afforded him by studio technology, cultural and institutional factors provide the proper context for understanding the scope of his power and influence in the Canadian arts and media.

Gould's career in television intersected in important ways with the Canadian debate around the role of public and private broadcasting in national life, and the relationship between new media, mass culture, and national identity. Given the historic importance of communications' technologies to Canada's political and cultural integration (with the construction of the East-West Canadian Pacific Railway of 1881), the advent of the mass media posed new challenges and offered new opportunities for Canadians' ability to project a distinctive national identity. Recognising this, broadcasting in Canada had early been conceived as a national public service, underwritten by federal policy that discriminated against aggressive commercial

¹⁵ Kevin Bazzana, *Wondrous Strange*, 226.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 288. His experimental philosophy of music on television is outlined in his essay "Oh, for heaven's sake, Cynthia" (Apr., 1969). He felt that traditional approaches "deny the medium's indigenous attributes". This informed his view that "all aspects of the interplay between audio and video badly need reconsideration" (*ibid.*).

activities which threatened the public interest.¹⁷ Given the distractive allure and ubiquity of television in Canadian homes (ninety-two percent of Canadians owned one by 1965), the medium became a nodal point for debates around the impact of broadcasting on Canadian life, with optimists seeing in it the potential for a ‘new, wider public sphere’ and an ‘enlightened democracy’, and pessimists regarding it as just another vehicle by which American mass culture could work to undermine the creative and moral fabric of the nation.¹⁸ Gould’s earliest television career (1952-1958) benefited from the fertile state of post-war Canadian culture and broadcasting, in which the CBC maintained a virtual monopoly over the Canadian airwaves, the milestone of coast-to-coast transmission had been achieved, and cultural and economic support for high arts broadcasting was formalised in political rhetoric (notably, the Massey Commission Report, 1951) and federal policy (the creation of the Canada Council for the Arts, 1957).¹⁹ The period 1958-1964 marked a sea change in Canadian broadcasting policy. The introduction of private-station competition combined with tightened federal budgets and political antipathy to the CBC weakened the mandate of Canadian public broadcasting and left the CBC increasingly seeking to recover its financial shortfall with advertising revenue derived from cheap and popular American entertainment programming (amounting to thirty percent of the broadcast schedule by 1964).²⁰ The mature period of Gould’s television career (1965-1982) saw another shift, as growing resistance to Canada’s absorption into America’s cultural, political, and economic empire; to an outdated Masseyite conception of the intrinsic value of international high cultural forms; and to separatist tendencies in French Canada had

¹⁷ Susan Harada and Frank W. Peers, “Radio and Television Broadcasting”. *The Canadian Encyclopedia*. See: <https://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/radio-and-television-broadcasting/> (accessed Jan. 31, 2018).

¹⁸ Howard Fremeth, “Television”. *The Canadian Encyclopedia*. See: <https://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/television/> (accessed Jan. 31, 2018); Leonard B. Kuffert, “Mass Media, Broadcasting, and Automation” in *A Great Duty: Canadian Responses to Modern Life and Mass Culture, 1939-1967*.

¹⁹ Ryan Edwardson writes that “The Canada Council for the Arts (1957) marked a new age of Canadian high-cultural activity” (in *Canadian Content*, 114). Coast-to-coast transmission was achieved on July 1, 1958 (Nash, *The Microphone Wars*, 263). The Masseyites believed in the civilising power of art and felt that international artistic paradigms could help bring Canada “up to standards” with the rest of Europe (Edwardson, *Canadian Content*, 165).

²⁰ Ryan Edwardson, *Canadian Content*, 124. Historian of the CBC, Knowlton Nash, suggests that the Fowler Commission Report on Broadcasting of 1957, and the subsequent Broadcasting Act of 1958, precipitated the “march into a more commercial ethos” for the corporation (Nash, *The Microphone Wars*, 250-269).

made issues of Canadian identity and sovereignty a high-profile concern in the media discourse. Now, in respect to CBC programming, ‘the distinction between cultural brows [came] to mean less than the origin of the content’, and, as such, ‘indigenous high and popular culture were both . . . vested with an important role in the quest for nationhood’.²¹ So-called ‘Canadian content’ quotas for television broadcasting had been in effect since 1961 (set at fifty-five percent), but were poorly enforced by regulators.²² The report of the 1965 Advisory Committee on Canadian broadcasting represented a return to the core principles of Canadian public broadcasting, as initially codified in the Aird Commission report of 1929, in that it recognised the essential role of the CBC as a public-service broadcaster responsible for galvanising an elevated common culture through entertaining, informative, and inclusive programming capable of reaching the entire population (though now ‘elevation’ was deemed possible through more modest, middlebrow means).²³ The Broadcasting Act of 1968 set a further precedent in making the need to ‘safeguard, enrich and strengthen the cultural, political, social and economic fabric of Canada’ a guiding factor in any regulatory decisions made by the newly established Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC).²⁴ Contributing to this ‘second wave’ of Canadian nationalism, by 1972 the CRTC had established stricter Canadian content requirements for prime-time Canadian television (sixty percent from the hours of seven to eleven p.m.), and a Department of Communications had been established in 1969 to ensure the ‘orderly operation and development’ of telecommunications infrastructure such as the Canadian broadcasting network.²⁵

²¹ Ryan Edwardson, *Canadian Content*, 115.

²² Knowlton Nash, *The Microphone Wars*, 310.

²³ The 1965 Report had stated that “In a vital broadcasting system, there must be room for the thinker, the disturber and the creator of new forms and ideas. He must be free to experiment – to fail as well as to succeed” (quoted in Nash, 318). Gould was clearly in his element here!

²⁴ Quoted in Robert Armstrong, *Broadcasting Policy in Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2010), 42.

²⁵ Knowlton Nash, *The Microphone Wars*, 386; Norman Hillmer, “Department of Communications”. *The Canadian Encyclopedia*. See: <https://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/department-of-communications/> (accessed Jan. 31, 2018).

Gould was well placed to take advantage of Canada's new strain of middlebrow cultural nationalism of this era. Since the early 1950s, Gould had gained a broad following in Canada through a combination of prodigious musical talent, savvy concert promotion by his manager Walter Homburger, and high-profile appearances on the CBC's radio and television networks. Like the comedic double-act Wayne and Shuster, or popular singer Juliette, Gould was a homegrown television celebrity, and an exception to the 'no-star' policy which the CBC usually enforced for its on-screen talent.²⁶ Whereas television productions involving Canadian personalities were usually low-cost, low-ratings affairs which were mounted out of a sense of public duty rather than out of any explicit commercial interest, Gould complicated the commerce-culture nexus as it was typically understood in terms of the divide between profit-oriented U.S. entertainment programming and the supposedly more wholesome forms of Canadian television. Gould was both Canadian *and* popular, proving that one did not always have to compromise on standards to deliver profitable Canadian television. Kevin Bazzana has noted that Gould's first CBC 'talk-and-play' special, *The Subject is Beethoven* (1961), 'attracted a great deal of attention' and was seen by more than one million people.²⁷ John P. L. Roberts, Gould's CBC colleague and Head of Music for the English radio networks, has further suggested that the show was responsible for introducing new audiences to classical music.²⁸ Not only a commercial sensation for the CBC, Gould served the various ends of Masseyite culturalists of the Fifties and the new nationalists of the Sixties and Seventies by providing at once an exemplar of high cultural aspiration and accessible Canadianism. By watching Gould on television, Canadians were being given a lesson in national identity which saw the issues of nation and taste conflated: namely, the notion that indigenous forms of cultural expression were more edifying than the products of the American mass-entertainment industries, and more relevant by more adequately reflecting the Canadian experience and

²⁶ "The CBC has always been uneasy about proclaiming anyone as a 'star' . . . because then they couldn't control them". See Knowlton Nash, *The Microphone Wars*, 258-259.

