

**THE PERFORMER'S WORK AND WORLD:
MUSICAL REFLECTIONS
ON
CREATION, INCARNATION, AND RE-CREATION**

A MONOGRAPH
WRITTEN IN FULFILLMENT
OF THE REQUIREMENT ON THE
INTEGRATION OF FAITH AND LEARNING

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INTRODUCTION

García Lúpez de Cardenas discovered the Grand Canyon and was amazed at the sight. It can be imagined: One crosses miles of desert, breaks through the mesquite, and there it is at one's feet. Later the government set the place aside as a national park, hoping to pass along to millions the experience of Cardenas. Does not one see the same sight from the Bright Angel Lodge that Cardenas saw?

The assumption is that the Grand Canyon is a remarkably interesting and beautiful place and that if it had a certain value P for Cardenas, the same value P may be transmitted to any number of sightseers . . . [I]t would be nearer the truth to say that if the place is seen by a million sightseers, a single sightseer does not receive value P but a millionth part of value P.

A man in Boston decides to spend his vacation at the Grand Canyon. He visits the travel bureau, looks at the folder, signs up for a two-week tour. He and his family take the tour, see the Grand Canyon, and return to Boston. May we say that this man has seen the Grand Canyon? Possibly he has. But it is more likely that what he has done is the one sure way not to see the canyon. (Walker Percy, "The Loss of the Creature," in *The Message in the Bottle* , pp. 46-47.)

The Fifth Symphony of Ludwig van Beethoven is undeniably one of the greatest musical statements of Western culture. It electrified its first audiences, and moved Nineteenth-Century men of letters like E. T. A. Hoffmann and Robert Schumann to ecstatic utterance. Some might even argue that it helped win World War II. Why is it that orchestral musicians the world over groan when they learn that an eminent conductor has chosen to program the work on a subscription concert?

The performer of music, and specifically the performer devoted to that "high art" music of the Western European tradition commonly and misleadingly called "classical," is often in a curious position. In the cultural climate of the late Twentieth Century, such a person is faced with the task of dealing with a nearly fixed and endlessly repeated body of work, governed by a system of rules, conventions, and traditions of Talmudic complexity, in order to give the audience member a vital and immediate musical experience. In a world where the new is suspect, where the comfortable and familiar are the preferred commodities, and where competition is keen, such a task can seem either unattainable or futile. How does a performing musician, as a re-creative artist, go about the business of wrestling with one's work? Furthermore, whence comes the energy, the reason, and the passion for going about this business in the first place?

What follows is a series of reflections on the elusive art of the musical performer. It is written from the perspective of a Christian who believes that there is an intimate connection between performance and the biblical doctrines of Creation and Incarnation -- between bringing dry textbook markings to life as part of a vital musical experience and the Plan of Life, in which the Eternal created all that is, and put on human form, that the Word might become Flesh. It is also written from the perspective of a performer who, while retaining proper respect for scholarly academic study in all disciplines, including his own, is impatient with any discussion of a work of art which ultimately fails to

shed light on that work in an experiential way. Lastly, it is written from the perspective of a professor who sees his task as the act of passing on Living Truth and living truths to those who will come after him.

It is impossible, given the constraints of this project, to be at all comprehensive in treating all of the topics and issues raised herein. The choice of musical issues to be addressed has been strongly colored by the particular struggles and concerns of my career. Certainly the theological stance, a blending of elements from Reformed and Incarnational thinking epitomized by my twin dialogues with the writings of Jerry Gill and Nicholas Wolterstorff, reflects my involvement, at various points in my pilgrimage, with both Calvinist and Anglican traditions. Many of the thoughts expressed are still very much in a developmental state, and some, if given the full treatment they deserve, could be the subject of an entire monograph. These pages, then, constitute an *essai* in the strictest sense of the word -- an attempt to come to grips with things which occupied my mind during my years of apprenticeship and continue to challenge me as a professional. If some readers find in these reflections more poetry than precision, so be it. An artist can no more avoid using art to illuminate the arts than a philosopher can refrain from thought to illuminate ideas. What this paper lacks in philosophical sophistication, it may make up, at least in part, through its musician's-eye view of the matters under discussion. I further hope that it might serve as a modest bridge between the world of analytical reason and the world of the intuitive -- between the propositional and the iconic. Important figures in Christian higher education have long recognized that Jesus commanded us to love the Lord with all our minds; may what follows be a reminder that He has also asked us to love Him with all our hearts and souls.

PART I: THEOLOGICAL REFLECTIONS

All integration is Incarnational.

(Bruce Lockerbie, in an address to the Faculty of Wheaton College, August 25, 1990)

As a Christian, I propose that there are some striking correspondences between the processes involved in musical reflection and performance, and those at work in the world of spiritual struggle and growth. I most definitely do not imply that a Christian performer has necessarily an artistic advantage over an unregenerate counterpart -- the Christian may be too detached from his or her own body to make music dance, or may feel too inhibited or intimidated by tradition to take musical risk. I do, however, maintain that insight into the workings of the created order can only help us as musicians to mirror that order in our own work and life. Indeed, in a time when art has become commerce, when æsthetic taste is driven by the fifteen-minute universe of media attention, and when the concepts of quality and meaning have become objects of derisive scorn, the recovery of insight consistent with the Creator God revealed by Scripture and Incarnate in Jesus of Nazareth is a task of the utmost urgency.

ON THE ARTISTIC IMPLICATIONS OF CREATION AND INCARNATION

"In the Beginning, God created the heavens and the earth." The first words of the book of Genesis proclaim what was once the most primal given of Western civilization. Though these words are now regarded with scorn by a society which seems ever more determined to prove that it has only Chaos as its father, for those of us who are professing Christians, they form the root of all we proclaim, and the basis for our understanding of all existence. Through the ancient Hebrew account, we learn that the Eternal stands at the Beginning of History, and that He created everything that is. We also learn, in the verses which follow, that the created order is good, and that mankind, male and female, are created by God to "glorify God and enjoy Him forever" (The Westminster Confession). For many of those seeking to justify the ways of Art to Man (especially to *homo ecclesiasticus*), the Genesis narrative has been a logical starting place for any discussion of human creativity. At its most basic, the argument goes that since God creates, declares Creation to be good, and creates Man in His image, both male and female, anyone bearing the *imago Dei* will quite naturally exhibit creative urges quite like those of Him whose image is borne. Other human lessons are often drawn from God's creativity. Contemporary Christian visual artists are quite happy to point out that God's creation justifies the abstract in Art. Everything God created was something that had never before existed -- as many have observed, the free forms of each sunset proclaim that non-representational Art is (or at least can be) good.

It should be noted at this point that among the many other lessons to be found at the beginning of the Bible is the strong warning against the human temptation to strive for equality with God. If one goes too far in equating human creativity with the Divine acts of Creation, one ends up uncomfortably near the German Romantic habitations of Faust and Prometheus. The wise mortal will take careful note of the limits of human creativity. J. R. R. Tolkien, for example, speaks of the enormous gulf which separates God's creation of everything *ex nihilo*, and the creative impulses of humankind, which are confined to a mere reshuffling of the stuff which God has already wrought. Tolkien quite usefully refers to human creative activity as "subcreation." (See, for example, his essay "On Fairy Stories," in *The Tolkien Reader*, especially pp. 68-71.) In this view, any human creative act, whether it be the Sistine Chapel frescoes, the *St. Matthew Passion*, *King Lear*, *Anna Karenina*, or *Guernica*, is ultimately the act of a little child imitating the Father in Heaven, just as a toddler may "play house" or dress up in Daddy's ties or Mommy's jewelry. Such a view certainly describes accurately the nature of things, and promotes the Christian virtue of humility, so often in short supply among artists. Calvin Seerveld goes so far as to argue against the *imago Dei* analogy on these grounds:

Man is not God's image, a finite parallel to an infinite Perfection. Only Christ is a spitting image of God. The fact that man is made *in* the image of God means that men and women carry inescapably around with them a restless sense of allegiance to -- And this structural, worshipping restlessness remains to plague man until he finally, as Augustine puts it, is rested with commitment in the true Creator. (Seerveld, *Rainbows for the Fallen World*, p. 26.)

He also argues that "*imago Dei* and 'creation' obfuscate understanding art because it looks too hard, and overlooks the limited, serviceable, craftsmanship character of artistic activity." (Ibid.)

In addition to these caveats, the theme of creation, as apt and useful as it is, is likely to leave certain members of the artistic community feeling vaguely disenfranchised, specifically those whose role is not to produce new works of art, but to perform and interpret the works of others. Are they really involved in a creative process, or are they second-class citizens, devoted merely to re-creating what others have first imagined? The answer to such questions, as well as others, may be sought through contemplation of another central Biblical theme, one which grows out of the theme of Creation, and, in the Christian understanding of things, brings it to completion -- the theme of Incarnation.

". . . and in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God . . . who for us men, and for our salvation, came down from heaven, and was incarnate by the Holy Ghost of the Virgin Mary, and was made man" (The Book of Common Prayer, [1979], pp. 327-328). The Creed of Nicaea, in full consort with the Scriptures, proclaims the Incarnation as a central mystery of the apostolic faith. God, having created the universe, determined from before the foundation of the world that He should enter

human existence in the flesh, and by His entrance into humanity affect its redemption. The Eternal becomes bound by time, the Limitless chooses to be limited, the Omnipotent is nailed to the cross, the Sinless becomes an atonement for the sinful, the Unimaginable bids Thomas (and all of us) to feel His hands and side. We all live, through grace, in the shadow of this enormous fact, and as members of the company of faithful people, we can rejoice in the great Incarnational affirmation that "Another lives in me." That fact and that affirmation also lead to a question. If creation as a principle drives human activity -- if we can at least "subcreate" because we bear the *Imago Dei*, then are there ways in which Incarnation also becomes a principle of human existence?

In my thinking about these questions, I have been greatly aided by a monograph by Jerry H. Gill entitled, "Art and Incarnation." In attempting to understand what Incarnation means in particular relation to the artistic enterprise, I have chosen in part to summarize and perhaps expand upon some of his arguments.

