



## March 2009

### The Alcan Quartet

plays

### Glenn Gould



The Alcan Quartet returns with a milestone recording featuring the compositions of two giants of Canada's 20th century music scene, Glenn Gould and Sir Ernest MacMillan.

Gould & MacMillan String Quartets is available from late March 2009

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### The Incredible Tulk: An Interview with Lorne Tulk (Part II)

By Penny Johnson, GGF contributing author  
(continued from February's e-newsletter).

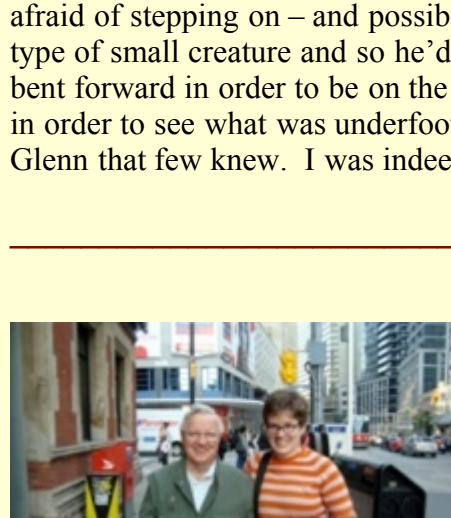
**K**nowing how much Glenn loved talking on the phone, I decided to ask Lorne how he might have responded to the age of communication, namely the era of the cell phone. "I think he definitely would have been into cell phones. They are certainly an improvement on the aforementioned one installed in his car. Actually, the phone that he had put in his car was intended to be a kind of safety precaution. I may have failed to mention that Glenn had an inner ear problem, which caused him to lose his balance. He was terrified about having an attack while driving. So, yes he would definitely have approved of cell phones!"

"Speaking of cars – and he'd had several over the years, as you know – he actually had names for every one of them. For example, the last one he called 'Longfellow', and I remember a Pontiac called 'Lance'. Oh and by the way, Glenn was – contrary to popular belief – a splendid driver! Yes, he tended to be fast, but believe me he was as dexterous behind the wheel as he was behind the keyboard. He knew 'exactly' where his car was on the road, and what he could do with it. Furthermore, he was extremely conscious of what it would do for him. Glenn loved going on long excursions, driving along lonely roads, especially in the early morning. Not once did I ever feel threatened or unsafe when Glenn was driving, and Glenn would drive me home almost every night. Oh, and just for the record, during the wee small hours, he tended to drive quite slow and relaxed.

"Often when we went to the house, I'd make him scrambled eggs. Most of the time though we'd just park out front and talk for hours. It's difficult to try and recall what specifically we talked about – this occurred almost every night over the course of several years – but the conversations went in every direction. Sometimes we'd discuss a particular news item that caught our attention that day, or perhaps politics, a politician, religion, or a particular theory. Whatever it was it was always interesting...and it would – of course – last for hours."

Amidst all of the publications that have been put out in the years following the death of Glenn in 1982, I wondered whether or not Lorne ever considered him to be over-rated in any way. Lorne replied by saying that: "Well, biased as I am, I'm not sure I can answer that [laughs]. People often use the word 'genius' when describing Glenn, and I'm not sure that's a completely accurate description of him. 'Genius' implies 'singular of purpose', and Glenn was just too multi-directional. Being 'single minded' just wasn't a 'Glenn' thing. He seemed to be everywhere, and all at the same time."

Our readers may not be aware of the fact that Glenn named as his beneficiaries, the Toronto Humane Society, and The Salvation Army. "He definitely was a humanitarian," remarked Lorne. He very much wanted – and at all times when the occasion permitted him – to help those who had less than he. I think Glenn is particularly well known for his love and/or attachment to anything having to do with animals. You know, Glenn would not even kill an ant. He was constantly afraid of stepping on – and possibly killing – any type of small creature and so he'd walk slightly bent forward in order to be underfoot...that is, in order to see what was underfoot. That's the Glenn that few knew. I was indeed privileged."



Lorne Tulk and Penny Johnson at the intersection of College & Yonge Street in downtown 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.