²⁷ Kevin Bazzana, *Wondrous Strange*, 225.

²⁸ As quoted in Helen Mesaros, *Bravo Fortissimo*, 368.

sensibility. Gould thus affirmed the identity trope of Canada's moral superiority to an American 'Other'. Even lacking the availability of detailed ratings statistics for Gould's television broadcasts, a measure of his popularity and commercial usefulness to the CBC network can be gleaned from television listings' information and financial records. On weekdays, Gould always appeared in primetime television slots (usually at 9:30 p.m.), and at competitive hours on weekends (usually Sunday, 3:00 p.m.). We also know that one of Gould's earliest television shows (the one-hour programme *Anatomy of the Fugue*, 1963) cost \$30,000 to produce, contrasting sharply with the more general tendency of the CBC around this time to resort to musical programming as a way to fill Canadian content quotas on the cheap (a tactic roundly criticised by the Canadian parliament).²⁹ Gould was also making considerably more money from television than from concerts: Mesaros reports that Gould received a \$20,000 stand-alone fee for the 1979 film *Glenn Gould's Toronto* and he also received a fee for re-broadcasts of his television work (as a comparison, he was making \$3,500 per concert at the height of his performance career).³⁰

Gould's creative engagement with the electronic media was thus conditional on his ability to meet the financial and cultural needs of the CBC. Gould could presumably generate the advertising revenue to help fund Canadian programming across all television genres (and thus help the CBC carry out its public-service mandate). He also provided a powerful symbol of national identity in an age where domestic cultural expression was seen to provide an answer to the crisis of national sovereignty brought about by federal policies of American integrationism and Masseyite cultural policies of internationalism. His status as a serious performer, and one with broad appeal, gave him further credibility with the CBC, an institution which saw in inclusive, entertaining, but challenging programming the blueprint for an elevated common culture. In this context, it is therefore not surprising to hear that

²⁹ Otto Friedrich, *Glenn Gould: A Life and Variations*, 209.

³⁰ Helen Mesaros, *Bravo Fortissimo*, 377; Otto Friedrich, *Glenn Gould: A Life and Variations*, 97.

Gould was given ‘carte blanche’ at the CBC.³¹ Nevertheless, these conditions also imposed constraints on Gould’s creative freedom. The economics of television, especially of Canadian television, involved logistical, organisational, and technical compromises that restricted Gould’s interaction with the media. Unlike in radio, Gould ‘did not operate the equipment, did not handle the tapes, and never directed his own programming’.³² The intrusive editing techniques and iterative approach to studio recording which formed the core of his media philosophy were mostly unavailable to him. Even the ability to pre-record his shows was limited, at least in his early career. As late as 1961, writes Paul Rutherford, ‘nearly 95 per cent of the made-in-Canada programming on the English network service was live’.³³ The CBC was not always a willing partner to Gould’s creative projects, either. Bazzana cites a change in the CBC’s organisational culture of 1975 as contributing to the pianist’s impression that the corporation ‘was increasingly less enthusiastic about making and promoting the kinds of musical programs that interested him, on the assumption that they were too highbrow for most viewers’.³⁴ In his last Bach projects with Bruno Monsaingeon, the CBC ‘grew annoyed at his lavish use of studio time’.³⁵ Bazzana also notes that poorly maintained studio equipment at the CBC was a factor preventing Gould from completing his projected seven-part television series *Music in Our Time* (1974-1977).³⁶ Such has led Gould’s official biographer Otto Friedrich to conclude that:

While Gould was the absolute master of sound . . . one senses that visual technology always remained slightly beyond his reach, a toy to be played with, puzzled over, explored.³⁷

The idea of Gould as master of his own creative destiny in the television studio also neglects the issue of how the demands of Canadian nationalism impinged on his work. In the context

³¹ Otto Friedrich, *Glenn Gould: A Life and Variations*, 208.

³² Peter Ostwald, *Ecstasy and Tragedy of Genius*, 221.

³³ Paul Rutherford, *When Television Was Young: Primetime Canada, 1952-1967* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1990), 96.

³⁴ Kevin Bazzana, *Wondrous Strange*, 451.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 450.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 451.

³⁷ Otto Friedrich, *Glenn Gould: A Life and Variations*, 230.

of the Canadian Centennial celebrations of 1967 and the turn to ‘national myths, symbols, figures, events, references, and other signifiers’ as the cultural materials of a new Canadianism, Gould’s interaction with ‘Northern’ and technological imagery in his media representations demonstrates how Gould’s celebrity was appropriated for nationalist causes.³⁸ As theorist Samita Nandy argues, famous Canadians play a crucial role in the country’s hegemonic discourse of ‘technological nationalism’ in that ‘the politics of the Canadian state and . . . its ideological beliefs are reproduced in the performance and representation of celebrities [through the media]’.³⁹ ‘[T]he settlement of the north’ had been cited by Canadian critics as an example of ‘folk experience’ which Canadian television had a duty to represent, and the decision by Telesat Canada, in 1973, to launch the ANIK satellite had been taken on the basis that the North, as ‘the heart of Canada’, deserved its own television service which would help integrate it with the rest of Canadian society.⁴⁰ The CBC was heavily involved in Northern-themed programming for television, with such shows as *Sergeant Preston of the Yukon* (1955-1958), *The True North* (1967), *One Northern Summer* (1972), and *Al Oeming – Man of the North* (1980).⁴¹ The film version of Gould’s *Idea of North* (1970) can be situated within this tradition. The example of the *Idea of North* franchise allows us to challenge the popular idea that Gould held creative authority in the recording studio, for two reasons. First, because the impetus for the original project (1967) came less from Gould, but more from a Centennial commission by the Public Affairs unit of the CBC, forming part of the nationalist zeitgeist of the late Sixties.⁴² Before 1967, while Gould made use of nature symbolism in his media representations (most notably in the NFB film *Off the Record*, 1959), he did not cultivate a self-consciously northern iconography, nor develop the artistic or philosophical

³⁸ Ryan Edwardson, *Canadian Content*, 138.

³⁹ Samita Nandy, *Fame in Hollywood North*, 21.

⁴⁰ Leonard B. Kuffert, *A Great Duty*, 196; Daniel Baum, “Broadcasting Regulation in Canada: The Power of Decision” in *Osgoode Hall Law Journal*, Vol. 13, No. 3 (Dec., 1975), 725-726.

⁴¹ See Blaine Allan’s reference list “CBC Television Series, 1952-1982” at

<http://www.queensu.ca/filmandmedia/sites/webpublish.queensu.ca.fmwww/files/files/CBC%20Television%20LinkedListings.pdf> (accessed Feb. 1, 2018).

⁴² Friedemann Sallis, “Glenn Gould’s ‘Idea of North’”, 117.

underpinnings of this rhetoric in any systematic way. Gould's assertion of authority is also undermined because, while Gould 'abetted the misconception that the [television adaptation of *North*] was a joint effort or even his own show', interviews with the producer and director, Judith Pearlman, have clarified how limited his involvement was with its shooting or even post-production, revealing the tension between Gould's mythic self-representation and the on-the-ground realities of his studio work.⁴³

Leonard B. Kuffert's study of the relationship between the Canadian mass cultural critique, mass communications, and the new nationalism also suggests the CBC's influence on Gould's interaction with technological themes in his television programmes.⁴⁴ The domination of the Canadian airwaves by American commercial programming had sharpened the cultural critique of technology (and particularly television) as a socially destructive force. Nevertheless, the view from critics was that Canadian broadcasting, as an expression of the cultural marketplace, was 'corrupted but redeemable', and that the ubiquity, accessibility, and allure of television made it uniquely placed to instil a sense of national belonging, given the correct approach to issues of media content and regulation.⁴⁵ As we shall see, the personality profile *Variations on Glenn Gould* (1969) represented Gould's first real foray into the subject of technology on television, and, in this, shared with other CBC programmes in the *Telescope* series – such as *Footnotes on the Future* (1969) – the preoccupation with technological themes.⁴⁶ As a 'carefully packaged portrait of the artist', the show courted the middlebrow aesthetic – 'the compulsion to provide an authoritative but simple primer on a given subject' – which the CBC increasingly adopted as a competitive strategy.⁴⁷ It exemplified the CBC's stance that media technologies served important social ends by providing access to uplifting

⁴³ Kevin Bazzana, *Wondrous Strange*, 297.

