

FEAR OF INCLEMENT WEATHER PART I

[Redacted] favored horizontal playing.
That is to say he preferred playing laterally across all four strings
drawing the bow forward and back through multiple planes
rather than maintaining repeated contact with a single vertex
while the left hand shifts up dramatically
toward the nose and down again.
This of course or so we can assume is the legacy of Franco-Belgian technique
specifically that of his teacher the great composer and virtuoso Eugene Ysaye.
Much of twentieth-century viola literature was written for [Redacted]
and as a result reflects the aforesaid pragmatism and right hand primacy.
For example Bela Bartok's Viola Concerto features extended passages of barriolage
a pattern intended to be executed in arpeggiation
wherein the left hand remains a stable whole each finger performing easfully
their putted functions rather than leaping radically from position to position.
While some students believe an accurate rendering of these oft-decried measures
indicates vertical facility that is to say elaborate pyrotechnics of the left hand
seasoned veterans former students of [Redacted] and his progeny
recognize it as a bow-driven exercise
or a complex sounding geometry
of the right hand.

FEAR OF INCLEMENT WEATHER PART II

On December 2nd 1949 Bela Bartok's Viola Concerto
premiered in Minneapolis under the baton of [Redacted]
with [Redacted] the dedicatee as viola soloist.
In those days the Minnesota Orchestra was the Minneapolis Symphony
and performed at Northrop Auditorium on campus of the University of Minnesota
as Orchestra Hall was not yet constructed.
The mid-century Minnesotan intelligentsia likely flocked
to the central mall eager to hear a great composer's swansong.
And yet the work despaired Bartok's intended triumph.
You see Bartok left the concerto near completion in sketches
pending revision on a rainy day in September of 1945.
[Redacted] was to meet with Bartok
at the composer's upper west side apartment en route to an engagement in Maine.
They planned to discuss final edits potential technical difficulties and or
non-idiomatic impossibilities
however the rendezvous never occurred [Redacted] forgot his umbrella
and wished to avoid the inclement weather.
Perhaps he feared the precipitate would crumple the perfect crest of his fedora
streak his overcoat or perhaps his viola case was piped with suede.
Days later while [Redacted] performed something
somewhere on the Atlantic Coast
Bela Bartok died
leaving the concerto unfinished raw and somewhat unplayable.

FEAR OF INCLEMENT WEATHER PART III

A kind of bionic man of the viola [Redacted]
taught at the Curtis Institute for some fifty years and continues even now
to take new students.
He succeeded his teacher the great viola virtuoso [Redacted]
in this position and disseminates the Franco-Belgian tradition
to which his mentor adhered.
[Redacted]'s students rank among the best violists in the world
many of them hold prestigious positions
in the so-called "top five" orchestras.
While his legacy as a pedagogue is uncontested unrivaled monolithic
the realities of [Redacted] as teacher especially in his later years
include lesson-long naps on the studio chaise
and a marked disinterest in his pupils' public performances.
One such instance occurred with respect to [Redacted]'s student [Redacted]
now principal violist of [Redacted].
In the midst of performing the Bartok Viola Concerto
[Redacted]'s A string snapped *dry plunk thump* it went.
Even at the tender age of 21 [Redacted] behaved as a consummate professional
and thus continued unimpeded playing the extended passagework
in the highest positions on the C G and D strings.
(that is to say leaping radically from position to position)
In the morning after [Redacted]'s Curtis Institute colleague
and then-concertmaster of the Philadelphia Orchestra
approached the master-violist
Heard your student on the radio
because you see in those days Philadelphia Public Radio
broadcast all the Curtis Institute student recitals
kid sounded great but were those really your fingerings?

FEAR OF INCLEMENT WEATHER PART IV

[Redacted] won his position as principal violist of [Redacted] in 1994.

Prior to this appointment [Redacted] spent ten years as principal of [Redacted] after attending the Curtis Institute of Music in Philadelphia.

Despite these accomplishments he speaks humbly of his past noting the debt owed to his mentor [Redacted] and his mother a school teacher amateur cellist and resident of [Redacted].

His German language skills are formidable and as such the conductor [Redacted] has been known to ask him to translate expressive markings in Mahler's symphonic scores.

[Redacted] is tempted in these situations to decode the tangled Viennese cipher into material not fit for mixed company.

He maintains a small studio at the University of [Redacted] where he chain-smokes before and after his students' lessons and has more than once been mistaken for a transient.

He often acts as ringleader for section-wide practical jokes designed for good fun and based in musical erudition.