One of Mr. Gill's central theses is that the business of Incarnation has to do with concrete and particular revelation in Space and Time. God has not chosen to reveal Himself finally and completely in either the subjective realm of human feeling and intuition or the propositional world of analytical argument (although He certainly uses both in the advancement of His Kingdom). Instead, God's last Word to humanity is the God-Man, Jesus of Nazareth, who was born in a particular place at a particular time. In a similar manner, he argues, "artistic creativity [does not] exist [merely] in the mind or spirit of the artist, but rather in the concrete object or performance." (Gill, p. 10.)

Another way of putting this is to say that Incarnation involves embodiment. Gill is careful not to equate the notion of embodiment with neo-Platonic notions which drive a dualistic wedge between the body and soul, or between the Eternal and the temporal. (Ibid., p. 11.) Christian doctrine, rightly understood, sees no such division. The material world is declared at the Creation to be good, and because of the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, the company of the redeemed can look for the resurrection of the body, not merely the everlasting persistence of the soul. Expanding on Gill, I see some clear implications in all of this for the musician, and for performing artists in general.

Performance, by its very nature, involves embodiment. One can get tied into elaborate æsthetic knots of Gordian complexity when trying to deal with questions of in what sense, and in what form a musical or theatrical work of art may be said to most truly exist. Does it exist in the composer's mind -- in which case, only contemporary music can be said to have a real existence; in the original manuscript -- if it can be found; in the first performance -- first performances, even under a composer's own supervision, having a notorious reputation for imperfection; in a first edition or critical edition -- a problematic enterprise, especially if the composer, like Frederic Chopin, or Charles Ives, is of a sufficiently improvisational bent to leave multiple versions of his or her intentions; in a definitive recording -- each of Stravinsky's recordings of *The Firebird* are significantly different

from each other -- ? (Those interested in wrestling more philosophically with such issues may wish to consult Nicholas Wolterstorff's densely written *Works and Worlds of Art*. Insofar as I presume to understand him, I find his assertion [p. 74] that only a written-down piece qualifies as a musical composition to be problematic at best, since such a position relegates even the most intellectually rigorous improvisation to the sidelines.) While one can unambiguously have a first-hand encounter with the work of the great painters by standing in front of their canvasses for as much time as one chooses, a piece of music or theater must be embodied in order to be fully experienced. There can be no artificial separation between the abstract ideal of the work itself, whatever that may mean, and the physical act of performing it. All performers are aware of the ways in which certain composers build the physical act of performance into the interpretive necessities of certain compositions. The struggle to accomplish difficult leaps and awkward trills in a work like Beethoven's "Hammerklavier" Sonata, Op. 106, becomes an intrinsic part of the abstract musical meaning. (One need only compare performances by Artur Schnabel, known both for his occasional technical struggles and transcendent artistry, and a stellar pianist like Maurizio Pollini, for whom no physical difficulties exist, to hear the loss of dramatic tension which sometimes results from something being too easy.) There are further implications to be drawn from this train of thought having to do with artificial distinctions between theory and practice. The attitude, still current in some old-line liberal arts institutions, which suggests that performance is not a proper subject for academic pursuit, while theoretical study is permissible, seems untenable in the light of such reflection. (I will return to this topic later in this essay.) Equally untenable is the willful ignorance of theoretical concerns which some students of major conservatories tend to cultivate. We, as embodied creatures bearing the image of God, are asked to love Him not merely with our all our soul, but with all our spirit, mind and strength as well. (Luke 10: 27-28; also parallel passages.)

Because Incarnation is concrete and embodied, certain other things inevitably follow. Incarnation necessarily involves limitation (Gill, pp. 15-17.) Moses knew that to see the unmediated face of God, as He is in all of His Holiness, Power, Glory, and Infinitude, would be to perish utterly. Even a glimpse of God's "back" caused him to shine so brightly as to require a veil between him and the tribes of Israel. (Exodus 34: 33-35.) That the Son of God truly took on the form of a man means that He gave up His omnipresence and His omnipotence. It means that He was subject to pain and loss, temptation and sorrow, yet without sin. (Hebrews 4:15.) It means that those who knew Jesus in the days of His life on Earth saw the Father, but saw Him limited and mediated by His very embodiment.

Gill puts it this way:

Any attempt at communication must be concrete in order to serve its function, but that very concreteness also leaves out much else which could have been said. God's communication with humanity through Christ the Word is no exception. It is adequate but not exhaustive. . . . Love is thus seen as an active force which takes concrete bodily form and accepts risks and limitations as necessary to the well-being of other persons. Christian love is incarnated or it is not love at all. (Op. cit., p. 14.)

He further likens the concept of limitation as illustrated in the life of Jesus to the artistic struggle with media. To use specifically musical examples, composers who choose to make a musical statement using a string quartet as the performing medium forfeit the visceral impact obtainable with the forces required for, say, the Eighth Symphony of Gustav Mahler -- the resultant musical communication must be achieved by other means, and will be affected by use of those means. In the case of Jesus -- God Incarnate and Man Divine, it is likewise impossible to separate medium from message. It is not sufficient to focus solely on the teaching of Jesus; doing so brings us uncomfortably near a conception of Jesus as merely the greatest teacher who ever lived. Part of the message, indeed the part upon which all eternal destiny hangs, resides not merely in the fact of Who He is, but in His Person itself. We come to know God not through the knowledge of Jesus's proper honorific, but through personal knowledge of Him. Gill is probably too glib in summarizing the point by saying, "in faith as in art, the medium is the message." (Ibid., p. 15.) Often, both in faith and in art, the message transcends the medium (otherwise, the Incarnation would be too inflexibly bound by its occurrence in First-Century Palestine), but the message is clearly affected by the medium. No doubt God chose to reveal Himself as He did for His own sovereign reasons, and it is certainly the case that the sensitive artist will be deeply attuned to the media in which he or she chooses to work.

As Gill continues his exploration of the meaning of Incarnation, he spends quite a bit of space dealing with issues of direct and indirect communication. He discusses Jesus's use of parable, and sees in parabolic utterance a connection with the linkage of medium and message noted in the previous paragraph. In a parable, "the truth is revealed in and through the details of the story, without being either separable from them or reducible to them." (Ibid., p. 20.) That is to say, the truth of the parable lies in the story itself, not merely in the propositional statements which can be deduced from it. There is something of this point in the remarks of the French critic Paul Valéry:

Nothing beautiful can be summarized. Tasteless pedagogues summarize and have their pupils make résumés of works whose very essence is the absurdity of 'resuming' them. Their skeleton digests of the *Aeneid* and the *Odyssey* are drained of the movements, potencies, and graces which give them their whole value in the eyes of real people. (Paul Valéry, *Analects*, p. 213.)

Gill further points out that parabolic or indirect utterance carries with it the risk of misunderstanding (*op. cit.*, p. 22), but that with that risk also comes the possibility for

a richer range and texture of meaning as well. Moreover, there are more limits to the so-called "subjectivity" of artistic communication than we often think. The aesthetic value of great and good art can be discerned by a rather wide spectrum of viewers from among the vast assortment of works offered up. (*Ibid.*, p. 23.)

(A brief aside -- even if generally conceding his point, one cannot help but wonder what would occur if Mr. Gill were to make a statement such as the last sentence in the presence of Jacques D  rri  .)

A BRIEF DIGRESSION ON THE SUBJECT OF MUSIC AND MEANING

The performing instrumentalist is acutely aware of the mysteries of indirect or parabolic communication. Singers and choral conductors do indeed share in these mysteries to an extent, but in the absence of a sung or spoken text, the mystery deepens considerably. Though it is beyond the scope of this essay to delve into these matters fully, questions about the meaning and purpose of instrumental music are among the most persistent and tantalizing in the arts. Human beings seem curiously uncomfortable with abstraction and ambiguity in music, and in particular, the ambiguity inherent in music without words. It is perhaps worth noting that the notion that textless music is somehow superior to that with text is of quite modern origin; one can find some early articulations of it in the critical writings of E. T. A. Hoffmann, written during the first quarter of the Nineteenth Century. The rise of this notion is connected to a shift, during the Eighteenth Century, away from an understanding of art in connection with imitation of Nature --*mimesis*-- towards an understanding based on personal expression. (See David Charlton, "Hoffmann as A Writer on Music," pp. 10-12, in *E. T. A. Hoffmann's Musical Writings*. I have also referred on this point to notes taken from a lecture by Steven Scher, "Changing Views of Nature in Eighteenth-Century Thought: Aesthetics and Mozart," given at the symposium, *Mozart's Nature, Mozart's World*, held at the Milwaukee Art Museum, March 10, 1991.) Such discomfort can lead to suspicion, as is sometimes the case among certain types of conservative Christians who maintain that without a clear, didactic, evangelistic message, music is at best a waste of time, and at worst a dangerous wile of Satan. It can also lead to the attempt to impose some sort of concrete meaning in situations where none can be clearly demonstrated. One need only glance through the purple prose of James Huneker's introductions in the old Schirmer editions of Chopin to read of the ghostly Venetian gondolas and impassioned avowals of love which Nineteenth-Century writers commonly found in works with stubbornly prosaic titles like "Nocturne" and "Prelude."

Even if one avoids dwelling on this sort of Romantic pictorialism (or the somewhat related Baroque doctrine of *Affektenlehre*), it is still tempting to try to determine, through some sort of

musical or intellectual grid, exactly what it is that a piece is all "about." Thus, depending upon which commentator one chooses to believe, the opening movement of Beethoven's Third Symphony can be said to be "about" Napoleon, or about Beethoven's struggles against his deafness, or merely about *Allegro con brio*. (I am deliberately echoing a witticism reported to have been uttered by Arturo Toscanini -- see Joseph Horowitz, *Understanding Toscanini*, p. 102, for the actual quote and Wilhelm Furtwängler's response.) One can find some justification for all three of these suggestions.

It is a matter of historical fact that Beethoven originally dedicated the symphony to Napoleon Bonaparte, and violently erased the inscription from the title-page of the manuscript upon learning that he had crowned himself emperor. That Beethoven then described the work as being "in memory of a great hero" rather than destroying it only suggests more strongly that identifying one exact meaning for a piece of music is difficult even for the composer of the piece itself.

