

# TRANS-CANADA EXPRESS: GLENN GOULD, PETULA CLARK, AND THE POSSIBILITIES OF POP

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Glenn Gould stopped performing for live audiences in 1964. Freed from the rigors of the concert circuit, he dove into radio and television at just the moment when he and Canadian state media could parlay his immense musical popularity into something more. Gould would continue to perform and record new music—always in studios, to be sure—at a remarkable pace. But in conjunction with those performances, Gould constructed a media theory of his own. In print, on television, and, most important, on radio, Gould became the great complement to Marshall McLuhan.

When Gould was not playing piano (or organ) he was fashioning something else—interview shows, portraits of artists, and oddities such as his arch dialogue on the dire impact of competitive sports on the world. But the peaks of Gould’s non-piano involvement with the medium were three sound documentaries, instances of what Gould called “contrapuntal radio” that were retrospectively grouped together as “The Solitude Trilogy.” The first, “The Idea of North,” was about just that, the enduring mythological significance of the Canadian North in the postwar era when its national

integration was proceeding rather quickly; it first aired Dec. 28, 1967. The second, “The Latecomers,” was about the forced depopulation of Newfoundland outposts as the colony became part of the Canadian confederation; it aired Nov. 12, 1969. And the last, “The Quiet in the Land,” dealt with Mennonite accommodations to contemporary mass culture. It was completed in 1975, but did not air until Mar. 25, 1977.<sup>1</sup> These three pieces are, by all estimates save one, fascinating, technologically adept incursions into questions of nation, sound, space, and media. The one reserved judgment belongs to Darrel Mansell who called them “uninteresting.”<sup>2</sup> He is more than balanced out by Richard Kostelanetz, who places Gould in the Text-Sound art pantheon — “a radio artist of the first rank, if not the greatest in North America.”<sup>3</sup>

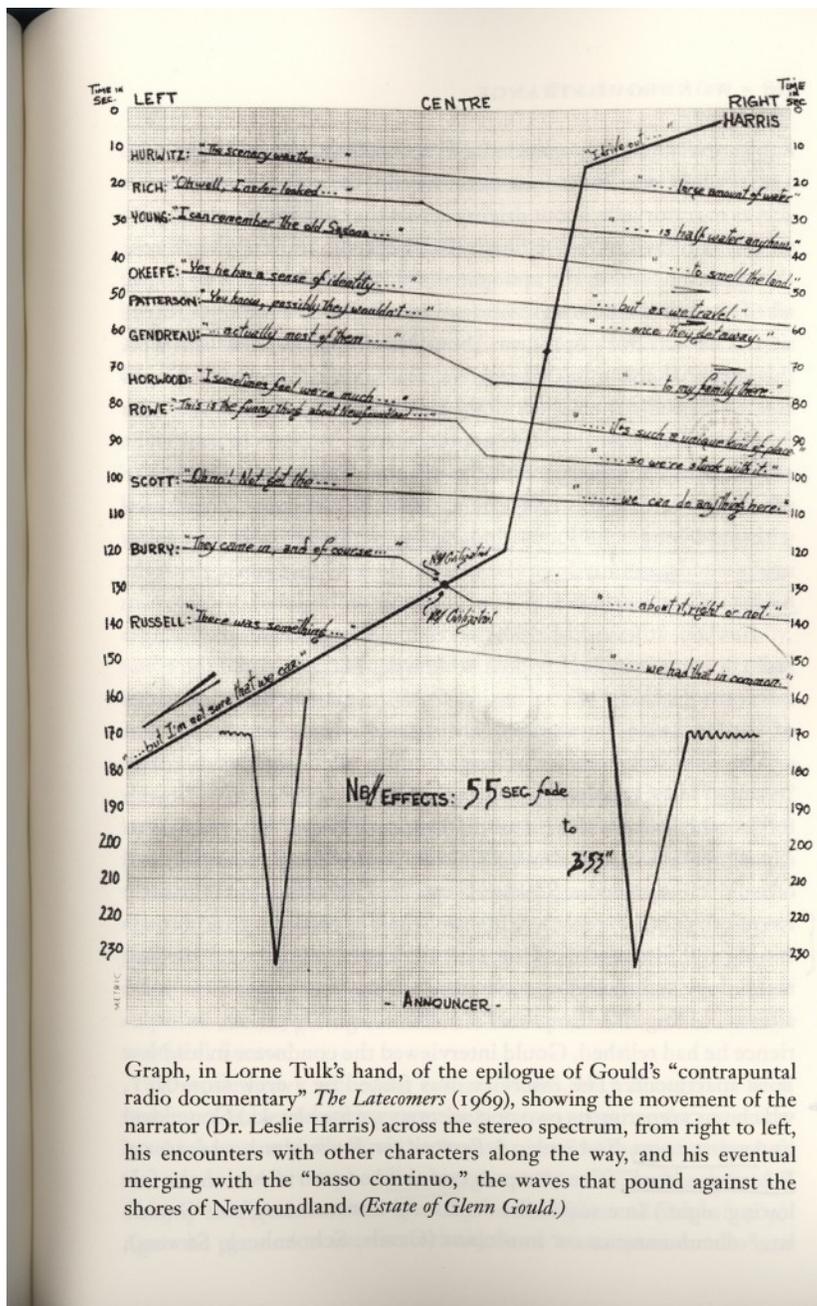
The standard interpretation of these pieces is biographical, and it runs more-or-less like this: After 1964, as Gould attempted to grapple with his own mediated career, he found in Canada’s national experience a collection of ready allegories. As his best biographer, Kevin Bazzana, puts it: “The train trip in *The Idea of North* stands in for the *inward* journey Gould had been taking since 1964. ‘It’s very much about me,’ he said of the program. ‘In terms of what it says, it’s about as close to an autobiographical statement as I am probably going to make at this stage of my life.’” (300)