⁴⁴ See Kuffert's chapter "Mass Media, Broadcasting, and Automation" in *A Great Duty: Canadian Responses to Modern Life and Mass Culture*.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 202.

⁴⁶ The CBC show *Footnotes on the Future: The Quality of People* explored "the inhumane effects of technology along with its blessings" (Anon., "Television Highlights" in *The Ottawa Journal* (Jan. 30, 1969)).

⁴⁷ Leonard B. Kuffert, *A Great Duty*, 197.

and engaging content that combated the alleged moral degradations and cultural usurpations of American entertainment programming.

Audio-Visual Representations in *Variations on Glenn Gould*

The subsequent analysis of the television show *Variations on Glenn Gould* (1969) aims to foreground some of the concerns of this chapter, and the wider thesis. As the show's title implies, *Variations* elaborated the premise of Gould as a multifaceted and complex personality, with a range of professional interests and opinions. Following Gould into the concert hall, the recording studio, and the Canadian wilderness, the show suggested that a well-rounded understanding of Gould and his art must take into account Gould's relationship with music, technology, and nature. In this, it formed a televisual counterpart to Gould's *Concert Dropout* interview, a bonus LP for Columbia Masterworks released the previous year and arguably the most important of Gould's 'position papers'. *Variations* provides privileged insight into how the categories of culture, media, and identity were specially implicated in the construction of Gould's fame and reputation. The show reflected and contributed to the Canadian discourse of new nationalism. Articulating the message of inclusivity and national unity which the Broadcasting Act of 1968 had established as a cultural mandate, television by this time 'was more than just a vehicle of information or social realism. It was also a full-fledged apparatus of desire designed to invoke new forms of attachment to the nation in all its represented forms', partly by trading on the power and influence of celebrity personalities.⁴⁸ By presenting Gould as a man who 'considers laughter as important as breathing', but also one with 'very serious views on his function as an artist', the show pitched Gould's cultural appeal in terms of his middlebrow credentials, demonstrating Gould's role in the construction of nation as mobilised by the CBC through its 'infotainment' programming policy. He offered something for the musical connoisseur as well as for the layperson interested in accessible and

⁴⁸ David Hogarth, "Reenacting Canada" in Zoë Druick et al. (eds.), *Programming Reality: Perspectives on English-Canadian Television* (Waterloo: Wilfred Laurier University Press, 2008).

engaging Canadiana. As in earlier periods of his career, Gould's visual representations thus performed a crucial ideological function, as his status as a musician, technologist, and Northerner was mediated through aesthetic and cultural discourses to situate his identity as artistic genius and national icon. A structural breakdown of the film is presented in **Table D**. By focusing on the ways Gould's performing body generates meaning via the audio-visual codes of television, but also on the institutional constraints as described above, I am employing a critical approach to visual materials which fulfils the methodological requirements of theorist Gillian Rose: that images be taken seriously in themselves, and that 'the social conditions and effects of visual objects' are given due consideration.⁴⁹ It therefore dovetails nicely with my concern to present Gould as both subject and object of his celebrity identity, and to problematise the debate around authorial intent and agency which has framed his cultural reception.

i) Pre-Introduction: 'Glenn Gould on Recording Technology'



The pre-introduction to the film consists of two shots: the first shows Gould in performance at the piano, playing and repeating a fragment of the primary theme from the fifth movement of Beethoven's 'Pastoral' Symphony. In the second shot, which lasts over a minute longer,

⁴⁹ Gillian Rose, *Visual Methodologies: An Introduction to the Interpretation of Visual Materials* (London: SAGE Publications, 2001), 15.

Gould addresses the camera directly in an extended monologue about the deeper social importance of recording technology.

This first sequence quickly establishes the theme of Gould as a multifaceted creative figure: he is at once virtuoso pianist, recording artist, and thinker. It encourages us to relate to Gould as a performing musician, and one of exceptional ability, in two ways: by replicating the angle of vision of a concert audience, and by setting the scene in Massey Hall, Toronto's most prestigious musical venue. The presence of the row of seats clarifies this performance context. The wood panelling subtly associates Gould with notions of musical tradition and history, while its arch-shaped indentations, resembling the stained-glass windows of a church, suggest the spiritual power of his art. At the same time, the sequence works to build an understanding of his musical difference: the microphone stand, cables, and loud speaker are prominent visual elements which jar with traditional concert iconography; he is performing a piece of symphonic music on the piano, embellishing the melody in idiosyncratic ways, and his playing is discontinuous; for a concert musician, he is casually dressed; and his more subjective mode of address to the camera in the monologue sequence breaks with the objective, and more traditional, rhetoric of musical delineation of the former shot. The defining themes of Gould's life: isolation and communication, creativity and morality, are first introduced in the sequence. The long camera shot emphasises Gould's aloneness on the concert stage, while the presence of the recording technology symbolises his need to communicate. In the monologue, Gould comments on the relationship between the production and reception of recorded music (communication), draws a distinction between the 'autocratic' and 'democratic' uses to which it is put (morality), and suggests its role in cultivating 'the musicality of man' (creativity).

ii) Opening Credits and Introduction: ‘The Musicality of Man’



Following the show’s opening credits, we are taken to a television studio, where presenter Fletcher Markle gives a synopsis of Gould’s personal and professional biography, outlines the premise and format of the programme, and familiarises the audience with some of Gould’s recent recordings. Markle’s description of the show’s format is illustrated on-screen, as the film cuts to shots of Gould rehearsing for a recording session, preparing a radio documentary, and contemplating Canada’s northern landscape. The sequence comes to a close with a shot of Gould performing at the piano, accompanied by a voiceover in which Gould gives a summation of his musical philosophy. Markle briefly reminds the audience of details of the programme, and the show cuts to adverts.

Of all the sequences of the film, Gould appears the least in this one, reminding us of how the direct visual presence of the celebrity shapes audience perception, but does not wholly determine it. The *Telescope* series, aired weekly, represented a specific context of production through which audiences could reckon with Gould’s celebrity status. In its ten years on the air (1963-1973), the show sought to familiarise Canadian audiences with the accomplishments of a national figure, international celebrity, or a notable, unknown, citizen. Markle hosted the show for its first six years, and served alternately as its producer and executive producer from

1966-1973.⁵⁰ The show belonged to the genre of personality profile or ‘people portrait’, which had developed a set of particular narrative concerns in common with popular journalism; the idea was not to ‘debunk’ but to convey an ‘admiration for the talents of the people interviewed’ and bring them ‘nearer and clearer’.⁵¹ One crucial innovation in this regard was to ‘get the subject to talk directly through the lens to the viewer’.⁵² In the same year the show was aired, newspaper critics reported that the *Telescope* series had achieved its highest-ever ratings, with ‘virtually no opposition’ from private competitors.⁵³ The success of the series secured for Gould a large and well-disposed viewing public and a primetime slot in the CBC television schedule (8 pm). Critics were drawn to the series’ ‘striking presentation’, ‘light visual approach’ and ‘crisp’ and ‘meaningful’ editing, beyond the intrinsic interest of the subject being profiled.⁵⁴ The task of illuminating and eliciting interest in Gould’s art and personality, then, was well-served by the technical, aesthetic, and generic conventions of the programme.

