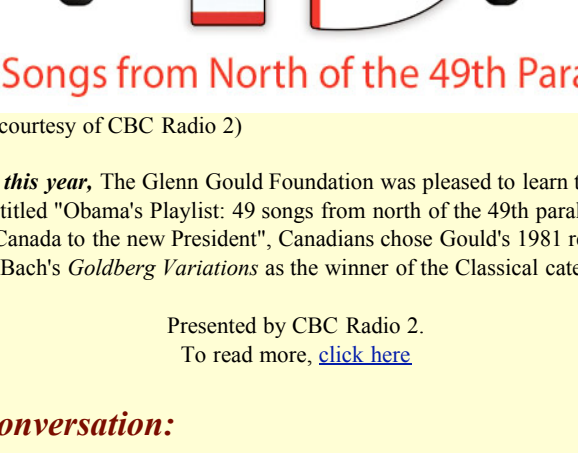




# THE GLENN GOULD MONTHLY

## February 2009



### 49 Songs from North of the 49th Parallel

(Photo courtesy of CBC Radio 2)

**Earlier this year**, The Glenn Gould Foundation was pleased to learn that in a contest titled "Obama's Playlist: 49 songs from north of the 49th parallel that define Canada to the new President", Canadians chose Gould's 1981 recording of J. S. Bach's *Goldberg Variations* as the winner of the Classical category.

Presented by CBC Radio 2.  
To read more, [click here](#).

#### In Conversation:

**Tim Page on Glenn Gould:**

An interview by **Brian Levine** (Part IV)

Edited and transcribed by Penny Johnson

*The following transcript* is taken from an interview with Tim

Page, author of *The Glenn Gould Reader*, and conducted by Brian Levine, Managing Director of The Glenn Gould Foundation. Consisting of five installments, the interview serves as a follow-up conversation to a presentation that Page gave on April 18th, 2008, as the keynote speaker for Cinéma-thèque Ontario's Glenn Gould film series.

Installments 1-3 can be found in our November, December and January e-newsletters.

#### (Installment No. 4)

**BL:** I'd like to talk for a little bit about the following surrounding Glenn, and particularly the really, almost super-intense reaction that he seems to evoke in some people. For example, in her book, *Wild Harmonies*, pianist Hélène Grimaud talks about Glenn's influence on her life and work:

"In this respect, there are two pianists – among many others, including Rubinstein, Horowitz, Arrau, Yudina, and Argerich – who have left their mark on me. Two rivals: Glenn Gould and Sviatoslav Richter.

Enough has been written about Glenn Gould to fill a library. Nothing has been left untouched: his madness, his sleepless nights, his childish laugh, his anxiety, his frailty coupled with an incredible strength, his hands that tremble, straighten, attack, and triumph – his El Greco hands, an extension of faith stronger than pain. People have talked about his body, pushed to extremes, and have listed his failures, his successes, his constant struggle – a struggle against himself as well. His resolute attention, the feeling of having faced danger: accepted, inevitable; the seriousness with which the intensity of the music leaves its mark on deep souls – his solitude, city to city, country to country, without friends, without lovers, but with friends by the thousands, and many lovers...women briefly glimpsed...desperate music-lovers...hysterical female admirers. Illness, disciples, rivals, the feeling of being about to leave, of leaving everything, of forgetting everything, of playing oneself. Then the speed, the oblivion, the worry...no time to stop, no time to breathe, presto, forging ahead, even faster, the desire to prematurely reach the end, this impatience to see oneself, to be taken out of oneself in the most intense music. And finally, the solitude. Everything that gave me the delightful impression that I had a musical older brother.

Well in it's rather over-heated way, it is rather lovely, and it offers a rather intense and personal utterance.

**TP:** Yes, a lot of people have that response.

**BL:** But – and without meaning in any way to disparage someone who I obviously feel very strongly about –

**TP:** Yes, she's a terrific pianist too.

**BL:** Yes. Do you have any thoughts on what inspires that intensity? I mean, there are other pianists and other musicians who are unique individualists, Celibidache, Michelangeli, but they don't produce this kind of reaction, except perhaps in moments of very tiny number.

**TP:** Yes. I think some of this certainly has to do with a fascination for Gould's private life, which was not it exactly as she had it. I often hear this, and again, a lot of it is really. The talent is not myth. The reclusiveness is not myth, although he managed to reach out to the world in his own way.