The second suggestion quite clearly smacks of "the personal fallacy" -- that popular notion which connects meaning in a work of art primarily to autobiographical concerns of its creator. One cannot necessarily explain a work of art with any degree of accuracy by resorting to the artist's biography, and yet to reject the possibility that "the personal fallacy" has some limited viability in some cases is as misguided as to embrace it as the key which unlocks all æsthetic secrets. After all, artists do disclose themselves, consciously or not, in their work. Beethoven's roughness and violence of personal expression are indeed very different from, say, the gentility and *politesse* of Felix Mendelssohn's personality, and both sets of character-traits can be connected, at least in a generalized sort of way, to the modes of expression in each man's music.

The final suggestion, the one which Toscanini himself claimed to adopt, is that of the absolute musician, the one who believes in art for its own sake. It is a position which acknowledges the musical validity and beauty of abstract, even mathematical form and proportion. Within it, one can understand a theoretical edifice like Johann Sebastian Bach's *Kunst der Fuge*, while at its logical extreme lie the self-referential experiments of Milton Babbitt, in which abstractions are cultivated to such an extreme that one risks ignoring other considerations. Although this position rescues us from some of the traps outlined in the preceding two paragraphs, it is itself not above criticism. Music, although it does not achieve anything like the clarity of verbal speech, does have a sort of abstract "language" of gesture and syntax which does point, however inexactly, towards something beyond itself.

Perhaps the only thing that is clear in this discussion is that we are in highly complex and highly nuanced territory. Musical meaning can be suggested through a composition, but that meaning is subject to all sorts of factors. One's point of view, whether it be historical, theoretical, or poetical, will provide differing perspectives, all of which may possibly have validity. Besides the factors outlined above, there can be sociological factors at work, completely extrinsic to the composition in

question, which can lead to a thoroughly secular love-song -- Hans Leo Hassler's "Mein Gott, dich ist mir verwirret" -- becoming indelibly associated with the sufferings of Jesus -- as "O Sacred Head now wounded" (Grout, *A History of Western Music*, pp. 312-313), can cause an Italian overture written for an opera about Swiss patriotism to forever remind listeners of the American West (Rossini's *Guillaume Tell* Overture), or make a German symphony become a symbol for victory over the Germans (Beethoven's Fifth). In all of this, Gill's discussion of the parabolic is helpful, as is Calvin Seerveld's related concept of "allusiveness" (or Harold M. Best's very similar notion of "multi-meaningfulness"), and Wolterstorff's discussion of "fittingness." (For a discussion of "allusiveness," see Seerveld, *Rainbows*, pp. 131-135; for "fittingness," see Wolterstorff, *Art in Action*, pp. 96-121.)

To accept the open-endedness of parabolic meaning inherent in an abstract, non-programmatic piece of instrumental music is a wonderfully liberating thing for a performer. It allows the performer to wrestle honestly with the work in question, knowing that the struggle will result in a communication whose results may reach beyond what either the performer or the composer can imagine.

A POSTSCRIPT ON THE LIMITATIONS OF MODELS

In my earlier discussion of the Creation model, I suggested that there were some limits to the image which needed to be taken into account, lest one fall into error. Are there any such cautions to be raised about the Incarnational model? In that all of our models, no matter how theologically sound, allow us to see but in part, until the Perfect comes (I Corinthians 13:10), it seems inevitable that it be so. Incarnation can be an illusive idea, and seems at times to defy definition. As with Creation, God's Incarnation through Jesus is ultimately an unrepeatable cosmic event. God has become Man once only, in the fullness of time. (Galatians 4:4, KJV) We can be transformed into His likeness through grace alone. It is also true, as Leanne Payne cautions, that those who rhapsodize about the presence of God among and within us run a risk of focusing so much on God's immanence that they forget the prior and overarching fact of His utter transcendence. (Leanne Payne, *The Healing Presence*, pp. 79-80.) It is probably less than accurate, in a literal sense, to imagine that we can become the art that we perform, or that art can become flesh. And yet, in at least a metaphorical sense, all that really matters in life is Incarnational. God has not come to us as merely a set of propositional statements of theological orthodoxy -- He has come personally, in a way that the disciples could experience directly (Thomas could touch His hands and side), and that we, too, by faith, can come to know. Art -- specifically music, theater, and dance -- cannot be limited to the passionless and propositional, but must be experienced through the personal and the concrete. We may not ourselves become art for others, but we offer something of ourselves through it, so that something vital may be shared. In our performing, our desire is the one Beethoven inscribed at the beginning of his *Missa Solemnis*, "From the heart -- may it go to the heart."

PART II KNOWING THE SCORE: INTERPRETATION

The letter killeth; the Spirit giveth life.
(II Corinthians 3:6, KJV)

Performers of music generally participate in one of two kinds of musical activity -- they either improvise, or they interpret the compositions of others. These two activities are by no means mutually exclusive. The improviser may play completely spontaneous material, or may use a pre-existing work as the basis for improvisation; the interpreter may, in certain situations, approach the composition being performed with the sort of freedom associated with improvisation. As a graduate of an institution well-known for preserving and perpetuating the traditions of "classical" music (its imposing marble edifice has led some to call it a "mausoleum for the arts"), my work has been largely focused on the business of interpretation. Rather than risk writing nonsense about that which I know only superficially, I wish to concentrate my thoughts on issues which arise whenever one actively deals with the musical legacy of others. These issues include the role and status of the composer, the nature and limitations of musical notation, the importance of tradition, and the functions of public performance.

THE COMPOSER IN MYTH AND REALITY

To choose to play the music of others is to be forced to deal with the figure of the composer. There is a musical mythology which elevates composers of "high-art" music, particularly those regarded as "Masters," to the status of quasi-divine beings. These beings are considered to hold a high degree of authority, and their every utterance is held to be of sacred importance. Thus, when a work by one of these "Masters" is performed, it is imperative that the performer seek earnestly after the one true, pure and unadulterated original text (often referred to as the *Urtext*), regard every textual marking scrupulously, and strive to eliminate all trace idiosyncratic response to the music so that the composer's voice may shine through clearly, as light through plate glass. Traces of this mythology appear both at the crudely popular level and among the most dedicated professionals in performance and historical musicology. Most fledgling piano students have at least one plaster bust on their pianos (usually of Beethoven), and many musicians have come to blows in arguments of truly religious intensity over the smallest details of expression, articulation and ornamentation, all in the name of reverence for the composer's original intent. (Anyone doubting the religiosity of the impulses at work here need only look at the title of a book on musical interpretation by the distinguished conductor Erich Leinsdorf -- *The Composer's Advocate: A Radical Orthodoxy for Musicians.*) In that this position can result in æsthetic idolatry, it is not one that the Christian can unquestioningly support. It is not my intent to encourage disdain for the hard-working men and women who, over the

centuries, have produced music worth hearing again -- it is indeed my opinion that a composer's work be treated with the utmost sympathy and respect. In my view, however, the basis for that respect lies not in hero- or idol-worship, but in the *imago Dei* which we all share. The creative reflection of God's nature seen in anyone, if that person exercises creative impulses with integrity, is something to be taken seriously, whether we admire the results of that creativity or not. If we seek to understand what and why a composer has done what he or she has done, we may learn something more about the way music works, we may come closer to a vital realization of that person's work, and we may enrich our own musical instincts and impulses. This is a very different motivation from that which produces plaster busts, and I believe it can lead to a deeper and freer exploration of the work at hand than can the fearful adoration of Genius.

Two related things can be said about the position of the composer at this point. Both the idea of the composer as Promethean hero, and the concept of the composer as a specialist distinct from the performer are of relatively recent date, and both can be regarded, for all practical purposes, as non-existent prior to the beginning of the Nineteenth Century.

Prior to that time, virtually all musicians occupied servant-status within society. Franz Joseph Haydn, as court composer at Eszterh-za, wore servant dress and lived in servant quarters. A church musician like Johann Sebastian Bach would commonly be expected to serve as teacher of Latin and music to the boys of the church choir, in addition to the expected duties of writing, rehearsing, and performing all of the music for the church service. (See David and Mendel, *The Bach Reader*, pp. 91-92.) Only with singular personalities such as Ludwig van Beethoven, aided in no small measure by the grandiose pronouncements of early Romantic critics such as E. T. A. Hoffmann, does one see the shift in perception from servant to exceptional genius (See Hoffmann, pp. 234-251.)

Similarly, the split between performance and improvisation, described earlier, began to open up only at the beginning of the Romantic era. Prior to that time, virtually all composers actively performed on *at least* one instrument, and it was the rare competent performer who could not compose music of at least utilitarian value. Many well-known compositions began their existence as improvisations. Both Mozart and Beethoven were known to perform their own piano concertos from scores containing only the barest outlines of the actual notes to be played. There is strong evidence to suggest that much of Robert Schumann's piano music began as free improvisation, and Chopin is known to have agonized greatly in the process of reducing his improvisations to some sort of final written form. In the case of several of his waltzes, several variant versions exist, due to his habit of making multiple copies, from memory, for various friends. Through the beginning of our own century, it was quite common for travelling virtuosi to write at least occasional showpieces and transcriptions for encore purposes. With few exceptions, one looks in vain for the non-performance-oriented composer until one arrives at Hector Berlioz, an unaccomplished player of the guitar and flageolet. (In fairness

to Berlioz, he did become a notable conductor as his reputation as a composer increased.) Thus, while certain musicians were of course acknowledged to possess extraordinary compositional ability, the notion of composer and performer as mutually exclusive categories would be almost inconceivable throughout most of Western history; it is an even more foreign notion in most other world cultures.

The implications of all of these points are several-fold. Firstly, if composers are human beings rather than gods, the performer should feel a certain respectful freedom in approaching a composer's work. A composition, whether it be *Messiah* or *Il barbiere di Siviglia*, is not the Word of God, but a creative act of humanity. It may have deep meaning for our time, or it may be merely splendid entertainment, but it is never the Holy Grail. Secondly, we can recognize that the craft of composition is a much more elusive one than is commonly recognized, even by serious musicians.