His "Titan" prank is the stuff of storied legend.

While he is most usually a sought chamber musician he has lost a great many gigs in recent years due to his inability to arrive at rehearsals sober on time or at all.

[Redacted]'s affable nature artistic and personal integrity make the realities of his alcoholism particularly tragic.

There is no doubt he wishes to do right by his students colleagues and family however he is often incapable of doing so and thus his cycle of abuse perpetuates.

[Redacted] believes that the western classical musician is an interpreter tasked with the faithful representation of the provided score and as such his playing lacks affectation deception and in its dedication to the musical ideal it is nearly Platonic.

FEAR OF INCLEMENT WEATHER PART V

[Redacted] was given [Redacted]'s
copy of the Bartok Viola Concerto clandestinely
on a January afternoon in 2007 an attempted
dead-drop rendezvous at 1111 Nicolett Avenue
Orchestra Hall or simply "The Hall."
The pages some twenty-five years young were contained in a plastic bag
likely a prophylactic measure given the harshness
of Minneapolis winters.
The staples bled rust onto the signature crease
and the piano part was long lost.
[Redacted] was to pass through the stage door
that is the entrance on Marquette Avenue stop
at the security desk and ask the gatekeeper
for the package (*um* [Redacted] *left a score for me?*)
at precisely 3pm.
She arrived dutifully at 2:55 only to find [Redacted] chain-smoking
In the granite courtyard adjacent frigid score in plastic bag
in gloved-hand grinning
broad if awkward
not knowing quite how to interact
give this precious document cased in crinkling reliquary
inscribed by [Redacted] bearing ghosted marks of [Redacted]
to his most dedicated female student [Redacted].

SUSPENSION THEORY

Tunnel Mountain is not a mountain
more of a foothill really
nothing to write home about
but it feels like a movie set if you've never before topped a peak
quasi-simulated crispness and every bit of decay in perfect pile.
Tunnel Mountain has a precipice not too terribly steep
but enough to warrant a guard rail three feet tall and change.
One might climb Tunnel Mountain or rather hike it
one might do so to experience nature etcetera
but really one climbs it
for the precipice overlooking the most earth-bound of the Canadian Rockies.
There at the precipice that is
you can see all manner of resorts for the rich pseudo-rustic chalets
you can see even Lake Louise
pristine waters like all the cliches
r.e. immaculate mountain vistas wilderness godheads etcetera.
You can see it the glob gleaming cyan from the precipice
you can see it and when you jump
when you circumvent the safeties
precautions set by park rangers
you can touch it. (*tumble thump crack crack ricochet etcetera*)

FLUID-PILE ENCHIRIDION

“I look at drivers on the freeway as I pass fast in the left; consider the quantity of waste produced by just one. Just think of it—the sheer amount of shit and urine and cum by just one.”

A native of South Minneapolis [Redacted] graduated
from the University of Minnesota where he was a pupil of the respected
though personally and professionally malicious
Fiddle Magic author [Redacted].

Make yourself a wretch and do everything according to rule.

Throughout this academic career [Redacted] maintained markedly defective
relationships with his colleagues musical and otherwise
often thrusting his detrimental corporeal preoccupation
upon friends and artistic collaborators alike.

If the companion is impure he who keeps her company becomes likewise impure.

More specifically [Redacted] perniciously pitted person on person
to tap taught insecurities and aggravate the body-hating culture
oh so very latent in circles of western classical performers.

The body is weak and subject to the restraint and the power of others.

[Redacted] found his fluid-pile existence disgusting and indeed
this self-loathing culminated in bulimia obsessive
practicing and a pattern of quick shifting polarity
twixt Stoicism and out-and-out hedonism.

It is the mark of degeneracy to spend much time on the things which concern the body.

A voracious reader [Redacted] applied his disordered single-mindedness
to consuming the canon of western philosophy in its entirety.
Presumably his dedication to the ascetic ideal remains total.

Your whole soul will be nothing at all if one thing after another pleases you.

[Redacted]’s guilt-burden is sizable and as such impels him to destroy
those for whom he cares most.

Expect all advantage and harm from yourself.

At present he lives with his wife and son in East St. Paul
and teaches violin from his home.

IF WISHES WERE HORSES THE POOR WOULD RIDE

1.