There's a lot that's going on there, and I think part of it is the fact that Glenn was so amazingly handsome and photogenic when he was young, and I don't think that if he had looked like – well you mentioned Celibidache – that there'd be the same sort of hysteria. And there's also the fact that Glenn was so obviously in his own ecstasy while playing. This is something that you also have with Karajan and Bernstein. I don't know. I just keep thinking that it would have been nice to introduce these people to Gould, or have them come to some terms with him and realize how funny he was. I'm always trying to tell people about this, but I guess people will believe what they want to believe. God knows he was an extraordinary pianist, and he had an unconventional lifestyle, but he was very human and very funny. It's certainly not the way I ever saw Gould, and I don't think it's the way he saw himself. I think, with all due respect to Grimaud again, he used to get long letters from women about himself, and it scared the hell out of him. [laughs]

**BL:** [laughs] After all, who wouldn't be a little bit alarmed at people presuming to talk about themselves in such an intimate way? They're complete strangers.

**TP:** It's a little bit scary to be too famous. I have friends who are really very famous and who have been recognized, and I don't think I'd enjoy it at all. It sounds like something that would be glamorous and exciting and all that stuff, but it must be kind of an absolute pain, because you don't have any real privacy and everybody has their own kind of little fantasy about who it is that you are. It makes it very hard for you to actually be who you are when you're walking down the street, just trying to be by yourself and think about things and people are stopping you every few minutes to say, "Oh, I love you in this," or "How were you able to do that?" There's a side in every artist who wants some of that, but not all the time and I think it's one of the reasons why Glenn lived off by himself, in places where people would leave him alone.

**BL:** Absolutely.

**TP:** I think he would have been miserable in New York City.

**BL:** Probably even more so in Los Angeles.

**TP:** Probably.

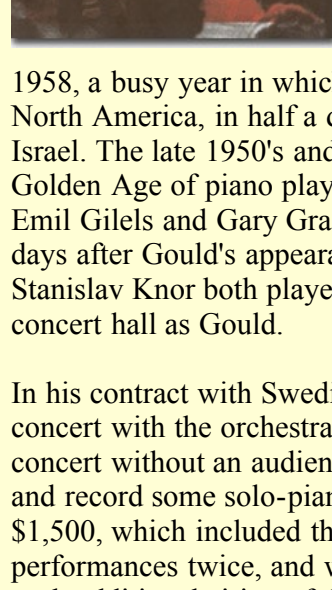
**BL:** All that sunshine.

**TP:** Yes, that's true.

*The fifth and final component of this interview will appear in our March e-newsletter.*

**Did you know?...**that Glenn Gould is the highest selling classical music instrumental artist of all time!

#### From the archives...



### Glenn Gould in Sweden

By Jörgen Lundmark  
The Glenn Gould Magazine,  
Fall 1997

**Glenn Gould visited Sweden** for the first and only time in

1958, a busy year in which he gave concerts throughout North America, in half a dozen cities in Europe, and in Israel. The late 1950's and early 1960's were a kind of Golden Age of piano playing in Sweden: pianists like Emil Gilels and Gary Grafmann gave concerts, and only days after Gould's appearance, Alexander Brailowsky and Stanislav Knor both played in Stockholm in the same concert hall as Gould.

In his contract with Swedish Radio, Gould was to play one concert with the orchestra in public, record a second such concert without an audience (this was usual at the time), and record some solo-piano pieces. He was to receive \$1,500, which included that right to broadcast his performances twice, and was to receive another \$375 for each additional airing of the tapes. The fee was high, thought not exceedingly so, for Gould was not, at the time, particularly well known in Sweden. (For one thing, Columbia Records did not have its own Swedish distribution.)

The visit to Sweden began on September 30th. During rehearsals, Gould was very dissatisfied with the Steinway at hand, a worn and uneven instrument. The piano technician gave him only one option: to play a Bechstein instead. But Gould had an exclusive contract with Steinway, and under no circumstances was he supposed to play any other piano. The dilemma was solved by pasting a piece of black paper over the Bechstein's label, allowing Gould to use the instrument throughout his visit.

The two classical-music producers assigned to the Gould recordings were new to their jobs at Swedish Radio, though they have since become prominent figures in Swedish musical life. Ingemar von Heijne and Lars-Johan Werle both remember the Gould sessions as thoroughly enjoyable experiences, and found him very easy to work with: contrary to late misconceptions, they did not need a large number of retakes. Of course, they were struck by Gould's usual eccentricities.