DECODING THE NOTATION: MUSICAL HERMENEUTICS (FUNDAMENTALISM AND HISTORICISM)

The notation of music is at best a highly inexact art. The composer's tools are limited, and remarkably ambiguous. Generally, the composer is restricted to producing a series of black dots, connected with various straight and curved lines, interspersed with occasional words, abbreviations, and other symbols, which are meant not just to instruct the performer as to which pitches and rhythms to play, but also to convey all of the emotional, dramatic, and psychological depths within any given work. It is the struggle to understand and interpret these indications that sometimes gives rise to a peculiar form of musical fundamentalism. I have consistently seen serious musicians who pride themselves on being free from all other forms of illiberalism succumb to an intellectually rigorous and highly inflexible form of legalism when it comes to understanding a score. These well-meaning, and often brilliant souls comb manuscript facsimiles, first editions, and *Urtext* versions in order to determine exactly what the composer wrote, and then reproduce the notation in aural terms as exactly as possible. The problems encountered here are those of hermeneutics, and are intimately related to issues of Biblical interpretation. Any seminarian or Sunday-School teacher who is serious about the Bible knows that there is a difference between a wooden and fearful literalism, and a reading of Scripture which accurately discerns the meaning of the text and sheds light on the Mind of God. While misreading the Scriptures may or may not have an immediate effect on one's life (depending, of course, on the passage and the magnitude of the mistake), one hears the effect of this musical literalism quite readily. I have often had the impression, listening to performances of this sort, that I was listening to an X-ray or perhaps a blue-print of the piece, rather than experiencing the work itself. To make these criticisms is not to belittle the magnitude of the problems involved, either in Biblical or musical hermeneutics. Indeed, given the allusiveness and inexactness inherent in musical discourse, the composer's task in conveying information, and the performer's task in decoding it are

both daunting, perhaps even more so than the task faced by the interpreter of words, even the Word of God.

Many aspects of musical style can only be hinted at in the notation; certain features, for example the characteristic distortions of rhythmic patterns found in the Polish mazurka or the Viennese waltz, may be completely absent from the score, and can only be discerned through a familiarity with aural traditions which may in some instances be either corrupt or dead. Without a knowledge of changing conventions in the meaning of notation through history, one can follow the text quite literally and be quite wrong about the composer's intention. For example, without knowing that Baroque composers occasionally notated triple meter using duple notation, one will play the gigues of Bach's French Suite in D Minor and Clavier Partita in E Minor in the incorrect rhythm. (See Howard Ferguson, *Keyboard Interpretation*, pp. 92-97.)

One may be stymied in the search for a definitive text, which contains the answer to every question about the composer's intention. There may not be such a thing as one authoritative *Urtext*, but rather a collection of equally valid possibilities. (This may even be true of certain Twentieth-Century figures, as harried Charles Ives scholars surely know.) Even with the existence of an *Urtext*, one may discover that the score is in some sense incomplete, as is the case with several of Mozart's concerti, in which certain passages were left blank by the composer, who would have improvised at those points. (Even during the Mozart Year of 1991, when more information about the composer and his era was available than at any other time in history, some performers persisted in leaving such blank spots alone, for fear that by doing otherwise, they might desecrate the Master's work.) In any score, even one by an objectivist like Igor Stravinsky, there is abundant room, even abundant necessity, for the performer to probe behind the notation for what can be discovered about the piece through structural and harmonic analysis, and beyond that, for what the instincts of a finely-tuned musical sensitivity can intuit.

The recognition of the issues raised above, coupled with the same fervent search for musical truth seen in what I have termed "musical fundamentalism," has led in recent decades to a new and increasingly influential historicist approach to music-making, whose avowed purpose is to recover the lost performance practices of the musical past. As "The Early Music Movement," adherents to this approach have at best rendered in invaluable service by allowing us to hear music which in some cases had lain forgotten and unheard since the Thirteenth and Fourteenth Centuries, in performances which recreate original vocal and instrumental techniques as closely as can be imagined by modern scholarship. With the increasing popularity of this approach, it is now possible to purchase newly-built fortepianos painstakingly copied from originals on Beethoven and Schubert played, and some intrepid souls, notably the pianist and scholar Robert D. Levin, have relearned the improvisational style and practice of the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries. Not content with their conquest of the Baroque

and Viennese Classical repertoires, "original instruments" ensembles have begun to make forays into the Romantic repertoire favored by major symphony orchestras and instrumental soloists. Furthermore, this historicism has begun to make inroads into musical traditions besides that of "classical" music, as witnessed by the recent appearance of *Urtext* editions (published by Oberlin College) devoted to the music of "Big Band" composers such as Duke Ellington and Count Basie, and the Smithsonian Institution's funding of a jazz repertory orchestra dedicated to the performance of such scores.

In its search for musical truth, this historicist view of music making is clearly preferable to the narrow "fundamentalist" view to which I referred earlier. Unlike that earlier view, which elevates the written text to prominence without taking other factors into account, the historicist approach recognizes, and indeed revels in the ambiguities of musical notation, and wishes resolve as many of them as possible through a thorough examination of the context of the composer's own time. Through the revival of previously obsolete instruments and the performance techniques appropriate to them, we have been made aware of once unimagined colors and textures which often resolve musical problems which do not readily yield to the specific characteristics of late Twentieth-Century instrumental design. In many concrete ways, the historicist approach has brought us closer to the sound-world of many composers.

For all of the good that has been brought about through this approach, however, problems remain. Some within the "authentic instruments" movement make stridently fundamentalist claims about what they see as a moral imperative to play any given piece of music exclusively on the instruments appropriate to the historical period in which it was written. Now that concert pianists have largely abandoned the "inauthentic" performance of Bach on modern Steinways, the authenticists would now urge them to abandon Beethoven and Schubert, with Mendelssohn likely to follow. While such issues are hotly debated on numerous grounds (for an excellent introduction to the debate, see Nicholas Kenyon's anthology, *Authenticity and Early Music*), the objections to such an authenticist viewpoint can be summarized as follows. Firstly, there is an implied elitism here which I see as very dangerous to the future of music-making. Given that original period instruments are rare and often fragile, and that authentic copies are often hand-made and expensive, the insistence on the "proper" choice of instrument can have the effect of driving more and more varieties of music into the hands of the privileged few and away from less privileged musicians and amateurs. The increased specialization which can also follow from this insistence on musicological correctness is also a mixed blessing at best. While we may gain insight from those who spend most of a career in one side of the repertoire, we concurrently risk losing a sense of breadth and wholeness of musical understanding, as specialists increasingly retreat into their specialty and become decreasingly able to talk across these narrowly defined boundaries. Perhaps

most importantly, there is a suggestion in all of this that the right communications technology is necessary in order to get one's message across. It is, oddly enough, a cousin of the notion that elections are won through the proper application of sound-bites and spin-doctors. Any Christian world-view should be wary of too easy a reliance on technology as a substitute for Incarnation. Just as the message of Jesus speaks as readily in Urdu or Tagalog as in Aramaic or Shakespearian English, a performance of J. S. Bach's *Kunst der Fuge* will be potentially just as moving an experience if it is done with a string quartet as it would be using an organ, clavichord, or piano.

PART III
WHOSE PERFORMANCE IS IT, ANYWAY?
(EGO, PERFORMANCE PRACTICE, AND OTHER MATTERS)

Le concert, c'est moi.
(attributed to Franz Liszt)

THE PERFORMER'S ATTITUDE TOWARDS THE WORK AND THE AUDIENCE

We begin, at this point in our discussion, to move beyond the textual issues involved in performance toward those which are, in one or more respects, social in nature. Certain aspects of performance, although affected to an extent by questions of technology, are certainly not addressed fully by them. In light of the previous discussion about the position and work of the composer, there remain questions about the degree to which the composer's intention and personality should dominate in a musical performance. Is the performer merely a passive vessel, a butler who brings the composer his slippers and then unobtrusively leaves the room? Does the performer somehow duplicate the composer's labors onstage, or in some mystical way become the composer in an act of musical transubstantiation? Or does the composer serve the performer and the audience, giving them his creative gifts to be used as they see fit? Different musicians have adopted widely differing views on the subject. C. P. E. Bach, writing during the time of transition between the older concept of art based on mimesis and the more modern model based on personal expression, asserts in his highly influential *Essay on the True Art of Playing Keyboard Instruments* (1762) that "a musician cannot move others unless he too is moved" (*op. cit.*, p. 152). This is the attitude Beethoven adopted when astonishing his listeners with audacious improvisation, and is also the attitude suggested by Schumann in his comment accompanying the last of the *Davidshändler Dances*, *Op. 6*, "Here, somewhat superfluously, Eusebius added the following, his eyes glistening all the while." At quite the opposite end of the spectrum, others have argued that the performer cannot be truly expressive unless he maintains a certain objective detachment between himself and the music. (For a discussion of the difference between pathos and true emotion which encompasses "restraint, and forbearance, renunciation, power, activity, patience, magnanimity, joyousness, and that all-controlling intelligence wherein feeling actually takes its rise," see Ferruccio Busoni, "Sketch of a New Æsthetic of Music," in *Three Classics in the Æsthetic of Music*, pp. 97-100.) If forced to take a position among these pivotal thinkers, I would suggest that, as with all debates between the heart and the head, the answer lies in synthesis. An inability to connect in some meaningful way with the emotive, psychological, or spiritual intent of the composer results in a performance that can deal, no matter how intelligently, only with the surface of things. A physician and a lover will describe the same face very differently. However, both, for very different reasons, may fail to be completely accurate. Without some objective balance, a performer, just as a lover, will tend to present nothing but sensory impressions, under the pretense of offering up

the truth. In essence, these reflections lead us back to one of the cautions raised earlier about Incarnational thinking. Without the reminder that God is first and foremost transcendent and Wholly Other, a preoccupation with His immanence can lead very quickly to an intellectually sloppy and emotionally sentimental monism or pantheism. Following these same lines of thought, one can say that the performer need not partake directly of the composer's psyche in order to express the intent of the composer's music. Just as the performer and work do not exactly become one (although the performer will often find that the most effective performances are often those in which he is least conscious of his own ego), neither are the composer and the work one in identity. Jesus took on human form, and took upon Himself the sin of the world without Himself becoming a sinful. This frees us from fear of becoming preoccupied with such pervasive ideas as that which suggests that an artist is not truly so except to the extent that he or she suffers within the fallen world. The French composer Darius Milhaud, in a 1958 letter to a student asking about such teachings in the writings of Richard Wagner, addresses this point quite touchingly:

I had a marvelously happy childhood. My wife is my companion, my collaborator; we are the best of friends, and this gives me great happiness. My son is a painter who works incessantly, and he is sweet and loving to his parents. Thus I can say that I've had a happy life, and if I compose, it's because I am in *love* with music and I wouldn't know how to do anything else Your Wagner quote proves to me once again that he was an idiot. You will probably think that I've been very lucky, and you're right. But even if a composer does have a difficult and unhappy life, he still writes out of love (think of Schubert), and it's in that love that he finds consolation and a reason for living. The idea that you can only make a work of art out of repression, semi-hysteria, or having your nose constantly out of joint, seems to me the most infantile and superficial notion anyone can have. (Darius Milhaud, Letter [1958], translated and quoted by William Bolcom in liner notes for *Electra-Nonesuch* 9 71316-2, 1975.)