What is more, Gould’s explorations of contemporary solitude were not only allegories of his own solitude and mediated public presence, they were original compositions, and as such they were compensation for his failure as a composer of music. Again, Bazzana: “Creating successful works in a new genre of radio art took much of the sting out of his failure as a composer.” (313) As Kostelanetz puts it: “In 1967, Gould told me that he wanted to compose more difficult contemporary music, in the Schoenberg tradition... Whether he ever composed such music I do not know— nothing has turned up since his death in 1982. Rather, he produced these radio pieces that, let me suggest, represent the fruition of his compositional ambitions.” (567) Radio as compensatory, allegorical autobiography.

Of course if one has put aside formal analysis, then the standard way to think about virtually all sorts of music has been through something like compensatory, allegorical autobiography. Still, Gould is an odd candidate for that convergence since his particular genius was for the strictures and systems of composers such as Bach and Schoenberg, what he would call a kind of “puzzle

solving.”<sup>7</sup> One can persist in regarding form a stalking horse for psychic torment, but whatever the source of Gould’s interest in form, he was, indeed, interested in form. For us, then, that translates into a need to explain allegoresis itself. More simply: why do Gould’s documentaries have a contrapuntal form? Needless to say, I don’t think that this is a biographical question but something like an aesthetic question, and to begin to answer it, I will turn to a shorter piece that is often left out of the Gould radio documentary canon, “The Search for Pet Clark,” a 23 minute essay that first aired Dec. 11, 1967, two and half weeks before *The Idea of North*. “Pet Clark” is a rehearsal of the great Gouldian themes—mobility, documentary, solitude, mediation—in a far more explicitly autobiographical vein. Those open commitments help us resist the temptation to see Gould’s radio career as a sustained yet unconscious effort to manifest his own unspoken self-involvements. Instead, we will catch Gould at a moment when his commitment to allegory will be raw.

“Pet Clark” is also technologically raw. Gould’s plunge into documentary making resulted in dramatic leaps forward in complexity; he built his later pieces at the very limits of what the CBC studio was then capable of. “Pet Clark,” in contrast, is utterly conventional. The text of the broadcast comes from Gould’s Nov. 1967 article from *High Fidelity* to which he was a frequent if irregular contributor; he reads that text with surprisingly few alterations.<sup>4</sup> Clark’s recordings are brought in at opportune moments, and, when Gould begins reading again, they are ducked under his voice. In contrast, his more “contrapuntal” recordings “eschew foreground-background distinctions,” as Bazzana puts in, and they usually inspired mildly angry or simply confused responses from listeners. *The Latecomers* was specifically commissioned to help launch the CBC’s new stereo service—an Ottawa station went online for the broadcast—and makes extensive, if sometimes florid use of the possibilities of stereo for the spatialization of narrative.