Turning to the images themselves, Markle’s business suit, armchair, and vocal cadence serve to communicate a ‘professional code’ which adds weight to his utterances, an effect accentuated by the flattering lighting and camera positioning. We are led to trust his assessments of Gould’s artistic worth, and take an interest in the recordings he promotes on Gould’s behalf. The fast cutting between shots of Gould in his various work settings defines the narrative of the film as non-linear and non-teleological, supporting the idea that what the film presents is a set of variations on the artist, and not a traditional chronological account. This narrative effect, achieved through montage, we might call, after film theorist Christian Metz, a ‘bracket syntagma’, for we are presented with ‘a series of very brief scenes

⁵⁰ John Corcelli, “Telescope”. Article written Apr., 2002. See <http://www.broadcasting-history.ca/programming/television/telescope> (accessed Apr. 14, 2018).

⁵¹ Fletcher Markle in Anon., “Markle Returning to U.S. After ‘Telescope’ Ends” in *Ottawa Journal* (May 17, 1969); Fletcher Markle in Ira Skutch (ed.), *Five Directors: The Golden Years of Radio* (Maryland: Scarecrow Press, 1998), 129.

⁵² Fletcher Markle in Ira Skutch (ed.), *Five Directors*, 130.

⁵³ Sandy Gardiner, “Canada Loser Again” in *Ottawa Journal* (May 23, 1969); Sandy Gardiner, “Shuttering Telescope” in *Ottawa Journal* (Feb. 28, 1969).

⁵⁴ Sandy Gardiner, “Shuttering Telescope”.

representing occurrences that the film gives as typical examples of a . . . reality, without in any way chronologically locating them in relation to each other'.⁵⁵ The final moments of the scene, where Gould asserts the importance of musical and social 'difference', is his credo of artistic individuality, for the first time choreographed to his performance of the 'Pastoral' Symphony. Through the combination of Gould's philosophising and the meditative horn-call motif which opens the fifth movement (bb. 4-9), the effect is to identify him as a subject of wonder and awe.

iii) Advertisements

Variations is interrupted by two advertisement breaks, each lasting three minutes. The presence of advertisements reminds us of the economic constraints on Gould's cultural production, manifested as a middlebrow aesthetic of 'infotainment' which the CBC adopted to draw audiences away from the commercially oriented programming of the private networks and so generate increased advertising revenue. For theorist P. David Marshall, the necessity of selling audiences to advertisers associates the television celebrity most strongly with 'the industrial nature of entertainment'.⁵⁶ This commercial backdrop is evident in some of the print reception for the series: we are told that the ratings successes of 1969 'pleased Markle and his sponsors', and Markle introduces his later discussions of the series by referencing the sponsorship deal he secured for it with the telephone company Air Canada.⁵⁷

⁵⁵ Metz quoted in James Monaco, *How to Read a Film: Movies, Media, and Beyond* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009; 1st ed. 1977), 245.

⁵⁶ P. David Marshall, *Celebrity and Power*, 121.

⁵⁷ Sandy Gardiner, "Canada Loser Again"; Fletcher Markle in Ira Skutch (ed.), *Five Directors*, 129.

iv) Scene I: ‘The Idea of North’



The first major scene of the film consists of three sequences. The first is set in a radio studio, where Gould philosophises about his love of recording technology and the North, and discusses the ways his *Idea of North* radio documentary was devised as ‘a piece of musical strategy’. The second presents Gould in a domestic setting, where he relates the importance of recording technology to his musical ideas and practices. The third sees Gould back in the radio studio with an assistant, ‘conducting’ one of his recent music-themed broadcasts, and elaborating on the musical bases of his technological thinking.

This scene, the longest of the entire film, synthesises the major themes of music, technology, and nature. Gould’s initial monologue establishes a link between technology, communication, and the sublime: it was as a form of ‘original human contact’, a ‘spine-tingling sense of awareness of some other human voice and persona’ that radio represented something ‘quite special’.⁵⁸ The idea of technology as communication is encoded visually in the use of extreme close-up shots of Gould and the spinning tape machines. The proximity of the viewer to the on-screen action, Gould’s direct mode of address to camera, and the more active involvement of the camera in framing Gould’s gestures and poses has the effect of making us participants in the scene. The North is also established discursively as a primary topic (as something of ‘very special’ meaning to Gould), useful as a metaphor for self-discovery and individuality. As Gould listens to a character from his *Idea of North* documentary provide a bitter-sweet

⁵⁸ Perry Rosemond (dir.), *Variations on Glenn Gould in the Telescope* series for CBC Television (May 8, 1969).

evocation of northern landscape (. . . ‘last shimmer in the sky’), the camera captures him in doleful reverie – his head bowed, his eyes seemingly closed:



One of the most striking aspects of the film is the camera’s obsession with Gould’s hands. This scene provides many examples of the camera encoding a rhetoric of hand and finger gesture: interlocking, gesticulating, and resting on Gould’s forehead. This latter visual motif accounts for over five minutes of Gould’s on-screen time. The film followed in a tradition of visualising Gould’s genius via his hands. It fed the interest in Gould’s hands as the stock-in-trade of his craft, acknowledging their function as ‘key integers of social meaning’ and ‘signifiers of difference and distinction’.⁵⁹ Hands and fingers also contributed to a ‘typology of theatrical gesture’ which could evoke the ‘artistic agonies’ and ‘tense absorption’ of musicians in their work.⁶⁰ Resting his fingers on his forehead, the basic effect here was to encode an understanding of Gould’s ‘mind-centered persona’.⁶¹ More subtly, in the second sequence of this scene, this rhetoric contributed to what Carr has termed ‘the idealization of a technological sublime’.⁶² As Gould discusses the ‘idealistic ramifications’ of technology for music, the camera provides a visual correlative of ‘idealism’ in the way his fingers gesture to his forehead, aided by bold lighting effects. The representation of Gould’s fingers alone was enough to connote this meaning, as notions of the ‘sublime’ were linked to the role of fingers as physical mediators of musical expression in performance.

⁵⁹ Graham Clarke, *The Portrait in Photography* (London: Reaktion, 1992), 76.

⁶⁰ Graham Carr, “Visualizing ‘The Sound of Genius’”, 25.

⁶¹ Paul Sanden, “Hearing Glenn Gould’s Body”, 27.

⁶² Graham Carr, “Visualizing ‘The Sound of Genius’”, 17.

v) Interlude

The action returns to Markle in the studio, who hypes the forthcoming segment with promises of ‘memorable moments in Toronto’s Massey Hall, and a trip to the northern shores of Lake Superior with Canada’s master musician’. Here Gould’s work and achievements are made meaningful to domestic audiences by locating them within discourses of Canadian national identity. It coincides with the demands of the new nationalism by invoking ideas of place, geography, and celebrity to appeal to a sense of the ‘authentically’ Canadian. *Telescope* had an explicitly nationalist agenda. It sought to ‘examine, reflect, and project the Canadian image’.⁶³ The executive producer of *Telescope*, Thom Benson, was a ‘proud, soul-deep Canadian nationalist’, and the photographer for *Variations*, Robert Hutt, had collaborated with Gould previously on the film version of *Idea of North*, a project rooted in a Centennial commission for CBC Radio.⁶⁴ The preoccupation of *Variations* with themes of technology and landscape, particularly, reflected the ideological charge of the mass media, broadcasting, and automation on the one hand, and of North/South, East/West physical and political geographies on the other.

vi) Scene II: ‘I was Running Scared’



⁶³ Jill Tomasson Goodwin, “Fletcher Markle (1921-1991)”. See: <https://www.broadcasting-history.ca/personalities/markle-fletcher> (accessed Feb. 20, 2018).