When Werle first met Gould at the Grand Hotel, he found the just-awakened pianist still in his pyjamas. But he remembers Gould as a kind and considerate person, and remembers his deep commitment to composing, a subject in which they shared a mutual interest.

The second studio session took place on Wednesday, October 1st: the music was Haydn's Sonata No. 49 in E-flat Major. While researching this article, I encountered two people with distinct memories of Gould's also recording a solo work by Bach, or no documentation of such a session survives. There exists a very short sound test of Gould playing the Gigue from the Partita No. 5 in G Major. Perhaps he did record this Partita, which was a staple of his concert repertoire; the timing of the Haydn session does suggest that an additional piece was recorded.

Four days later, on October 5th, Gould made his only public appearance in Sweden, again with Jochum leading the Swedish Radio Symphony Orchestra, in a concert that was broadcast live. The first half, which included Bach's Clavier Concerto no. 1 in D Minor, was aired on radio channel 2, and unfortunately the tape of this half has been lost. After the intermission, Gould again joined the orchestra in Beethoven's Piano Concerto No. 2 in B-flat Major, and the broadcast continued on Channel 1 - this time, the performance survived on tape.

After the public performance on October 5th, Gould had one more recording session with Swedish Radio the next day, for which he played Beethoven's Piano Sonata in A-flat Major, Opus 110 and Berg's Sonata, Opus 1. No further recording dates were scheduled, and he never appeared in Sweden again.

While in Stockholm, Gould met with a young journalist, Oscar Hedlund, who worked at Swedish Radio and who has since become a prominent writer on music. He remembers Gould's visit as the most important musical experience of his life. He found Gould a very amiable and easygoing person, even if his demand that his hotel suite be heated to eighty-six degrees Fahrenheit proved difficult to accommodate. Apart from the concert itself, at which he was impressed by Gould's extraordinary piano tone, Hedlund vividly recalls a dinner appointment with the pianist. Gould ate very little - "like a bird" - and he always brought along his famous Poland spring water and special biscuits. He was in a splendid mood, and only once did he lose his temper. One of the other guests made the mistake of describing Bach's nature as pure mathematics, at which Gould naturally became upset and exclaimed that if he were to play all of the slow movements from Bach's concertos, they were certainly all faint from the resulting surge of emotion. On another occasion, Gould told Hedlund that his concert in Stockholm would be a one-time historical event: in his mind, he was apparently already looking forward to his retirement from concert life a few years later.

**Postscript:** In 1986, the surviving tapes from Gould's 1958 visit to Stockholm were released in a two-CD set on the Swedish label BIS (CD-323/324, mono); the set is still available. The first CD features the recording of the Mozart concerto and the live performance of the Beethoven concerto; the second includes the sonatas by Haydn, Beethoven, and Berg.

#### The Incredible Tulk:

An Interview with Lorne Tulk (Part I)

By Penny Johnson, contributing author

**One of the many pleasures** I have as a contributing author here at The Glenn Gould Foundation, involves the opportunity to interview various individuals who knew and/or worked closely with Glenn Gould. Needless to say, October 31, 2008 proved to be a very memorable day, for not only did it happen to be my first Halloween in Toronto, but also – and more importantly – it was my first meeting with Lorne Tulk. Without doubt, Lorne is one of the kindest, most attentive and thoughtful individuals I have ever met. We began our day – in true Gouldian style – at a restaurant near St. Clair West & Bathurst Street here in Toronto, before migrating to Fran's restaurant, a favourite of Glenn. The following recollections on a life spent in collaboration with Glenn Gould, will surely offer a rare treat as to how Glenn came to be known by those closest to him.

As many of you may know, Lorne worked as a technician for CBC Radio in Toronto, a job that brought him into contact with numerous high profiled and important people such as political figures, dignitaries, as well as many entertainment personalities from writers and actors, to artists and musicians of all types. As Lorne explained, "the majority of these people had a special kind of sensitivity that, along with their creative skills, needed to be addressed if productivity was to be achieved."

High on the list of very creative entertainers who became connected with Lorne, was Glenn Gould. The match produced a sizeable output of some of the most original – and perhaps quite memorable – productions of the twentieth century. Lorne worked on most, if not all of Glenn's radio work, as well as assisting with some of Glenn's television appearances. He also collaborated on all (save the very early Schoenberg) of the documentary compositions, as well as being involved with most of the commercial recordings that Glenn made for Masterworks (the Classical division of Columbia Records, based in New York and now known as Sony.) The two enjoyed a friendship that lasted for over thirty years, Glenn having thought of Lorne as a younger brother.