For Milhaud, love is the key to the creative enterprise. I would suggest that it is also the key to the proper relationship between performer and audience. One of the greatest occupational dangers for the performer is the amount of isolation involved in honing one's craft. A certain amount of pseudo-monastic discipline is required of any singer or instrumentalist in order to develop a thorough command of one's technique, and a thorough understanding of the composition at hand; and yet both monastic and musical literatures also attest to the way in which such isolation can lead, if unbalanced, to paranoia, egomania, and other personal distortions. (For these very reasons, chamber music can be an important avenue for musical and personal balance.) In addition, the highly competitive environment experienced at most major music schools, along with the combative pedagogical techniques particularly favored by an older generation of conservatory teacher, tend to have the effect of turning every inter-personal encounter into something confrontational. It has been the experience of many performers, including myself, that a special effort is required to break through these constantly-reinforced patterns of behavior in order to present one's work as a gift to the listener,

and ultimately to the Lord. As trite and clichéd as this sort of discussion can become, it seems absolutely crucial that the performer approach his work not in a spirit of defensiveness (in which there is something, such as one's self-worth, to be proved) but in a spirit of giving. It not only elevates the others involved from the status of potential enemy to friend, but it also allows the performer to work without fear or inner constraint. There is at least one more thing to be said about the relationship of performer to listener, which grows out of the last few statements. If performers are to give, they should give freely without regard to who is listening. There should be no such thing as "an important gig," in which one plays in order to curry favor with the wealthy and influential who happen to be in attendance, and there should be no such thing as "a little gig," in which the audience is too unsophisticated or unappreciative to be worth the performer's best energies.

THE SOCIAL ROLES OF THE PERFORMER

In this complex relationship between performer and listener, what social role does the performer play? That is to say, once we have dealt with the technical and hermeneutical hurdles in the way of performing a piece of music, and once we have dealt with our stance towards the audience, what is it we are doing for them? To this may also be added the related question sometimes asked by Christians: "What are we doing for God?"

*****THE CHRISTIAN AND ART AS WITNESS*****

Young, zealous Christians who get involved in music at some level often come to a point at which they become quite concerned about whether their practicing and performing are of any functional value in extending the Kingdom of God. They wonder whether or not "secular" music, especially of the instrumental variety, can possibly convey any sort of Christian witness to the listening audience. Some may respond to such anxieties by choosing to restrict their performing activities to "Christian" music, reasoning that the performance of a Dino hymn-arrangement must carry with it more spiritual power than a Brahms intermezzo. Others deal with the issue through cultivating outward, visible signs of inward piety. They wear crosses on their lapels and, once onstage, bow in obvious gestures of prayer before beginning to play or sing. This, the approach I followed during my teens, arises out of the theory that if an audience member somehow recognizes that the performer is a Christian through such signs, and is moved or impressed by the performance, that person will automatically be led to seek out the performer after the concert for spiritual counsel. It is the same theory which undergirds such phenomena as the "muscular Christianity" studied by James Mattheson and others. As I have continued in my pilgrimage, I have begun to question the value of such an

approach. I currently wonder whether "reaching the audience for Jesus" is even the point for a performer, particularly one within the "classical" tradition. I find myself speculating that Christians might find more freedom, while at the same time more readily finding their intended vocation, if they acted not **for Christ** and His Kingdom, but **in Christ** and His Kingdom. To put it in terms directly applicable to the performer's situation, I am suggesting that the performer will do better if he does not self-consciously labor to somehow reach the audience for God, but rather offer his work, in the practice studio as well as on-stage, to God as an acceptable sacrifice. I do not wish to push the priestly analogy too far, nor do I wish to suggest that performing artists are in any sense exempt from the Great Commission. (No one who uses the arts as a cultural Tarshish in which to hide from God's call to minister in another way should find any comfort in these words.) I am suggesting, following analogically the principles set forth by the Apostle Paul in I Corinthians 12 concerning the necessary diversity of the Body of Christ, that once released from false guilt arising from misunderstanding the performer's role, we may find ourselves better able to do both the work of the artist and the work of the Kingdom.

Nicholas Wolterstorff (in his important exploration of a Christian approach to the artistic life, *Art in Action*) has written quite persuasively of the varying social functions for which a work of art may be fit. He quite rightly suggests that a symphonic work designed for the primary purpose of "aesthetic contemplation" may not be best fitted for the purpose of supporting the liturgical action of a Christian worship service, and conversely, a hymn which enhances a congregation's ability to praise God may not stand up well under the purely musical scrutiny of the concert hall. While making such distinctions between various functions of art, he is also careful not to suggest, for example, that one should be easily satisfied with liturgical music of inferior aesthetic quality simply because it is not meant for "aesthetic contemplation." (I shall return to the notion of aesthetic contemplation shortly.) It seems reasonable to argue that Christian performers will be at ease with their roles before the public in part to the degree that they understand the different services they provide.

AESTHETIC CONTEMPLATION

We have already suggested quite strongly that the performer of music -- the performer of music without a verbal text is particularly in mind here -- does not present the listener with propositional truth. Musical communication is abstract, allusive rather than direct, and (to again use Harold M. Best's terminology) "multi-meaningful." The listener can, however, be presented with an object or experience for the purpose of what Wolterstorff calls "'aesthetic contemplation.'" It would be useful to consider this term briefly, in order to understand its possible meanings and to reflect on Wolterstorff's argument.

In Wolterstorff's view, "aesthetic contemplation" is the consideration of an art-work for the purpose of finding *aesthetic satisfaction* (his italics), in a way which may be quite distinct from the original purpose of the work. (*Art in Action*, p. 33.) It is a consideration which is disinterested by its very nature, and which generates a satisfaction in contemplation which does not *result* (his italics), but rather is a satisfaction *in* listening. It is essentially the same thing as dealing with art for its own sake. (Ibid., p. 34.) He suggests that such an approach to art is a relatively new phenomenon characteristic of the West. Citing another aphorism from Paul Valéry, which states that "the most evident characteristic of a *work of art* may be termed *uselessness* . . ." (Ibid., p. 35), he suggests that contemplation for its own sake is a criterion by which one can tell whether a particular discipline is a fine art in our society. As an example, he states that

philosophy is not a fine art in our society. And by this criterion it proves not to be that. For though perhaps there are some works of philosophy which reward contemplation for its own sake, works of philosophy are seldom if ever produced with such contemplation as one of their primary uses. Philosophy is for increased insight. (Ibid., p. 37.)

It is at this point that I, reading as a working artist, begin to have trouble with Dr. Wolterstorff, writing as a working philosopher. I do not fundamentally disagree with him in his concern that disinterested aesthetic contemplation (using his definition) as the sole purpose for art leads to a value- and responsibility-free artistic community with nothing to say to all sorts and conditions of humanity. Nor do I challenge his contention that such contemplation is an ideal toward which a certain school of aesthetics strives. What I question is the extent to which such contemplation can ever be practiced in a pure form. All of us, particularly in this speed-driven era, have limits to our attention-spans. As serious a musician as I must confess to having a mind that wanders on occasion during the late string quartets of Beethoven, and that contemplation of a work of art may lead to a rambling free-association through any number of topics related to the work tangentially, or not at all. In my teaching of general-education courses, I have found that students are generally baffled by an exhortation to "just listen," and prefer to be shown how one can listen, for example, to the shape of a melody, to rhythmic patterning, or to the dramatic or psychological plan of the work. I also contend that as one becomes more seriously engaged in a work, merely disinterested contemplation will cease to be sufficient. Serious contemplation of an art-work should lead, if only passingly or by a stream-of-consciousness route, to reflection about the states of mind or emotion suggested by the work, and, particularly in the case of verbal artistic expressions, to reflection about the world presented or challenged by the artist. I further question the implication that art, even as abstract an art-form as music, is not for increased insight. I want to maintain that insight is not the sole preserve of the verbal, rational, and analytical aspects of human consciousness, but can also, in a way congruent with

itself, be obtained through the abstract, imaginative, and intuitive parts of our being. Contemplating Pablo Picasso's *Old Guitarist* may not give one much cognitive insight into the nature of guitar-playing, or into the socio-economic status of musicians at the turn of the century, but may tell something in the end

about blueness, about design, about distortion or perception which can be just as enriching in its own way as the more readily defined insights which Dr. Wolterstorff finds in his own discipline.

In order to be accurate, and fair to Wolterstorff, I must point out that he ultimately affirms the place of some form of artistic contemplation in a Christian view of the arts; that he so evidently admires the music of the Catholic mystic Olivier Messiaen only serves to illustrate this. I am strongly convinced that, in a society which allows so little time for respite from the noise and distraction of mass culture and everyday life, we can do worse than to offer music as a "calculated trap for meditation." (Denis de Rougement, cited in *Art in Action*, p. 67.) What we must avoid, in our own preparation as performers as well as in our presentations to the public, is the mistake of making an idol out of a possible icon.