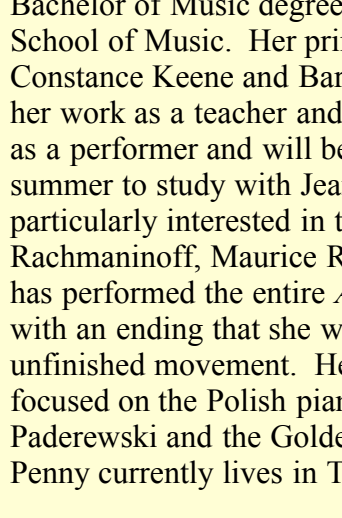
Thirty-eight of those years were spent with the technical department of CBC radio in Toronto. His career has taken him from cheap rooming houses to encounters with royalty, from the hallowed halls of academia to the highly charged world of news and current affairs and into the world of drama, from the 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.

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### Did you know?...

Bert Gould, Glenn's father, owned and operated a furrier business on Melinda Street in downtown Toronto, directly across the street from The Glenn Gould Foundation office. How serendipitous!

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### On Elephants and the Provinces

Danish Book Encounters with Glenn Gould

By Ole Knudsen  
(Edited by Janet Marcine)

**I** come from a home without a piano, and to tell you the truth, I really don't like classical music. I'm 50 years old and was raised in a small southern town in Denmark, as far from the capital of Copenhagen as you can get. Life in the Danish provinces is very narrow-minded – I was brought up with pop and rock music, and when my musical conscience really started in the beginning of the 70's, I took a liking to mostly English rock like David Bowie, Elton John and Bryan Ferry.

I moved to Copenhagen in 1978 to study, and of course went back home to visit my parents from time to time. I discovered quite quickly, as one does, even though you love your old folks, you move away from them more than just geographically.

Around 1983, during one visit at home, I was particularly bored, so I turned on the television at around 3:00 in the afternoon. In Denmark up until 1985, there was only one T.V. channel. No kidding! No cable, not anything, so I had to be content with whatever was on. That day, for some reason, it was this strange-capped fellow trying to sing to elephants. Without much luck, I must add, they ran trumpeting away.

This was my first encounter with Mr. Gould. I had never seen anything else like him in my entire life. He was so fascinating – and the fact that he played classical music didn't bother me that much since he played it so beautifully. I started investigating, buying as many of his albums that I could find. I read books and articles by or about him. And a couple of years later, when I got my first job in publishing, I edited a book with some of his writings called *The Glenn Gould Reader*. Later again in 1993, I edited a book of his letters (taken from *Selected Letters*). I never understood people who said that Mr. Gould could not write. I loved his way of writing, his quirkiness. And because of his writings, we I learned to love Strauss and Schoenberg as well. Mr. Gould was first and foremost an intermediary. That's really what grabbed my attention that memorable day with my parents. And that's what I still so admire every time I hear him play or talk.

In case you didn't know, Glenn Gould never played in Denmark. He played in Sweden, which is pretty close, but still no cigar! There has always been a very close bond between Danish music lovers and Gould. I'm sure it's *The Idea of North*. Canada is not the USA, and Canada and "all things Canadian" is something to which we Scandinavians take an immediate liking. So both the books I edited were fortunately well received. They got rave reviews in every Danish paper, and both books sold relatively well.

Still, nothing much happened on the book front until noted Danish composer and professor Karl Aage Rasmussen, who was born in 1947, wrote a beautiful little book on Gould in 2001. It was called *The Creative Lie* and the book used 12 chapters, or individual essays, to encapsulate the essence of Gould, the way he thought, played and behaved.

Rasmussen himself started composing in the mid-60s, when he was mainly occupied with orchestral music. Concepts like "music about music," "music on music," and "music over music" are keys to many of his works, as he often used pre-existing musical material in new connections in a woven montage of "words" from widely different musical languages (to quote G. Schirmer Promotion).

This way of composing was not unlike Gould's works for radio, such as *Solitude Trilogy* and others. And Rasmussen clearly saw a kindred spirit in Gould, although he was too modest to say so himself. To him, Gould was clearly a genius and should be treated as such, although that doesn't mean you can't have certain reservations of some of Gould's recordings.

*The Creative Lie*, is unfortunately in Danish. One could wish that all the Friends of Glenn Gould would be able to read this book, because it is very well written, very well thought out. Danish lessons anyone?



**Ole Knudsen** is a Publisher and Research & Development Manager at Gyldendal Publishers in Copenhagen, Denmark. In 1985, Ole began his first job in publishing and has remained in the same business ever since, except for a two-year stint as Marketing Director at The Royal Danish Theatre in 1990/1991. Ole is a writer of several books, as well as a translator of comics, novels and plays. He is also an avid follower of The Glenn Gould Foundation website and e-newsletter.