"I met Glenn a second time, several years after I started working for the CBC. The meeting developed into a strong working relationship, which in turn produced what would turn out to be a very strong and lasting friendship. It's true that Glenn suggested, '...if possible, he would very much like for us to become brothers.' I didn't really give too much credence to this, but rather I just thought it was Glenn approving of our ability to work well together. Glenn however, was persistent. Several times over the next few months he continued to propose the notion. Each time I would just simply try to shrug it off. Finally he made it quite clear that he was serious by suggesting that we go to his lawyers office, or go down to City Hall tomorrow perhaps, or some time in the very near future, to make this (having me officially named as his brother) legal. Well, this made me sit up and take notice...he really was serious! Now I had a dilemma. What to do?"

"So without thinking too deeply, I pointed out to Glenn that '...I have three brothers, a twin sister, a mother and father, all of whom should also have some say about this!' His response (as I came to learn) was 'Glenn'. He said, '...that is so dear.' Glenn never brought the subject up again, though it was clear to me that he really did want siblings. Thus I became the brother he never had, much in the same way that Glenn's cousin, Jessie was more like a sister."

Lorne and I spent a good deal of time talking about The Idea of North, or simply, 'North' as he and Glenn referred to it. "Glenn had every word of those documentaries (The Solitude Trilogy) in his head," remarked Lorne. "Before he ever committed anything to paper, it was complete in his mind. It is quite possible that perhaps and/or because of the process of making 'North', the seeds for 'The Latecomers' – the second of the Trilogy, which we referred to simply as 'Newfoundland' – began germinating in his mind, and I suspect the same was probably also true for the Menonite's ('The Quiet in the Land')."

"Glenn presented the The Solitude Trilogy using three forms of isolation: 'The Idea of North' explored a kind of geographical isolation, where you're physically alone and often by yourself; 'The Latecomers' on the other hand, involved a communal kind of isolation, where whole communities exist in isolation from one another; 'The Quiet in the Land' had to do with more of a religious or spiritual type of isolation, where people are isolated by choice and for specific a reason.

"The interaction between Glenn and the various 'characters' in The Solitude Trilogy reflected a compulsive desire on his part, to be in complete control. Glenn was the kind of interviewer, who, when asking a question – which might take five or ten minutes – would explain (with elaborate details) what he expected. In fact, he practically gave the answer that he wanted to hear!"

Before The Solitude Trilogy, Lorne worked with Glenn on a documentary about Petula Clark, the British pop idol of the 1960's. "Glenn liked her," remarked Lorne. "In this twenty plus minute documentary, he quite literally puts her under a microscope, dissecting completely, every ounce of her music, and sometimes even her character as well as her arranger, Tony Hatch. I heard a lot of Downtown during those days [laughs]. Several years before my CBC days, Glenn also did a documentary on Arnold Schoenberg. He did another documentary on the composer years later, during the centennial of the composer in 1974, though I was only a peripheral player for that."

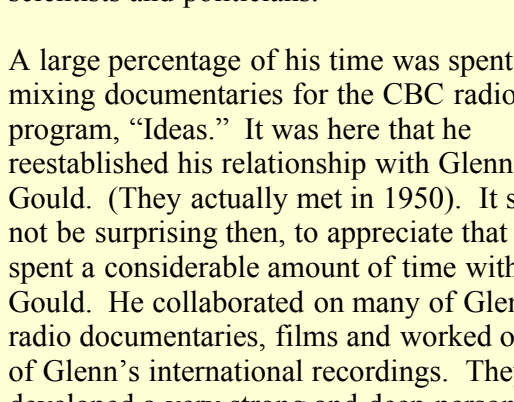
During the course of our delightful afternoon together, Lorne shared with me many heart-warming anecdotes about the social side of Glenn Gould, a dimension that very few had the privilege of knowing. "He was both a good listener, and at the same time – if it's possible – an incessant talker, because when he made suggestions, they were intelligent and well thought out. This indicated the depth of his listening ability. By the way, his suggestions were (for obvious reasons) usually accepted. He really was brilliant!"