There is at least one more point to be touched upon here. I maintain, as does Wolterstorff, that the work of art so considered need not be beautiful or edifying in a simplistic, Sunday-Schoolish sort of way, in order to be worthy of contemplation. Indeed, a realistic understanding of the fallenness of the world would suggest that "Art does not lift us out of the radical evil of our history, but plunges us into it. Art is not man's savior but a willing accomplice in his crimes." (Ibid., p. 84.) Even art which is redemptive will, of necessity need to reflect the Darkness if it wishes to point towards humanity's urgent need of the Light. As for beauty, the term is so relative as to have very little widely agreed-upon meaning. As Wolterstorff points out (Ibid., pp. 161-163), a work need not be beautiful, in a conventional sense, to have æsthetic excellence and significance; nor is a conventionally beautiful work necessarily superior to one that is not beautiful. To assert otherwise denies any sort of prophetic role for art, and suggests that the purpose of art is merely to soothe and reassure. Those skilled in the meditative arts know that contemplation may lead not just into green pastures, but also through the Valley of the Shadow of Death.

*****ENTERTAINMENT AND ENJOYMENT*****

Christians tend to become unduly nervous about the idea of entertainment. Anxious to redeem the time in evil days, some in the Church become very scrupulous about anything that might be construed as a waste of time. Such an attitude requires that whatever is done be serious, edifying and useful. Christians are not alone in this tendency. There is a certain type of performer, who approaches great music in a high-priestly way, who shuns all but the loftiest sentiments as unworthy of attention. The widely-quoted remark attributed to Artur Schnabel -- "I wish to play only music which is greater than it can possibly be played" -- sums up this attitude quite well.

As difficult as it may be to fault such a musical approach in its sobriety and nobility of purpose, it must be pointed out that the facts of music history suggest a wild commingling of the sublime and the ridiculous in the work of many of the "Great Masters." Johann Sebastian Bach, the devout Cantor

of Leipzig, was equally capable of the depths of the Mass in B Minor and the farce of the "Coffee" Cantata. Haydn and Beethoven shared a large propensity for inserting moments of low humor in symphonies and sonatas (for a concise and stimulating discussion of humor in music, see Alfred Brendel, *Music Sounded Out*, pp. 12-53), and the recital programs of Franz Liszt offer a remarkable study in contrasts, sonatas of Beethoven presented alongside such trashy virtuoso delights as Liszt's own *Grande Gallop Chromatique*. Throughout the history of "high" art one finds that high and low, serious and diverting, important and transient, exist side by side. Perhaps the fixation on the deepest, greatest, and most sublime works, with which many in the "high" art establishment are consumed, actually deprives us of the ability to truly understand the place such works occupy. If we hear only Beethoven's last piano sonatas and not his dance-hall music as well, our perception of both is skewed.

As for Christian attitudes toward entertainment, a search of the Scriptures yields neither outright denunciation or unqualified endorsement. In perusing two of the most "worldly" books of the Old Testament, Proverbs and Ecclesiastes, one finds that cheerfulness and merriment of heart are encouraged (Proverbs 15:13, 15), and yet there are also clear warnings about over-indulgence. In Proverbs 10:23, one finds that "lewdness is entertainment for the stupid . . ." The Preacher of Ecclesiastes is perhaps even more to the point. In his assertion that "all things are wearisome; no one can see them all, no eye can hear them all, no ear can hear them all" (Ecclesiastes 1:8), one hears very clear counsel to an age of sensory overstimulation, with its twenty-four hour news networks, its packages of the complete Mozart on multiple CDs, and its nearly complete motion-picture heritage available on VHS. In a time when so much is available to us so readily, it becomes extremely difficult for those who pride themselves as being literate and current to know how to seek and choose only that which is essential. Like the warnings against strong drink, these Scriptural warnings about entertainment seem primarily concerned with excess and obsession which become idolatrous, and thus prevent one from loving mercy, doing justice, and walking humbly with God (Micah 6:8). Balance would appear to be an essential key. The performer within the "classical" tradition may romp through the thickets of the Romantic virtuoso repertoire, and find pleasure in being able to be fast and fleet (compare with the famous moment from the film *Chariots of Fire*, in which Eric Liddell tells his sister that when he runs, he feels God's pleasure). Even so, such a performer risks losing sight of the deeper reaches of music-making if he or she fails to explore works which depend on qualities other than fleetness and dazzlement to make their effects. Perhaps even performers of Contemporary Christian music can relax at times from their strained assertions that they minister rather than entertain, if indeed what they do is actually entertainment (I will not deny that there are those within the field of Contemporary Christian music whose purposes are indeed prophetic and evangelistic). Yet, they should not forget that the distinction between entertainment and worship is a crucial one; the Church will be seriously crippled if it confuses the two on a regular basis. The Lord allows us the freedom to

enjoy this life as much as is possible, given the ugliness and sinfulness of the fallen world, but if we enjoy created things without returning thanks to the One Whom we are to glorify and enjoy forever, we will indeed be seriously out of balance.

One final question in this part of the discussion: what of the composition which is intended as a serious statement, or even as an act of specifically Christian ministry, which is taken by the listener as entertainment despite the composer's and performer's best efforts? There are several factors to consider in such a case. The first is the parabolic nature of musical discourse. To return to Jerry Gill's points about the Incarnational aspects of art, as outlined in Part I of this essay, that which is parabolic by nature runs the risk of being misunderstood. It is necessary for any artist, regardless of medium, to understand and accept this point if he or she wishes to avoid chronic frustration. There are artists -- Christian, Marxist, radical feminist, and pagan alike -- who accompany their work with elaborate explanations (sometimes eclipsing the work itself in size) in order to insure that the work will be understood properly. I side with those who would argue that if the artist has something so crucial to say that it must be written about, he or she should write the essay and forget, at least for the time being, about the art-work. Another factor to consider is the responsibility of the listener. Jesus's "Parable of the Sower" is worth remembering in this regard (Luke 8: 5-8; also parallel passages). The sower casts the seed (spreads the Good News) to the best of his ability and with all his heart, but he does not worry about the condition of every square inch of soil, or about the rate of growth of every seed. So it is with the dissemination of art. The composer and performer do their best to present something of value, and something which can connect with the listener, but it is then the listener's responsibility and privilege to respond to the work as he or she is able and sees fit. The artist can perhaps find consolation in the possibility that the listener may come to recognize something more of the work's value and content long after the fact of the initial encounter with it. Ezekiel puts it memorably : "To them you are no more than a singer of fine songs with a lovely voice and skill as a harpist. They will listen to what you say, but none will act on it. When the time comes, as it will, they will know there has been a prophet in their midst." (Ezekiel 33:32-35.)

*****WALLPAPER MUSIC AND THE PERFORMER*****

Both the concepts of music as an object or means of contemplation and of music as entertainment assume that the listener who contemplates or is entertained encounters the music in question as a center of perception. It would be a mistake, however, to assume that all music is even intended to be focused upon in such a way. Muzak, much of film music, music played in a restaurant or at an elegant reception, even much church music (consider the melodramatic "mood-music" with which church organists sometimes accompany pastoral prayers or altar-calls) is meant to occupy only the periphery of one's attention. It is meant to attract and keep no more attention than the wallpaper

in a tastefully appointed room. It adds ambience in such a way that one is barely aware of its function. (One of the curses of being a professional musician is the inability to hear any but the very quietest and most unobtrusive music without analyzing it, whether or not it was intended for such scrutiny.) This sort of "wallpaper" music is commonly regarded with condescension by musicians, particularly those trained in "high-art" institutions where it is often regarded as virtually blasphemous to treat music with anything less than full and reverent attention. Many of these same musicians find themselves, at some point in their lives, compelled to make "wallpaper" music in order to make ends meet, and some may find lasting employment in Hollywood or in a local French café. Disappointment and bitterness are major occupational hazards in such circumstances, as is an attitude of inattention towards one's work. If nobody is listening, it is easy not to care about what is heard. For the Christian, such an attitude is inconsistent with God's call to be faithful and content in whatever circumstances one is placed (Philippians 4:11). Again, an understanding of one's life and work as a true and acceptable flesh-and-blood sacrifice offered continually before the Throne is of vital importance. Whether or not anyone else notices, we serve God. Otherwise, no amount of applause will ever be enough -- we will always crave more. This attitude of giving to God, and therefore to others in His name, is a very different one than the old Romantic notion of the artist as heroic figure. It looks back to the older vision of the artist as craftsman and servant with which generations of the Bach family were familiar. Might it just be that the ability to work in this way not only makes it possible to be a good steward as a "wallpaper" musician, but also, in the end, allows one to be a healthier artist at whatever level one finds one's self?

PART IV THE CHRISTIAN PERFORMER IN THE WORLD AND IN THE ACADEMY

**Work that is at once creative, disciplined, and responsible, yet joyous and free
because we are doing what we were born to be, always glorifies God.**

(Leanne Payne, *The Healing Presence*, p. 169)

BEING IN AND NOT OF THE WORLD

Artists tend to imagine that they wrestle with problems of unusual difficulty, unique to themselves. As a Juilliard undergraduate leading a chapter of Inter-Varsity Christian Fellowships, I once asked a local pastor to speak to us on the subject of "The Ego," which, I assured him, was a particular problem for those of us in the performing arts. I remember his ironic laughter, followed by the remark: "That's a false dilemma. Did you think that this is not a problem for those of us who preach week after week?" I have since come to see that the questions faced by Christian artists, as they confront the alien culture which surrounds them (and to which they in large measure belong), are more akin to those faced by Christians in other walks of life than not. Therefore, I find it somewhat unnecessary to write at length about issues of moral decision-making, competition, and clashing worldviews -- issues with which the Body of Christ, and certainly a Christian academic community such as Wheaton College, ought to wrestle together, in all Her richness and diversity. I do, however, wish to touch upon some questions of direction which are being widely asked within the artistic community itself, both Christian and Pagan, in order to see if Christian thinking might suggest possible stances.