### In Conversation:



### Tim Page on Glenn Gould:

An interview by Brian Levine (Part V)

Edited and transcribed by Dr. 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 Cinémaquæ Ontario's Glenn Gould film series. Installments 1-3 can be found in our November, December and January e-newsletters.

(5th and final installment)

**BL:** Did he ever talk about matters of faith?

**TP:** Well, a little bit. I know he read a lot of theology. I don't think he had any, certainly no orthodox faith. I don't think he comes to ever talking about that is in McGreevy's film about Toronto, where he says "I don't go to church a lot these days." That's about as far as he went, but it was clearly an issue with him. You know, I don't think he belonged to a church, although he was very much of the Anglican church. Glenn had a real sense of propriety, and as for him being in the Anglican church, my own guess is that he mainly would have wanted that done because it was the proper English-Canadian thing to do. And that he had a lot of faith in. He believed very highly in etiquette, and good form in doing what you were expected to do. He was a very conservative rebel. He was a rebel, but he was also a very conservative rebel.

**BL:** How, in McGreevy's film, Gould also talks about but on a Sunday evening service he would always go on to the injunction, "Give us oh Lord, the peace that the world cannot give." This definitely is a kind of spiritual expression.

**TP:** That's true. There was clearly a spiritual side to him. He certainly wasn't an Atheist. Atheists tend to be at least as religious as religious people, I often thought, in their own funny way. I think he felt, as a lot of people do, that life is mysterious and that the mystery probably does not necessarily end with death.

**BL:** Would you talk a little bit about Gould in the context of musical iconoclast? We have a tradition of artists who don't quite fit the mould, who, whether it's in a various, systematic way, or in a more spontaneous and unpredictable way – you know, Michelangelo, Leopold Stokowski whom he admired, or any of a number of other performers – seem interpretively to move beyond words, that is, the normal range of parameters in terms of tempo, phrasing, points of style and so on, thereby accomplishing somehow to personalize the work to an extraordinary degree.

**TP:** Well, I don't really know how to answer that. I think you basically said it. He was very definitely one of those people. We were talking about mystery a moment before, and I was talking about Gould, music and the mystery of why it moves us so deeply and why we care so profoundly about it, was a little mysterious to him. I think it is for a lot of people. It's odd, because in little things he was very conventional. As we mentioned, his belief was that there was a certain code of propriety, which one did not step outside of. Perhaps this was the reason why he was so unconventional when it came to deep things, for in his music and his thinking about art, he was stepping outside of conventional boundaries all the time. Perhaps his conventional qualities enabled him – on little things – to make these big cosmic leaps when it came to his artistry. That's about the best answer I can give you.

**BL:** In general, do you think we need more people who are prepared to push the boundaries, or do you see that as a force of disorder that is ultimately not going to be very positive for musical interpretation? Should we actually be encouraging it more than we do?

**TP:** I don't know. Glenn managed to make it work. I think that young musicians looking at the world anew is something incredibly important, otherwise we're just again in rote-note, doing things over and over again. I don't think that's a great idea. However, the one thing I would say about Glenn is that he's not really somebody to imitate. You can imitate the spirit, however you cannot imitate the actual work because it is so personal and so much him.

Here I think I can pretty much speak for Glenn, because we talked about this. He once told me that he'd like to see a whole world where nobody cared what other people were doing, and that you'd go into the music you're working on, the book you're writing, and you wouldn't be worried about what your colleagues were going to think. You weren't going to be worried about what other people would be thinking. You were actually going into it in a very personal way, and you were going to find something to do.

I think he changed quite a bit in his last ten years. I think there was a new curiosity in the last few years of his life, because for me, his most willful and often least satisfying recordings, are ones from the late sixties or early seventies. And then you come to the late stuff, and you really have the sense that he's thinking about this music, and engaging with it, and while it's still sometimes quirky and it's still sometimes odd, it's way past trashing Chopin. That wasn't part of his existence.

**BL:** When he started with pieces like *Das Marienleben*, for example, which is a remarkable recording –

**TP:** It is, and a recording that nobody in the world really wanted. He probably had to twist the arms of everybody at Columbia to do it. I really admire that he went out there and recorded these pieces, because they really meant something very special to him, and he really gave them his all, which I think is important. If you're asking me, "Do we need another totally traditional performance of 'name you favourite work,' or somebody who's going to go out and find some more or less unknown piece and really do something with it?" then I'm definitely on the second side.

**BL:** Great. Thank you so much!

**TP:** My pleasure. It was fun!