[Redacted] began playing violin at age 10 comparatively late
to the company she would keep later in life.
The daughter of a poet/postal accountant
and a trained though not practicing actress
[Redacted] felt from a tender age
an obligation to succeed as a musician at all costs.
Although talented and bright she would spend her entire life
attempting to compensate for lost time and inadequate
technical facility or “chops” in musician parlance.
[Redacted] auditioned for music school at age 16
after only a year of private lessons.
Not surprisingly she was summarily and swiftly rejected.
After a preliminary audition at Northwestern University [Redacted]
an esteemed pedagogue and Bienen School professor went so far
as to call [Redacted]’s parents to a meeting
to shame them for squandering their daughter’s potential
saying something like:

*If only you had sent her to me when she was three
she could have been a great soloist.
But now she’ll have to quit anything else would be a waste.
But don’t worry she seems smart maybe she could be a doctor.*

2.

In a timely though not uncommon switch
for failed violinists such as herself
[Redacted] began playing the viola at age 17 under the tutelage of [Redacted]
a graduate of the Juilliard School and Yale University.
Once described as a “walking exclamation mark” [Redacted] supervised
what he termed “Viola Bootcamp.”
[Redacted] was to learn the totality of etudes
by D.C. Dounis a notorious and controversial figure in string pedagogy.
Wishing nothing other than to overcome childhood deficiencies
[Redacted] dutifully practiced the carpal-busting etudes responsible
according to numerous anecdotes for more than one career-ending injury.

On lesson days [Redacted] allotted an extra thirty minutes to her travel time.
This surplus provided her a temporal window within which
to excise in a gas station bathroom on the corner of 56th and France
the anxiety that manifested as nausea and culminated in vomit.
The ritual concluded with a purchase of gum tic-tacs altoids or the like
an attending necessity and she would arrive to the lesson moments later
flush-faced mint-tinged depleted and faint.

THE SARTORIALIST

For a recent performance of Tchaikovsky's Souvenir de Florence
[Redacted] donned a white silk tunic.
Even under the glow of minimal stage lighting
the garment took on an explosive sheen.
It forced his chamber music partners into temporary blindness and had also
the unpleasant consequence of disorienting audience members
unfortunate enough to sit in the front row.

Years prior when [Redacted] arrived in the States
to study with [Redacted] or rather "[Redacted]"
at the Manhattan School he sat with the same manner of bravado
at the back of the New York Philharmonic viola section.
In response the regular subs he supplanted posed with somewhat diluted vitriol
Who the hell is this kid taking my gig?

[Redacted] would later establish himself as a charismatic hotshot
principal violist of Tonhalle in Zurich sought after soloist
chamber musician and clinician.
Though more generally [Redacted] is known as an ego
with big hands and a small
viola.

LADIES & GENTLEMEN

1.

Ginette Neveu died in a plane crash only a few years after winning the Henryk Wieniawski International Violin Competition. With her in the fated cabin her brother and sonata partner the boxer Marcel Cerdan rumored to be Edith Piaf's lover and forty eight others dearly departed. Her entire discography is available on a set of four LPs that includes the Brahms and Sibelius violin concerti lyrical miniatures by Fritz Kreisler and Josef Suk Debussy's violin sonata and the *Tzigane* a virtuosic showpiece by Maurice Ravel. Among collectors and connoisseurs this remaining document of Neveu's playing is prized and considered unparalleled. Often these same discriminating audiophiles describe her as a great "lady-virtuoso" distinguished from her contemporaries Oistrakh Temiaka & Goldberg by her warmth unbridled passion and capability to embrace her public with a supple sonic touch. According to apocryphal stories when her body was found among the wreckage she was still clutching her Stradivarius holding it as if it were an infant.

2.

Between the years 1929 and 1934 Szymon Goldberg served as concertmaster of the Berlin Philharmonic under Wilhelm Furtwängler an iconic interpreter of Beethoven. Prior to this appointment he spent several years in Dresden at the behest of his teacher Carl Flesch. According to popular legend and more formal oral histories passed from teacher to student and back again it was through the heroism of the violist Paul Hindemith a close friend and chamber music partner that Goldberg escaped Nazi warcrimes. However this has yet to be verified by any reliable source. From 1942 to 1945 Goldberg was detained in Java where he was considered a prisoner of war. This three-year internment appears in his obituary as nothing more than a footnote. His Brahms sonatas recorded with Arthur Balsam evince the desperation into which he so gracefully tapped. That is to say the space round the notes like the field round the body is sacred active ether or ever-stalking nothing the that which comes prior and or is left behind. To the present day his disciples speak still of "Mr. Goldberg" and lament with wistful remembrance their once limited now expired contact with the great violinist pedagogue and person.