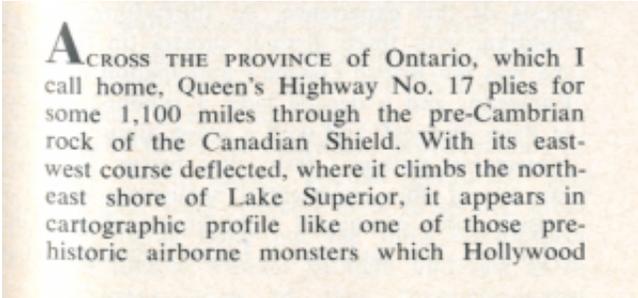
The Latecomers, conclusion. Graph by producer Lorne Tulk.

In the concluding section, the central narrator is describing a trip away from Newfoundland, and as that trip progresses, his voice migrates from the far right channel—where it has been throughout the piece—toward the left. At the same time, the thirteen other voices of the piece move from the left channel to the right by turns. All the while, the sound of the waves—what Gould called the “basso continuo” of the documentary—lap below the voices. The piece thus spatializes the narrative’s migration to and then from the island, and does so according to standard cartographic conventions in which North is at the top and Newfoundland is off to the right. The planning and execution of this section was a massive undertaking, beginning with a complex charting process—seen

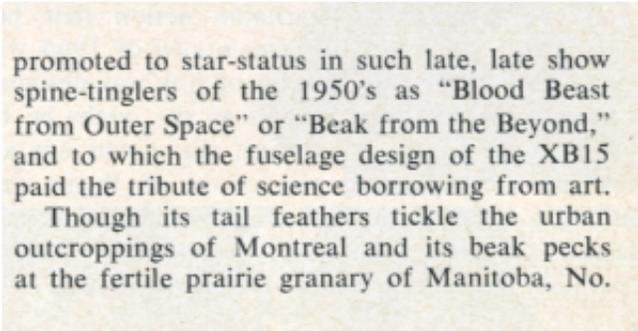
here in the legible version produced by Lorne Tulk, Gould's tireless producer—and culminating in what was surely a ludicrous scene of the two of them grappling with strips of magnetic tape all throughout the studio, draping them over chairs and lying them across tables in order to keep them at the appropriate height. Each of the hour-long documentaries took roughly 300 hours to compose.

The recording of "The Search for Pet Clark" was comparatively simple, and the architecture of the piece was as well. It falls into three easy chunks: an opening section describing Gould's drive around the north shore of Lake Superior, a long middle dealing with Clark's career and style and contrasting her favorably with The Beatles, and a concluding section that returns to Gould's car, ending with a simulated montage. The A-B-A structure is simple enough, and one Gould would return to. The opening puts him on the road; this is the way it sounds.

(For audio, [click here.](#))



**A**CROSS THE PROVINCE of Ontario, which I call home, Queen's Highway No. 17 plies for some 1,100 miles through the pre-Cambrian rock of the Canadian Shield. With its east-west course deflected, where it climbs the north-east shore of Lake Superior, it appears in cartographic profile like one of those pre-historic airborne monsters which Hollywood



promoted to star-status in such late, late show spine-tinglers of the 1950's as "Blood Beast from Outer Space" or "Beak from the Beyond," and to which the fuselage design of the XB15 paid the tribute of science borrowing from art. Though its tail feathers tickle the urban outcroppings of Montreal and its beak pecks at the fertile prairie granary of Manitoba, No.

17 defines for much of its passage across Ontario the northernmost limit of agrarian settlement. It is endowed with habitation, when at all, by fishing villages, mining camps, and timber towns that straddle the highway every fifty miles or so. Among these, names such as Michipicoten and Batchawana advertise the continuing segregation of the Canadian Indian; Rossport and Jackfish proclaim the no-nonsense map-making of the early white settlers; and Marathon and Terrace Bay—"Gem of the North Shore"—betray the postwar influx of American capital. (Terrace is the Brasilia of Kimberley-Clark's Kleenex-Kotex operation in Ontario.)

As you hear, the simple structure is complicated by its content, a content carried by sentences that abound in baroque folds that match the zigzag path of the road up the Eastern shore of Lake Superior. But that baroque folding exists not only at the level of the sentence but in the more sustained motives of the piece. Thus, in the midst of the prefatory opening section, Gould reckons with a double allegory. The first is an "allegory of the human condition" and it lies in the layout of the town of Marathon. The second is an allegory of national-existential consciousness and it exists more fitfully. Here is how Gould works from the one to the other.