Within the realm of "classical" music, there is much debate currently about matters of canon, just as there are in academic circles generally. In music, these debates are not merely centered on issues of political power (e.g. whether the hegemony of the dead, white, heterosexual, European male ought to be overthrown) but on the more fundamental question of whether the "classical" tradition is dying, or has at least lost its ability to speak to modern humanity. In a sense, powerful voices representing a post-Christian, post-Modern culture are beginning to ask the same question of us that has been asked for many years by skeptics within the Church -- "is it worth doing?" Are the strenuous efforts required to master traditional virtuoso technique and to gain an understanding of the Common Practice musical language of the West a waste of time when so few seem eager to listen, and when the future of the Global Village seems to demand a cross-cultural scope which increasingly marginalizes "the Classics?" Two examples might suffice to illustrate the point of this question.

The first example comes from the fairly recent history of a well-known Christian parachurch organization. A little over a decade ago, representatives of Campus Crusade for Christ visited the IVCF chapter at Juilliard in order to announce plans for a Christian symphony orchestra, to be based out of Campus Crusade facilities in southern California. The orchestra's conductor-designate assured the group that his goal was to build an orchestra so professional and musically exciting that the Iron and Bamboo Curtains would be compelled to open to this musical missionary endeavor, and urged the young musicians to consider the possibility that God might call them to this project. Sometime later, one such interested student (a room-mate of mine who later taught for a short time at Wheaton College) received a letter from Campus Crusade explaining that plans for the orchestra had been scrapped. It went on to explain that a poll had been taken which showed that an infinitesimal percentage of the world's population listened to "classical" music, thus suggesting that the project was not worth the expenditure of time and money.

The second example is in the form of a very recent article by Joseph Horowitz entitled, "Immortal Masterpieces to Snooze By." (*The New York Times*, June 9, 1991, 2:1ff.) The article, occasioned by the annual convention of the American Symphony Orchestra League, begins with the following assertions and questions:

Whether the [ASOL] convention's 2,000-plus delegates confront it or deny it, classical music is in decline -- and its troubles are artistic, not just financial. The audience is old and dwindling. Piano and song recitals are disappearing. New music has no certain role. Concerts, and the canonized repertory they recycle, are rituals of familiarity, marketed and consumed according to the over-priced celebrity performers they showcase. In other art forms, interest in new works is taken for granted. Even as a museum culture, classical music is too often second-rate, merchandising fancy reproductions of the old masters.

Is classical music a thing of the past? If so, can it be renewed?

From that sobering beginning, Horowitz goes on to discuss the phenomena of "midcult" (a term which he borrows from Dwight Macdonald), phenomena epitomized by the Public Broadcasting Corporation *Great Performers* broadcasts, the new breed of "classical top-40" radio stations, and by such spectacles as Luciano Pavarotti at Madison Square Garden. (In the first chapter of his book, *Understanding Toscanini*, pp. 18-22, Horowitz reminds readers that such events have a long history in the United States, going back at least as far as Jenny Lind's 1850 American tour, master-minded by P. T. Barnum.) He faults the music appreciation movement in this century for encouraging consumption of music without any attendant curiosity or interest in it; he quotes the following from an RCA Victor executive: "You can enjoy a Beethoven symphony without being able to read notes, without knowing who Beethoven was, when he lived, or what he tried to express." (Such a formula for free-floating enjoyment sounds quite close to Wolterstorff's definition of disinterested æsthetic contemplation.) He sees that such an uninformed popularization of music served to encourage the "sacralization" of a few

established Great Composers and a few *New York Times*-guaranteed Great Performers who become the very point of experiencing music at all. In other words, it leads to a commercial mentality which encourages one not go to hear **Brahms**, but to hear **Barenboim**, who will, just incidentally, happen to conduct Brahms. The same mentality is represented by those audio enthusiasts who know more about the minute differences between each of Herbert von Karajan's recordings of the Beethoven symphonies than about the symphonies themselves. Horowitz regards this as a situation in which there is no respect for creativity or eagerness for challenge. "No wonder," he writes, "classical music now alienates both intellectuals and the young." By way of suggested remedies for this current cultural landscape, Horowitz looks to people like Ernest Fleischman, manager of the Los Angeles Philharmonic, and violinist Gidon Kremer. He looks with favor on a Brooklyn Academy of Music chamber music festival, organized by Mr. Kremer and featuring "church performances of Haydn, Pergolesi, Sofia Gubaidulina and Arvo Pärt, a chorus from Pakistan, a Soviet jazz pianist, a Cuban-American band, a one-man Shakespeare troupe and a Peter Sellars music-theater piece," and mentions similar efforts by Mr. Fleischman in California.

How does one respond to these challenges? The case of the Campus Crusade orchestra strikes me as a sad and even ominous commentary on the state of some Christian thinking. It is a textbook example of the utilitarian approach to Christian living, to which I alluded earlier, which majors in doing things **for Christ** rather than **in Christ**. Such an approach values any human activity only to the extent that it serves the immediate, pragmatic needs of the Church. It tends to create a false separation between work which seems more spiritual and that which seems less so. Thus, in this instance, orchestral playing is seen as a good thing as long as it serves another end (e.g. getting across the Iron Curtain for the purpose of evangelism). However, once a poll shows it to be a marginal activity in the world at large, it becomes not worth doing. It is worth noting that similar demographic studies would likely find Christian theology, moral and ethical teachings to be nearly as "irrelevant" as Brahms symphonies. Presumably no-one employed by Campus Crusade would seriously suggest subjecting the fundamentals of the faith to polling data. An understanding of the goodness of the primeval order of Creation, and an Incarnational understanding of the allusive, parabolic nature of mediated revelation join together to suggest that, under the Lordship of Christ, there is no lawful human activity which is less useful, or less conducive to sacrificial living before God than any other. The determination of a Brother Lawrence to "perform all his actions for the love of God" (Brother Lawrence, *The Practice of the Presence of God*, p. 20) gives reason enough to do any job joyfully and well. For Lawrence, it could be washing dishes; for the Christian performer or artist, it can be the task of making art.

In his *New York Times* article, as in his other writings, Joseph Horowitz raises a number of serious and thought-provoking criticisms of the current musical scene. It is true that the "classical"

tradition seems somewhat ossified and lacking in vitality. Much concert-going seems a seeking after the æsthetic equivalent of warm milk and cookies, something comfortable, familiar, doing little more than calming the stomach. (How often do Wheaton students in the Introduction to Music course write of a favorite piece, such as Antonio Vivaldi's *Quattro Stagione* or a Chopin nocturne, that it is "smooth and flowing, and makes me feel peaceful.") It is true that much of the market for "classical" music is generated by the same sort of image-driven attention to manufactured celebrity which so completely dominates Hollywood. (For a visual example of the attention paid to image in the current recording industry, one need only turn to the recent CD release of the Brahms Violin Concerto, as played by British violinist Nigel Kennedy. The cover photograph seems expressly designed to sell recordings and draw in audiences in spite of the fact that this is a recording of one of the "Great Works." It shows Mr. Kennedy with a post-Punk haircut, a three-day growth of beard, and a confrontational facial expression, all of which clashes quite startlingly with one's preconceived notions of the work itself.)

Furthermore, it is true that "classical" music tends, in this day and age, to be consciously associated with wealth and privilege in such a way as to offend many with an intact social conscience. The advertisements commonly heard on "fine arts" radio station such as Chicago's WFMT-FM seem to suggest that such music is merely a charming social pendant which, when attached to a life of expensive cars and conspicuous assumption, reassures the neighbors that one is well-bred, not merely well-heeled. The associations made in such ads implicate me in a classist and elitist worldview which I cannot accept, and which, by virtue of my being a musician and an academic, I cannot sustain economically, simply by virtue of my love for the music thus associated. The use of music in commercial messages targeted to the upper classes exhibits a curious tendency towards shoddiness and artistic insensitivity. Though not the greatest masterpiece of Western tradition, George Gershwin's *Rhapsody in Blue* seems to have been permanently tainted by its use in United Airlines advertisements. Occasionally, such usage borders on the unintentionally comic. At this writing, there is a radio and television spot for Isuzu automobiles which uses as its musical background the "Dies irae" from Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart's *Requiem*. Whatever can the producers of the ad have intended? Can they be unaware of the ironic possibility that Mozart, the Medieval liturgical poet, and the Lord God of Hosts join together in this music to warn Madison Avenue and the covetous society on which it feeds of the awesome wrath which awaits the unrepentant?

If the audiences are shrinking, the production of truly creative new work is drying up, and the financial and cultural forces which present "classical" music are decadent, why not quit? Why not declare the Western tradition dead, and open one's self to other traditions, given especially the cross-cultural nature of our time? The answer, in part, lies in the danger any society courts by forgetting its past. We, like the Hebrew people throughout Biblical history, easily lose sight of past blessings, and have an arrogant tendency to assume that we know better than our predecessors. The past exists, in

part, to stand as a witness and corrective against our foolishness. It is for this reason that the cloud of witnesses is so important to the Church, and for this reason that I am opposed to the eagerness on the part of some denominations to alter anything in historical hymnody which does not appeal to our particular theological or sociological prejudices. Our forebears may well have erred on a number of points, but are we so sure that we err less, though perhaps in different ways? George Rochberg, an American composer who, though not a Christian fellow-traveller, works and thinks within a deeply moral frame of reference, has written eloquently about the relevance of the past to the present, as a result of his quest to understand the challenges and pitfalls of Twentieth-Century Modernism. In his 1969 essay, "The Avant-Garde and the Aesthetics of Survival," he wrote, "There is no greater provincialism than that special form of sophistication and arrogance which denies the past, and no greater danger to the human spirit than to proclaim value only for its narrow slice of contemporaneity," and warned against "the peculiarly Western illusion that only the new can release fresh human energy and vitality . . . and vivify existence" (Rochberg, *The Aesthetics of Survival*, p. 216), arguing on aesthetic and neurological grounds that memory is a crucial part of human experience and design. Elsewhere, he wrote, "if one wipes the slate clean of others, in order to satisfy some misguided notion of being 'contemporary,' one's own fate is, by the same token, equally guaranteed null and void. There is no virtue in starting all over again. The past refuses to be erased. Unlike Boulez, I will not praise amnesia " (Ibid., p. 233.)