⁶⁴ Knowlton Nash, *Prime Time at Ten: Behind-the-Camera Battles of Canadian TV Journalism* (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1987), 133.

In the second scene, Gould is shown discussing and performing excerpts from Beethoven's 'Pastoral' Symphony, first with a fellow musician, second with a studio assistant whom Gould addresses via a loud speaker. In a voiceover, Gould argues for the moral, creative, and musical shortcomings of the concert artist versus the studio artist. The scene closes with Gould giving philosophical justification to his musical humming.

The power relationship of dominant/dominated, master/slave that Gould establishes for the studio artist/concert artist in his voiceover is replicated in the ordering of the frame and relationship of Gould to his respective interlocutors. In the first sequence, the piano dominates the frame, and Gould's low-seated profile contrasts with that of his collaborator, who leans into the frame confidently. The prominence of the instrument, and formal attire of the collaborator, clarifies the setting: that of a concert performance. In the later sequence, Gould is the dominant partner, the piano replaced by the rows of empty concert seats which add an ironical element to the foreground action. The piano is still visible, but now fights with the speaker for our visual attention. The effect is literally to decentre the role of performance relative to the recording process. Gould's view that the recording process eliminates 'pressure' on the performer and extends the range of creative possibilities is reflected in the visual unfolding of the sequence, as Gould is shown in a relaxed pose, score in hand, and performing a range of musical excerpts to the microphone-speaker relay system. The theme of idealism is re-introduced in the final sequence, as Gould describes his humming as an 'attempt to cut through some area of imaginative resistance'. Gould's credentials as a genius apart are alluded to through a clever visual pun. As Gould describes the recording process as 'something quite special and particular and in no sense a reproduction of any other act', the camera pans up to a close-up shot of Gould performing a musical passage of high pathos, linking music, text, and image in a shared nexus of meaning.

vii) Performance



The centrepiece of the film is an uninterrupted performance by Gould of the exposition of the first movement of Beethoven's 'Pastoral' Symphony. Drawing attention to his trance-like facial expressions, swaying torso and chattering teeth, the sequence constructs Gould as a subject of fascination and desire by defining his genius in terms of his heightened sensitivity to the affective power of music. The experimental cinematographic approach elicits interest in the scene, but also invites us to identify with Gould on an intimate level. In an example of 'shaky cam' cinematography, the camera encircles the piano, picturing Gould in extreme close-ups, and from high and low angles.⁶⁵ We are made to feel that we are not passive observers but active participants in the unfolding drama. This contrasts sharply with traditional approaches to the filming of serious musical performances, which make use of static cameras and fixed points of view to emulate the relationship of artist to audience in the concert hall. The visual aesthetics of the sequence in fact register the influence of Gould himself, who spoke of the need to defy 'rigid and predictable' approaches to musical television beholden to 'the visual constants of the concert hall'.⁶⁶ He went on to praise those experiences 'where the cameraman was given a certain lee-way and permitted to choreograph a particular segment of music accordingly'.⁶⁷

⁶⁵ "Shaky cam" describes the use of hand-held camera movements. It contributes a "cinéma-vérité" appearance to the documentary.

⁶⁶ Glenn Gould letter to Helen Whitney, Sep. 3, 1971; Glenn Gould, "Oh, for heaven's sake, Cynthia".

⁶⁷ Glenn Gould letter to Helen Whitney, Sep. 3, 1971.

The scene is significant because it marks the point when the film's relationship between sound and image is reworked. Prior to this point, there was a causal link between the sight and sound of Gould's performances. From now on, what is heard does not necessarily correspond to what is seen. It captures the distinction, made by sound theorist Michel Chion, between 'visualized sound' and 'acousmatic sound'.⁶⁸ The distinction can also be reframed in terms of the relationship between 'screen music' and 'pit music': whether the sound operates in the 'space and time of the action' ('diegetic'), or operates outside it ('non-diegetic').⁶⁹ This compels us to consider the function of Beethoven's music in the film. In the first half, it served mostly pragmatic purposes: we hear short musical excerpts, which illustrate some aspect of Gould's craft (e.g. his recording technique). In the second half, we hear extended sections which envelop the scene as environmental sound, creating a musical ambience. The film now draws on the 'rich fund of cultural meanings inherent in the idea of the pastoral' to encode Gould's identity as a creative and moral artist.⁷⁰ Recognising 'music's unique capacity to control the perception of time', the film establishes a frame of reference by exploiting common temporal strategies associated with musical pastoralism.⁷¹ It also exploits the various musical clichés of pastoralism: horn calls, simple tunes, and repeated rhythms. Through the invocation of pastoral rhetoric, nature is encoded as a source of creative inspiration and moral redemption, an interpretation which coheres with Beethoven's programme for the symphony, and the philosophical premises underpinning Gould's identity as a 'Northern' artist.⁷² Beyond this, the film's music generates its effects by harnessing a network of cultural allusions

⁶⁸ Michel Chion, *Audio-Vision: Sound on Screen* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), 71-72.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 80.

⁷⁰ Richard Will, "Time, Morality, and Humanity in Beethoven's 'Pastoral' Symphony" in *Journal of the American Musicological Society*, Vol. 50, No. 2/3 (Sum., 1997), 277.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 319.

⁷² In Beethoven's sketches for the fifth movement, he prefaces the music with the title "thanks to God after the storm" ("Dank an die Gottheit . . . nach dem Sturm"). Reading the storm as an allegory for the wrath visited upon sinners by God, Will suggests that the inhabitants of Beethoven's idyll thus resolve to "transform their natural paradise into a moral one" ("Time, Morality, and Humanity", 326).

associated with the symphony's prior usages in popular culture: here one thinks particularly of its use in the film *Fantasia* (1940) to represent 'an explicitly unrealistic Arcadia'.⁷³

Again, this approach to musical television would appear supported in Gould's thinking: he questioned the 'morality and desirability of watching [performers] while you listen', and praised the use of music as environmental sound.⁷⁴ This technique is first effectively applied towards the end of Gould's performance. As Gould reaches the climax of the exposition (bb. 93), the scene unexpectedly changes to a shot of the pianist walking along the shores of Lake Superior, his figure distant and obscure. In contrast to the warmth and familiarity of the previous shots, Gould, as Northerner, is visualised as cold and remote.

viii) Scene III: 'Glenn Gould on Wawa'



The scene is presented as an extended commentary on the virtues of isolation. The sequences alternate between static shots and more active 'set-piece' shots, on-screen narration and voiceover, as Gould is shown in a variety of naturalistic settings: by the beach, by a waterfall in the forest, and by a lakeside pier. The narration and visuals are choreographed with the music. Unlike in previous scenes, most of the music is lifted from the fifth movement of Beethoven's 'Pastoral' Symphony, rather than the first. The scene ends by restoring the causal link between music and image, as we are taken back to the concert hall, and shown Gould performing the coda to the movement. The film ends on a close-up shot of Gould's empty

⁷³ Ibid., 328.

⁷⁴ Glenn Gould, "Oh, for heaven's sake, Cynthia" (Apr., 1969).

performing chair. The end credits juxtapose shots of Gould from all three scenes of the film, accompanied to music transcribed from the second movement of the symphony.

The themes of creativity and morality are dramatised through the audiovisual conceit of Gould's northern isolation. Part of the effect of the scene is a product of the camera technologies and aesthetic codes of the time: the development of the wide-angle lens made possible the on-location shooting style which Canadian documentaries of the late Sixties increasingly adopted in pursuit of an aesthetic of social realism.⁷⁵ This served the nationalist ends of representing Canada more faithfully to Canadians. The camera defines our sense of Gould's isolation and intimacy with nature by framing his figure against a vast backdrop of pastoral imagery.