(For audio, [click here.](#))

The layout of these latter towns, set amidst the most beguiling landscape in central North America, rigorously subscribes to that concept of northern town planning which might be defined as 1984 Prefab and, to my mind, provides the source of so compelling an allegory of the human condition as might well have found its way into the fantasy prose of the late Karel Capek.

Marathon, a timber town of some 2,600 souls, clings to the banks of a fjord which indents the coast of Lake Superior. Due to a minor miscalculation by one of the company's engineers as to the probable course of the prevailing winds, the place has been overhung since its inception two decades ago with a pulp-and-paper stench that serves to proclaim the monolithic nature of the town's economy even as it discourages any supplemental income from the tourist trade. Real estate values, consequently, are relative to one's distance from the plant. At the boardwalk level, the company has located a barracks for unmarried and/or itinerant workers; up-a-block, hotel, cinema, chapel, and general store; at the next plateau, an assortment of prefabs; beyond them, at a further elevation, some split-levels for the junior execs; and, finally, with one more gentle ascent and a hard right turn, a block of paternalistic brick mansions, which would be right to home among the more exclusive suburbs of Westchester County, N. Y. Surely the upward mobility of North American society can scarcely ever have been more persuasively

demonstrated. "Gives a man something to shoot at," I was assured by one local luminary whose political persuasion, it developed, was somewhere to the right of Prince Metternich.

A few hundred yards beyond Presidential Row, a bull-dozed trail leads to the smog-free top of the fjord. But from this approach, one is held at bay by a padlocked gate bearing a sign from which, in the manner of those reassuring marquees once used to decorate the boarding-ramps of Pan American Airways, one learns that "your company has now had 165 accident-free work days" and that access to the top is prohibited. Up there, on that crest beyond the stench, one can see the two indispensable features of any thriving timber town—its log-shoot breaking bush back through that trackless terrain and an antenna for the low-power relay system of the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation.

These relay outlets, with their radius of three or four miles, serve only the immediate area of each community. As one drives along No. 17, encountering them every hour or so, they constitute the surest evidence that the "outside" (as we northerners like to call it) is with us still. In the outpost communities, the CBC's culture pitch (*Boulez* is very big in Batchawana) is supplemented by local programming which, in the imaginative traditions of commercial radio everywhere, leans towards a formula of news on the hour and fifty-five minutes of the pop picks from *Billboard* magazine. This happy ambivalence made my last trip along "17" noteworthy, for at that time, climbing fast on all the charts and featured hard upon the hour by most D.J.s, was an item called *Who Am I?* The singer was Petula Clark; the composer and conductor, Tony Hatch.

I contrived to match my driving speed to the distance between relay outlets, came to hear it most hours and in the end to know it, if not better than the soloist, at least as well perhaps as most of the sidemen who were booked for the date. After several hundred miles of this exposure, I checked into the hotel at Marathon, and made plans to contemplate Petula.