"I have often heard people say that Glenn was lonely. I cannot agree with that statement. I would say he was alone, and a loner, but lonely? No, I don't think so. To me, Glenn always seemed to be pleased and grateful for what he was, and believe me, he definitely knew who and where he was. He was like a sponge. He absorbed everything around him. For example, after a week, no, after only a few hours, in one of our early studio bookings, he'd end up knowing more about that studio than I did! Well, almost. He was forever asking questions. He was interested in everything, and particularly in what 'you' (me) had to say. Another example: He'd often encourage you to become involved, or in some cases, say or do something that would help develop your ideas so that you too could contribute to a given project. Glenn was always interested in what you/we had to offer, even if you were just an innocent bystander. He genuinely believed that the good we do, will eventually come back. It helps us to grow (not to mention the added affect it might have on the final product.) This was Glenn! He helped me when I say that Mr. Glenn worked very hard every minute of everyday at being good."

With his penchant for acts of humanitarianism, I wondered what Glenn might have thought about the whole 'green' movement. "I don't know that he would have been 'into' it," remarked Lorne, "but I'm sure he would have believed favourably in the whole idea of a green environment. I'm not so sure, but that we didn't mention something of this nature during our car conversations. Glenn really didn't belong to groups or take part in them. Glenn was never a joiner. It's that simple!"

"Glenn was very much a little boy with big ideas. He absolutely adored children too. You know, I remember when he got the phone in his car. Back in those days, (the late-1960's) this was a big deal. The contraption took up most of his trunk, and must have cost a fortune. Nevertheless, he would telephone from right outside the house, and ask for one of the children (we had a daughter and son). In typical Glenn fashion, he would start off with: 'Guess what I did today?' The children, even at their tender ages, were on to Glenn's tricks. Anyway, Glenn would maintain a conversation until we opened the door, and they could see him sitting in his car out front. For Glenn, that was real fun stuff [laughs]...not the actual phoning, but rather, the reaction of the kids. That's what moved Glenn. He'd then come inside, have a coffee, and talk with the children."

*(Stay tuned for Part II in next month's e-newsletter.)*



Lorne Tulk & Penny Johnson at the corner of Yonge and College St., Toronto.

**Lorne Tulk** began working at a very young age in his father's recording studio. Since then he has been involved with entertainment for five decades, working in theatre, film, and television, but mostly in radio broadcasting.

Thirty-eight of those years were spent with the technical department of CBC radio in Toronto. His career has taken him from cheap rooming houses to encounters with royalty, from the hallowed halls of academia to the highly charged world of news and current affairs and into the world of drama, from the excitement of sports, to the depths of the ocean (he once had an assignment on a British nuclear submarine). He has worked with some of the most outstanding people of the 20th century, brushing shoulders with composers, poets, scientists and politicians.

A large percentage of his time was spent mixing documentaries for the CBC radio program, "Ideas." It was here that he reestablished his relationship with Glenn Gould. (They actually met in 1950). It should not be surprising then, to appreciate that Tulk spent a considerable amount of time with Gould. He collaborated on many of Glenn's radio documentaries, films and worked on a lot of Glenn's international recordings. They developed a very strong and deep personal friendship, which lasted until the pianist's death in 1982. Tulk has also served in a supervisory capacity, with CBC's Operations Department.

After retiring in 1996, he became interested in digital audio. Lorne and his wife Melva live in Toronto. They have two children, a daughter Lynn, a son Dana, along with three grandchildren.

Born in Peace River, Alberta, **Penny Johnson** is currently a contributing author for The Glenn Gould Foundation, in addition to being on the faculty of the Young Artists Performance Academy at the Royal Conservatory of Music. She holds a Doctor of Musical Arts degree in Piano Performance from the Manhattan School of Music, as well as a Master of Music degree and a Bachelor of Music degree from the Eastman School of Music. Her principal teachers include Constance Keene and Barry Snyder. In addition to her work as a teacher and writer, Penny is active as a performer and will be travelling to France this summer to study with Jean-Paul Sevilla. She is particularly interested in the piano music of Sergei Rachmaninoff, Maurice Ravel, and J. S. Bach, and has performed the entire Art of Fugue, complete with an ending that she wrote for the final, unfinished movement. Her doctoral dissertation focused on the Polish pianist, Ignacy Jan Paderewski and the Golden Age of the Piano. Penny currently lives in Toronto.

*Don't forget to check... The Contrapuntal Blog*

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