For musicologist David Wyn Jones, the 'Pastoral' Symphony is a model of 'tranquillity and freedom', a description which maps well onto Gould's own personal and artistic philosophy: music was a 'tranquilising experience', and isolation a prerequisite of creative freedom.⁷⁶

Wyn Jones has suggested that the outer movements of the symphony best represent the stability and tranquillity of the pastoral idyll in the shared use of simple harmonic language, slow harmonic rhythms, insistent lyricism, and leisurely crescendi.⁷⁷ For musicologist Richard Will, Beethoven manipulates such musical criteria to create a sense of 'idyllic time', as opposed to 'historical time', underscoring the impression of a 'retreat from the outside world'.⁷⁸ One effect of the music, therefore, is to clarify the distinction Gould makes in his narration between the 'emotional escalation' of 'city living and city thinking', and cool northern detachment.

⁷⁵ David Hogarth, *Documentary Television in Canada: From National Public Service to Global Marketplace* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2002).

⁷⁶ David Wyn Jones, *Beethoven: Pastoral Symphony* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 80; Ulla Colgrass, "Glenn Gould" (1981).

⁷⁷ David Wyn Jones, *Pastoral Symphony*, 77.

⁷⁸ Richard Will, "Time, Morality, and Humanity", 319, 317.

It has been suggested that the symphony's last movement, which contributes most of the soundtrack material in the scene, borrows stylistically from a tradition of religious pastoral music in its hymnal treatment of melodies and use of arpeggiated horn calls.⁷⁹ It has also been interpreted as an allegory of 'moral redemption', an attempt to 'regain . . . pastoral innocence' following the wrath of the storm of the preceding movement.⁸⁰ The religious and moral overtones of this hymnal treatment are exploited in a sequence towards the end of the film, in which Gould synthesises some of the dialectical tensions in his thinking. The music (bb. 245-254) complements the image of Gould walking alone along the pier, providing an audiovisual commentary on Gould's voiceover narrative: that to surround oneself with music is to construct a personal space of isolation, which allows for the fulfilment of one's individual creative potential, and thus the fulfilment of one's value as a human being.

The rhetoric of Gould as a creative genius is more explicitly encoded in an earlier sequence, which shows Gould walking towards a forest waterfall, humming and conducting the principal theme of the symphony's last movement. The forest and waterfall (and pastoral imagery more generally) associate Gould with the Romantic cult of nature, and the interest in rugged landscape and torrents as allegory for the wild and untamed nature of creative genius. This effect is heightened by the sudden entry of tremolo chords in the soundtrack (bb. 219-226) which focus attention on the rippling waters and make them appear more tempestuous than the image alone implies. The notion of Gould as a man apart is encoded visually: he walks away from the camera, his back turned. Bundled up in winter clothing, Gould's appearance is also a visual signifier of difference and detachment, contrasting with the informality and approachability suggested by his former studio attire. Resonant with nineteenth-century motifs of the reclusive artist, his 'northern' attire also serves to define him

⁷⁹ Ibid., 323.

⁸⁰ Ibid., 326. The work was received similarly by nineteenth-century critics. In a conversation with author Heinrich von Stein c. 1880, Wagner suggested that the symphony could help "regenerate" humankind (quoted in Wyn Jones, *Pastoral Symphony*, 85).

as a Canadian.⁸¹ His repetitive humming and gesticulating suggest a man totally absorbed in his imagination, while also hinting at the irrationality of the creative mind, and the madness of the genius who inhabits it.

Conclusion

Following his concert retirement in 1964, Gould developed new approaches to artistic representation and promotion through the electronic media. He recognised the significance of television's cultural ubiquity and accessibility, and preoccupied himself with the challenge of making his media identity meaningful to television audiences through new forms of audiovisual presentation.⁸² His large body of television works of this period – ‘talk-and-play’ specials, personality profiles, taped concerts, and documentaries – provided a vehicle for the idiosyncratic theories and practices through which he came to define himself as a performer, thinker, and public personality. Gould's new terms of engagement with the electronic media clearly had important consequences for his cultural production as an artist. Nevertheless, the view that Gould personally monopolised the meanings of his identity through his media work – one abetted by his conception of technology as a form of creative empowerment – is untenable. Leaving aside the fact that Gould's creative involvement in his television works has been overstated, institutional and socio-cultural (rather than purely technological) factors provided the conditions of possibility for Gould's creativity, and gave new meaning to Gould's media messages by defining them in relation to a network of broader political and artistic concerns: for example, the role of serious music programming in nationalist discourses of public broadcasting of the Sixties and Seventies.

The CBC personality profile *Variations on Glenn Gould* (1969) provides a case-study for thinking about Gould's celebrity as the product of meanings encoded by the pianist himself in

⁸¹ In the words of scholar Timothy Maloney, “his physical appearance was a constant reminder of the north, which is cold, which is Canada” (quoted in Rhona Bergman, *The Idea of Gould*, 101).

⁸² “television has *the* audience today”, Gould commented. “We should . . . attempt to get at that audience [while] the medium has it in its lure already” (*Glenn Gould: Concert Dropout*).

his self-representations, and those wider social and institutional contexts of meaning. My analysis has attended to the former by addressing the semiotic significance of Gould's audiovisual representations in the film, and the latter by addressing the programme's production contexts. Gould's physical appearance, gestures, spoken commentary, and musical performance mediated the pianist's self-identity as a creative and moral artist. Drawing on visual rhetorics and iconographies of North and technology, his representations appealed to ideas of isolation and community that have underwritten the insider/outsider status of the artistic genius, providing a useful template for his musical self-promotion. But these same rhetorics and iconographies also answered the call of the new nationalism, and contributed to Gould's appeal as a Canadian subject capable of addressing domestic concerns in an elevated but engaging manner. His ideological usefulness was most apparent for the CBC. The institution's committed relationship to Gould and his work relied, at least in part, on recognition of his ability to meet the financial and cultural needs of Canadian public broadcasting at a time when television, particularly, became the focus of debates around the links between commerce and culture, between technology, taste, and identity. Gould's celebrity image was assimilated to the stylistic and aesthetic codes of public television – for example, the direct-to-camera address increasingly adopted for the shooting of personality profiles – which not only instilled desire in Gould as a musical thinker and artistic personality, but in Canada as distinct from the United States, for it asserted the claims to moral superiority of middlebrow cultural programming over the lowbrow fare of the American commercial networks. In this way, the nation authenticated Gould's celebrity, but Gould's celebrity also authenticated the nation.