In defending the richness, validity, and current relevance of the "classical" tradition of the West, I do not mean to suggest that we in the late Twentieth Century can afford to ignore the global culture around us. The very lifeblood of the "classical" tradition has often depended on infusions from popular and non-Western cultures -- one easily thinks of the waltzes of the Strausses, the Gypsy influences in the works of Liszt and Brahms, the effect of Javanese *gamelan* on the colors and textures of Debussy's music, of Bartók's ethnomusicological researches, or the presence of Hindu rhythmic patterns in the music of Messiaen. In our current musical scene, even apart from the commercial value of such ventures, who can doubt that listeners, composers, and performers have been enriched by the "cross-over" efforts of Yehudi Menuhin, playing jazz with Stéphane Grappelli and Indian music with Ravi Shankar, or of William Bolcom and Joan Morris, performing new concert music and old show tunes with equal aplomb, or of Wynton Marsalis, a Grammy winner in both "classical" and jazz trumpet repertoire. (For the sake of the argument, we may safely ignore other such efforts, like Barbra Streisand's "classical" album, or Plácido Domingo's duets with John Denver.) A keen sense of curiosity, in addition to an undying desire to learn new tricks at whatever age, seem to be a part of the equipment necessary for long-lasting artistic vitality.

Having granted all of these things, I still wish to offer a caveat of sorts. In my view, openness and flexibility do not necessarily mean the same thing as an unthinking relativism. No artist can be

expected to do all things equally well, or be asked to be all things to all audiences. Even Wynton Marsalis, for all of his extraordinary versatility, has had to choose to concentrate on one thing -- classic jazz -- and in doing so has had to consign his classical repertoire to the sidelines. While not disputing the valid contribution that a breadth of knowledge or activity may bring to the task of music-making, I maintain that breadth, on its own, cannot be a satisfactory substitute for depth -- for the time and concentration required to probe into a musical idiom as deeply as possible. Just as the Church must be anchored in the eternal truth of the Word made flesh if it is to avoid being tossed to and fro by every wind and wave of false teaching (Ephesians 4:14), so the artist, without a solid base from which to work, cannot help but wander aimlessly through the marketplace of ideas. To return once again to theological points explored earlier in this essay, Incarnated reality is sufficient and specific to a given situation; it is, therefore incomplete. Jesus was Incarnate as a carpenter from Nazareth; he was not a stone mason from Jerusalem, nor a government official from C sarica Philippi. Artists need to be free to be what they are, pushing to expand the limits of their abilities, yet still recognizing the special strengths and limitations placed upon them by virtue of technical ability, temperament, training, and taste. Artists, too, make up part of the Body, and are all valuable in particular, unrepeatable ways.

THE PERFORMER IN THE LIBERAL ARTS

To some within the in circle of the Academy, the heading of this final section of my exploration may seem like a blatant oxymoron. After all, it is commonly supposed that the performance of music is a skill rather than a scholarly pursuit, and that conservatories are essentially trade-schools for the performing arts. The typical graduate of an institution such as Juilliard or Peabody has virtually no science on his or her transcript, nothing mathematical apart from specific applications within music theory, and little philosophy. Wherein is the common ground between the performer and the academy? Specifically, given that places like Wheaton College exist in which performers and liberally educated scholars draw salaries from the same source, how does the performer function in such an environment? What, if anything, does the performer offer to the academic community at large, and conversely, what do academicians have to offer to the performer?

The last of these questions is perhaps the easiest to answer. It seems clearer and clearer as time passes that the stereotypically ignorant performer has little place in today's culture. Given the diversity of musical materials handled by today's professional musicians, and given the general cultural breadth once expected of musicians, whether or not they were formally schooled (e.g. Franz Liszt's grasp of and interest in great literature, theology, and art), a narrow interest in merely musical or technical issues can hardly be tolerated. Much of the most intelligent research into "early" music (an exceedingly flexible term which now seems to cover everything from Guillaume de Machaut to Felix

Mendelssohn) ranges widely into areas which are only peripherally connected to music itself. (A

sampling of the topics dealt with in the recent symposium, *Mozart's Nature, Mozart's World*, includes "Mesmerism and Other Crises of Eighteenth-Century Science" and, unlisted in the program book, "Decorative Arts in the Eighteenth Century.") Singers of art song and opera need to know not only how to breathe and phonate correctly, but need to know poetry, language, and psychology as well.

As much as performing musicians need a wide range of disciplines in daily life and in their own work, so can academicians gain from contact from the world of the performer. The search for a basis for this assertion leads us back again to the world of the Incarnational. In the past seven years of teaching at the college level, I have been charged with the musical education of many non-music majors, and have taught a fair number of music majors who have gone on to do relatively little in the discipline itself. In attempting to understand what musical study contributes to the well-being of these students, I have come to regard musical study as a sort of laboratory for research into the human person. Much of the work done within the traditional disciplines of the liberal arts deals primarily with conceptual analysis; it depends on wresting ordered theories and principles from the raw stuff of the unobserved and unexamined life. In the search for order and clarity, one runs the constant danger of becoming so detached from the subject under examination that one's theories about the thing become more real than the thing itself. (In his novel *The Place of the Lion*, Charles Williams vividly portrays such a danger through the character of Damaris Tighe. See especially pp. 19, 126-136, 167-168.) In that music-making is always in some sense a physical act as well as an intellectual one, a student of music performance can learn much about the interconnections within him- or herself between the abstract and the concrete, between idea and execution, between thought and act. In that music involves affective responses which are sometimes irreducible to verbal form, a student of music performance may be forced to deal with aspects of interior life and personal expression which remain untouched in any other way. In these and other ways, music can serve as a sort of parable about many things in one's life and work. Reflecting similarly on the utility of performance training within a broader educational context, William Westney, of Texas Tech University, writes the following in an abstract of a lecture-recital on "Performance Mastery as a Prototype for Human Learning," given at the 1989 meeting of the Southwest Chapter of the College Music Society:

Certain theories about learning which have gained even greater credence in other fields -- concepts such as creative problem-solving, whole-brain thinking, synthesis, intuition, divergent thinking, body/mind integration, etc. -- find a tangible reality in the processes related to performing music. . . . College students who truly learn about themselves, who profit from the music-study experience by analysing its processes courageously and objectively, may end up better prepared for coping with the rapidly changing professional world -- in almost any field of endeavor. (CMS Proceedings: The National and Regional Meetings -- 1989, p. 170.)

If the aim of any good education, and certainly that of a Christian college, is to educate the **whole** person -- mind, soul, heart and strength -- then all modes of understanding must be honored and cultivated. The performer and the philosopher must stand together and learn from each other. One cannot say to the other, "Because you are not what I am, you do not belong to the Body." (See I Corinthians 12.) Side by side, we all, through our various gifts, talents and experiences, are necessary to the manifestation in this world of God Incarnate.

A CONCLUDING, UNSCIENTIFIC, AND PERSONAL POSTSCRIPT

Earlier in this essay, I wrote that I would avoid being too specific about the problems of the Christian artist in the non-Christian world, because the artist's problems were more universal than we ordinarily cared to admit. I also wished to avoid being too prescriptive -- the generation of more "Thou shalt's" and "Thou shalt not's" seems inimicable both to the freedom of the individual Christian and to an understanding of life based on the guidance of the Holy Spirit. However, between the commencement of this essay and its completion, I spent five weeks at a summer music festival in Tennessee, teaching and performing at an intensely frenetic pace, and once again dealing concretely with my position as an inhabitant of two worlds. I had in fact chosen to participate in this festival in large part because I wanted to use it as an experiment to see if I could still function as a Christian in a pagan environment, after seven years at Wheaton College. That a similar experiment three years earlier had gone badly, leaving me with severe doubts about my ability so to function, made me all the more anxious about the outcome. In the earlier situation, I had worried quite self-consciously and often about **MAKING A BIG IMPACT FOR GOD**. When that summer ended with my unwitting involvement in major conflicts with some of the leading personalities of the festival, I despaired of having made a positive contribution of any kind, and wrestled with guilt for having failed my Lord.

This time around, I determined to practice the Presence, quietly practice my craft, and let God alone worry about what my own presence in the festival might affect for the sake of His Kingdom. What do I have to report as a result? In one sense, I'm not sure, since it is God's business more than my own. I know that I felt more freedom to speak about my faith, both in lessons with students, and in rehearsals and casual encounters with my colleagues. Such moments seemed to come naturally as an organic part of the conversation, and in making less of a conscious effort to control the moment, the moment seemed at times to take on a life of its own.

One moment, on the last night of the festival, stands out as a parable of sorts. It speaks to the issue of performance as witness, to the ability of God to ensure that His word does not return to Him void, and to the possibility that He can be honored in whatever work we do to His greater glory. In

many ways, it was an inconclusive moment, capable of being taken in any number of ways by those who were present; I am not entirely certain of its exact meaning. Nonetheless, I took it, and continue to take it as a sign of God's presence beside me on my pilgrimage to become the person and artist He wishes for me to be. For what it may be worth, what follows is an account of that moment.

My final assignment for the summer was to participate in a performance of the chamber version of Aaron Copland's ballet suite *Appalachian Spring*. It is a more difficult work than it sounds, with some tricky passage-work and several moments of unexpected rhythmic complexity. I had been anxious about it, but the performance went better than I had feared it might. The piano part ends some five minutes before the actual end of the piece, at the conclusion of a section based on the Shaker tune, "Simple Gifts." The final portion of the ballet is a quiet hymn of thanksgiving. Reflecting on the beautiful colors coming from my colleagues in the violin section, and on evidences of God's grace throughout the summer, I found myself bowing in silent prayer at the piano bench. At the post-concert reception, the conductor, with whom I had had only the most casual conversations, spotted me. I thanked him for his fine work, and told him that the last part of the performance seemed quite special. "I was crying," he said. "Actually," I heard myself say, "I was praying." "That's what moved me to tears," he replied. "I was listening to the sounds of the orchestra, and then caught a glimpse of you facing upward, and suddenly the whole scene became very moving. Sometimes, in moments like that, I say my own prayers. That's what it's all about."

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