Table D										
Film structure in chronological time										
Section	Pre-Introduction: 'Glenn Gould on Recording Technology' [1 min. 21 seconds]	Opening Credits + Introduction: 'The Musicality of Man' [2 mins. 10 seconds]	Ad Break [3 mins.]	Scene I: 'The Idea of North' [7 mins. 43 seconds]	Interlude [15 seconds]	Ad Break [3 mins.]	Scene II: 'I was Running Scared' [4 mins. 40 seconds]	Performance [3 mins. 3 seconds]	Scene III: 'Glenn Gould on Wawa' [4 mins. 9 seconds]	End Credits [48 seconds]
Themes	Recording process as 'autocratic' vs. 'democratic'; 'Pseudo-creative' involvement of audience via technology as generating musically enlightened culture	Gould biography and identity: Gould as eccentric musician of 'sheer genius' + Gould as 'concert dropout' and media artist and media personality (Gould as recording artist, radio artist, 'Northern' artist); Promotion of recent albums; Importance of musical difference and individuality		Technology as 'human contact' and human awareness; Radio as music and philosophy; Personal, philosophical, artistic significance of 'North' and <i>Idea of North</i> radio documentary; Technology as idealism	Gould's Canadian identity		Creative and moral status of concert artist vs. recording artist; Humming as idealism	Gould as pianist	'North' as creative isolation and emancipation, cities as creative conformism and limitation; Competition vs. non-competition; Musical recordings as 'environmental' isolation and 'shelter'	Gould's artistic identities
Mise-en-scène	Concert Hall	Television Studio; Concert Hall; Radio Studio; Northern Ontario		Radio Studio; Domestic Setting	Television Studio		Concert Hall; Domestic Setting	Concert Hall; Northern Ontario	Northern Ontario; Concert Hall	Concert Hall; Northern Ontario
Music (piano performances except when otherwise stated)**	Beethoven's 'Pastoral' Symphony: V: bb. 10-12	<i>Telescope</i> theme tune (brass arrangement + percussion); PS: I: bb. 1-2; PS: V: bb. 4-9		Romantic violin music (Richard Strauss?); Ricercar a 6 from Bach's 'Musical Offering'			PS: I: bb. 5-11; Gould improv.?; PS: I: bb. 46(?), 53, 67-69	PS: I: bb. 1-138 (Exposition)	PS: I: bb. 138-150; PS: V: bb. 10-12 (hummed, + improv.), 219-244, 245-264 (Coda)	PS: II: bb. 10-15

* Quoted title headings as given in DVD set *Glenn Gould on Television* (2011)

** 'PS' = 'Pastoral' Symphony; roman numerals refer to movement numbers

CONCLUSION

In the introduction to this thesis, I quoted the words of theorist Arthur Kroker to suggest that Gould's celebrity career, like the Canadian identity that Kroker was trying to define, was a story of the conflict between ideas of technology and culture, economy and landscape. For all the caricatures that can be, and have been, made of Gould, I have tried to draw attention to some of the more dynamic, sometimes contradictory, aspects of his celebrity that provide the base context for understanding the nature of his modern cultural significance.

One source of this dynamism was the Canadian culture to which he belonged for most of his life. As one of Canada's few exceptional performing artists who lived in the country, worked in the country, and identified with the country, Gould was an important national symbol. Since his first radio broadcast for the CBC in 1950, Gould's life became intertwined with that of the nation. The same tensions between Canada's European past and its American future that had provided the crucible for Gould's early concert experiences and musical education now fuelled his early broadcasting career. His identity was co-opted to the task of defining Canada as a nation that could rival the United States in talent and opportunity, and that could surpass it in refinement and sophistication. As I have shown, these tensions were re-articulated in the mid-Sixties, when Gould's style of media presentation became more a reflection of a middlebrow, populist nationalism that recognised a role for commercial programming in the fight for Canadian cultural sovereignty.

A second source of this dynamism was his relationship to the mass media. Unlike the 'purists' of his generation, perhaps exemplified in the conductor Sergiu Celibidache, Gould recognised a role for the modern mass media in musical life, and exploited it. He was a chameleon, adapting his image to the demands of the medium. Often, as in the case of his 'contrapuntal' radio documentaries, he adapted the medium to the demands of his image.

This brings us to the third, and perhaps most important, source of his dynamism: his identity. Gould was a private star, who cloaked his image in ambiguity by presenting his life as a discourse of ideas. His musical recordings, radio documentaries, television shows, and writings all incarnated 'Glenn Gould' in ways unusual and idiosyncratic. But the actual 'Glenn Gould', of media fame, was an identity he disavowed, choosing to deconstruct and satirise it in his essays with the aid of his cast of personal alter egos. His creative and moral philosophy, underpinned by a dialectical relationship of the individual and the collective, and articulated through northern and technological rhetorics and iconographies, established a basic framework for his cultural reception as a genius and Canadian icon. For writers such as Alana Bell, he is literally iconic of nation: an 'elusive, multiple and fragmented' idea. As a spiritual and redemptive figure, as a rebel, and as a madman, Gould's identity has become a set of discursive templates on top of which writers have constructed their own varied interpretations of his life and work. Beyond this, Gould's identity has served as an organising principle for constructing other identities: that of a community, a nation, or even another life. During his career, Gould's identity was especially adaptable to the promotional needs of his employers: to compare Gould's Columbia press of the mid Fifties to his CBC press of the mid Sixties is almost to compare two different artists. And, of course, the dialectical nature of his media identity fuelled the controversies that kept him relevant. Was he, in the words of critic Josef Mossman, an 'Eccentric or Musician?'. Were his recordings sublime or ridiculous? Were his thoughts about the demise of the live concert preposterous or prescient? Did he inject life into a dying tradition? Or did he contribute to high art's modern debasement?

It has been a primary contention of my work, and that of others, that Gould's 'auto/biographical play' in the media has fundamentally influenced subsequent accounts of him, and contributed to his modern appeal. But I have also tried to broaden this analysis by situating Gould's attitudes towards his own fame within a 'Circuit of Culture' model of his celebrity. It would be wrong to accept uncritically his notion that his pre-retirement celebrity

was entirely a ‘media concoction’, and that his work in the studio was that of an autonomous artist able to dictate the meanings of his identity through scripted self-performances. To do so would be to participate in his own mythology by neglecting the role of his own ideological commitments. Pre 1964, he sought to counter the charge that he was an artistic phony. Post 1964, he sought to demonstrate the validity of his beliefs regarding the ‘limitless possibilities of the broadcasting and recording media’. The contrast between ‘active’ and ‘passive’ fame in Gould’s thinking also incarnated the ‘Longinian’ versus ‘Platonic’ biases in his attitudes towards creativity. As something beyond his power to control, he didn’t regard his ‘creative genius’ as a concert performer to be an ‘individual’ achievement, and thus he projected an image of a man unworthy of, and detached from, his celebrity. As a studio artist, however, he felt fully responsible for his celebrity, given that his recording and broadcasting achievements were expressions of his own creative will. But for all Gould’s protestations to the contrary, it remains the case that he was in fact a savvy self-promoter from the start, performing his role as Eccentric for the cameras and for the press. And the ‘control’ of his mature career, predicated on a belief in the liberating power of technology, was not control in the sense that Gould understood it, for his ability to represent himself in the way he liked was contingent on his ability to meet the cultural, financial, and promotional needs of media institutions (for instance). His media projects were often scuppered by faulty recording equipment and union disputes. And despite his efforts to fix the meanings of his own identity – as the ‘Last Puritan’, for example – audiences have re-coded his image, often in ways that Gould would not have sanctioned. Here one thinks of Michael Clarkson’s exposé of Gould’s private life, and particularly, revelations about Gould’s five-year affair with a married woman, Cornelia Foss, in the late Sixties. In short, Gould was neither industry puppet nor master manipulator. As is often the case with Gould, the truth lies somewhere in the middle.

Industry had a crucial role to play in driving and expanding interest in Gould. The emphasis writers have given to Gould’s Columbia promotion in the mid Fifties is no coincidence: the

publicity surrounding the release of his debut album for that label transformed Gould from a national celebrity into an international star. Gould emerged on the scene at the opportune moment, when he could exploit the cultural dominance of the U.S. record industry and the P.R. and business expertise of Columbia's staff. His images tapped into the social zeitgeist, and their dissemination in a wide variety of papers and magazines secured for Gould new audiences, much larger than any in Canada. For example, Gould's 1956 appearance in *Life* reached an audience the equivalent size of a third of the population of Canada! The fetishisation of Gould's personality, characteristic of his modern reception, finds its roots here, in Columbia's efforts to sell to the American public a vision of artistic individuality consonant with their dreams and desires. So too, then, does the perception of Gould's achievements become more polarised, at a time of heightened resistance to the adverse effects of 'midcult' on American artistic life.

Canadians had dreams and desires too, of course, and Canadian institutions such as the CBC and the NFB catered to them in more culturally appropriate ways. Throughout my analysis, I have tried to show how Gould's emergence as a Canadian icon interacted with discourses of nationalism pursued by Canadian institutions. Again, the nature of this interaction was complex. His image in the 1940s and 1950s often served as a repudiation of Canada's supposed 'colonial mentality'. It reinforced the idea of a self-assertive nation, holding its own against the U.S. At the same time, as in the NFB films, Gould could be portrayed as a typical Canadian country boy, with simple tastes and a polite manner. His images in the 1960s, as Northerner and technologist, appeared to perform different cultural work. While images of Gould furrowing a path through Canada's northern snows seemed to suggest something of the nation's pioneering spirit, it also spoke to the Canadian preoccupation with themes of isolation, victimhood, and survival. Gould had now become the 'anti-hero'. He was an emblem of Canadian insecurity at a time when the perceived overreach of American power had given vent to more pessimistic, even fatalistic, cultural sentiment, as captured in George

Grant's elegiac nationalist book *Lament for a Nation* (1965). But he was also an emblem of Canadian unity, a ratings hit for the CBC, who demonstrated how Canadian celebrities had by now become central players in a broadcasting discourse that linked the issues of national sovereignty and domestic cultural expression. Programmes such as *Variations on Glenn Gould* (1969) were examples of a Canadian cultural 'third way' that saw in the 'elevation' of high culture and the accessibility of popular culture the ingredients of a new nationalism. The on-location shooting style and documentary format of many of these productions represented an effort, on the part of the CBC, to forge a national consciousness by acquainting Canadians with the special characteristics of the country's landscape and people through the hypnotic power of television.

Part of the achievement of Gould's image was to create a new unity out of disparate and seemingly incompatible rhetorical or discursive elements. It is this that accounts for much of what is fresh and engaging about his identity. Gould's iconography mediates some of these tensions. Consider, for example, Dan Weiner's photographs of Gould in the recording studio, where allusions to a discourse of the musical sublime serve to soften and personalise his corporate image and give new meaning to his status as a recording artist. In another example, magazine depictions of Gould's eccentric individualism drew together the worlds of the musical and the social, interpreting Gould's authenticity through the lens of artistic genius and contemporary Beatnik culture. In each case, his identity is suggestive, rather than definitive, and, as I have argued elsewhere, it is the fact that Gould's identity allows for and encourages multiple interpretations that makes the pianist such an engaging and appealing cultural figure.

Today, then, Gould's identities continue to perform important cultural work. For Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, Gould the Rebel becomes the archetypal metaphor for a nation that thinks outside the box. He provides a conceptual toolkit for thinking about the nation's innovation agenda. If the comments of users on video-sharing websites and social media

platforms are anything to go by, Gould's music continues to affect his listeners deeply and personally – a legacy afforded by Gould's exceptional productivity as a classical recording artist and broadcaster, as well as his philosophy of listener communication that he channelled through his works. And he continues to fire debates around the relationship of genius to eccentricity and madness. Peter Goddard's *The Great Gould* (2017) implies that this is the central conundrum of his life, the affirmative nature of the book's title contradicted by the sullen, and slightly pathetic image of Gould that forms the book's visual backdrop. This is an artist with hidden depths, it seems to suggest, and inherent contradictions.

Goddard is one author who has identified something interesting and revealing in the way Gould has managed to attract new audiences to classical music. But in some circles the feeling remains that Gould's lay popularity somehow cheapens his reputation, and makes him a subject unfit for serious study. It has been the argument of this thesis that precisely *because* of Gould's lay popularity he is a subject worthy of serious study. His celebrity career is interesting in its own right, of course, and my thesis has served the more immediate aim of shedding light on those events and situations in Gould's life that I feel have been neglected by others. But I also believe that his celebrity adds up to something more than the sum of its parts, providing insight into the cultural complexities of notions of 'high' and 'low' (e.g. in discourses of Canadian broadcasting), the relationship of musical fame to its national contexts of production, and the interaction of musical and social identity.

Gould clearly bears fruitful comparison with other pianists of his age who broke down distinctions between high and low: certainly Leonard Bernstein, perhaps also Liberace. Like them, he cultivated a highly imagistic persona, was criticised in the press for his supposedly egotistical concert manner, embellished his performances in idiosyncratic ways, and his representations embraced certain social and pop cultural trends. During his concert career, Americans seemed to regard him as one of their own: in a 1958 *Time* article that considered

the rise of the ‘All-American Virtuoso’, Van Cliburn, Gould was cited as an example of ‘first-rate native talent’.¹ To Canadians who tended to seek validation of their artists from external sources, Gould’s American fame was a vindication of his Canadian fame. But unlike performers such as Bernstein and Van Cliburn, Gould never lived in the United States, and expressed a general distaste for American culture. In 1971, he even moved his recording activities out of New York, setting up home base in Toronto’s Eaton Auditorium, and communicating with his record company and long-term American record producer Andrew Kazdin primarily by phone. It is perhaps ironic that the championship of Gould as a nationalist icon in the mid Sixties and Seventies depended on a recognition of precisely those middlebrow credentials that were a product of Gould’s interactions with the American cultural scene. So it would be wrong to suggest that the relationship between Gould’s American identity and his Canadian identity was one purely of opposition, and that this was expressed in terms of a mass culture/high culture binary. Like the idea of the Canadian nation, Gould’s fame expressed itself in complex, and seemingly contradictory, ways.

Pop cultural approaches to the selling and promotion of classical performers have now become the norm. And in an age of Facebook and Instagram, where promoters have access to a ready-made audience of millions, the mass media have become the bedrock of such campaigns. Gould, then, was a modern performer before his time. More than most, he understood the direction of travel, and planned accordingly. Unable to achieve immortality as a composer, he hoped to achieve it through his media legacy, and certainly the cultural ubiquity of Gould’s image today suggests that his decision to retire from concert performance was not, as was thought at the time, an act of professional suicide, but in fact a wise investment in his future career. His broadcasts and recordings, totalling over three hundred hours, have given his identity a permanence and multi-dimensionality that would have been denied him if he chose to remain as a concert artist. Gould’s ‘death of the concert’ narrative is

¹ Anon., “The All-American Virtuoso” in *Time*, Vol. 71, No. 20 (May 19, 1958).

thus given new meaning: a comment on the redundancy of concert promotion in an age of digital networks and multimedia convergence. Of course, new technologies have also provided the means for new forms of participation with Gould's work, reframing Gould's identity as a communicator.

However important Gould's musical legacy, then, it might be suggested that Gould's other principal contribution was as a celebrity, who helped pioneer new forms of cultural representation and promotion that have given shape to our modern musical experiences. One of the aims of this thesis has been to reveal how this was so, by analysing those events in his celebrity career that have contributed to and defined his modern cultural significance. I have not aimed to be exhaustive in my treatment of Gould, but, rather, critical and scholarly. The circumstances around Gould's untimely death, for example, are rich in mythic significance, but exceed the scope of the thesis. A study of Gould's business relationships with CAMI and impresario Ronald Wilford in the Seventies would shed more light on Gould's mature media career, but these financial records are restricted to researchers. Still, the analyses that I have presented should provide a solid grounding for further research by others: particularly, my statistical surveys of Gould's U.S. print reception, and my work on Gould's interaction with Canadian broadcasting policy. My intent has not been to dispel the aura around Gould, or reduce his mythology to a set of facts and fictions. I would certainly not wish to discourage the kind of creative imaginings of Gould's life that have given his image such vibrancy. Rather, I have tried to draw attention to the significance of these creative imaginings, not only for what they say about Gould himself, or the institutions who sponsor him, or indeed the fans who celebrate him, but for what they reveal about the history and legacy of his myth ascendant.

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