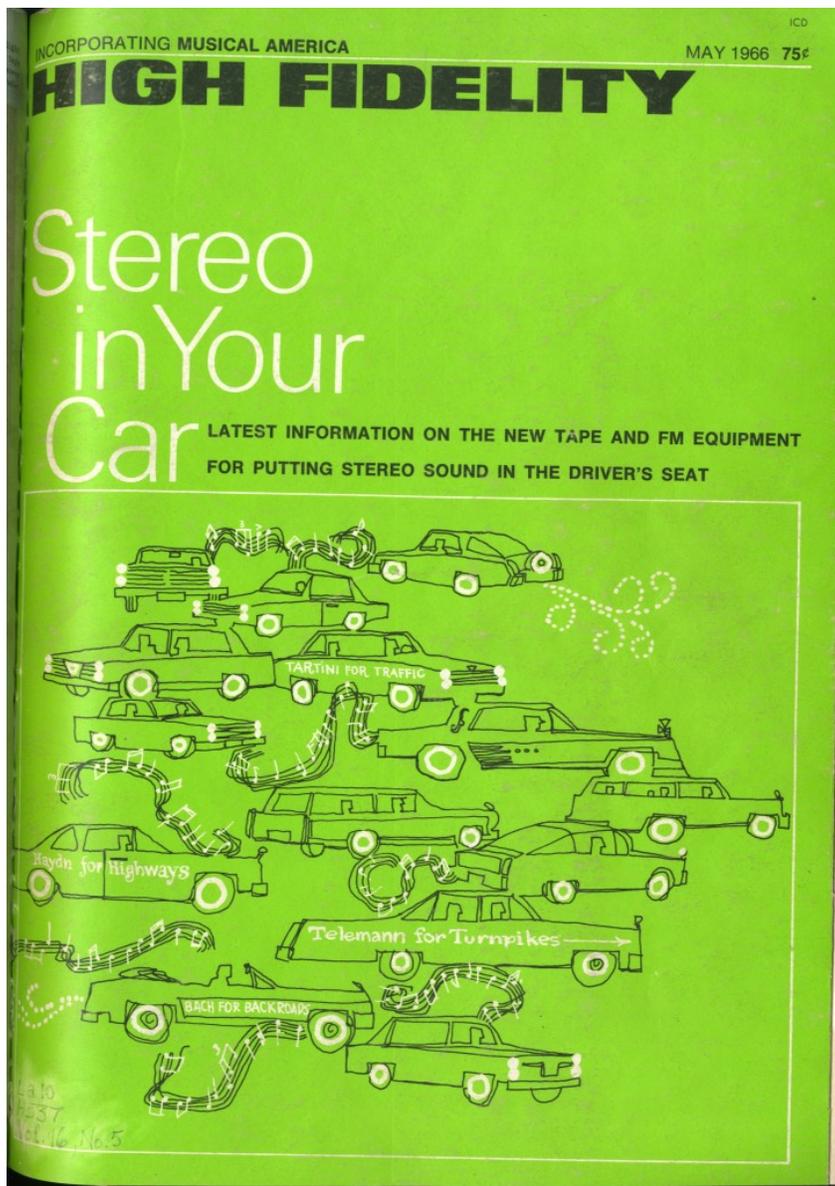
There is a geology, and over that lies a design. Overlaying both is a very particular media web in which a network of low-power relay stations create islands of access to the national broadcast feed. This is the radio space. Gould, in his car, traverses that space at a rate of his choosing, and that vector syncs up with the radio space in such a way that Gould can create within the car a punctuated soundstream. What is more, the radio soundspace, considered

outside of Gould's temporal encounters with it, has its own generally cyclical temporality: news on the hour and 55 minutes of hits. But that cycle unwinds in time so that as the hits ebb and flow, a song that is moving up the charts will find its way to a particular slot in the broadcast cycle for a given span before it is eventually released from heavy rotation. This is the broader soundstream, and, according to Gould's prologue, when he was driving across Ontario, the song that was then climbing the charts and that would be aired "hard upon the hour" was Petula Clark's "Who am I?" By measuring his speed, then, Gould claims that he could sync up the car's punctuated soundstream with the radio's soundstream and thus hear Pet Clark's new single "most hours."

Three things are obviously necessary for this convergence. First, there must be an uninterrupted road. The Trans-Canadian highway officially opened Sept. 8, 1962, and the stretch that Gould is driving was only built in 1960-1961. It was some of the most difficult construction in the system, but when it was done towns such as White River were accessible by car. (One has to imagine the oddity of towns that could only be reached by boat and railroad, but where residents might have their own cars to drive around in town, and where, if they wanted to have their car in, say, Toronto, they would have to ship it by rail until they reached the continuous highway).

Second, there must be a national broadcasting system. In 1962, the CBC folded its "Dominion" network into the "Trans-Canada" network to create "CBC Radio" (now CBC Radio One). The low-power relay system had been built out beginning in 1940, and more than 90% of the nation's population had access to some version of the CBC signal in 1961, even if that was via 40-watt relays like Marathon's CBLM.<sup>5</sup>

Finally, one needs a car to link the road and the radio. Gould was a prodigious driver, and he drove enormous American convertibles—Lincolns and Cadillacs. In addition to their size, these cars always featured state-of-the-art sound systems at a time when car audio was undergoing remarkable changes. Stereo intensified the in-car audio experience, but more important was the impending 8-track revolution. If the CBC had labored for decades to make Canada one nation under radio, in-dash tape decks would fragment it, perhaps beyond repair.

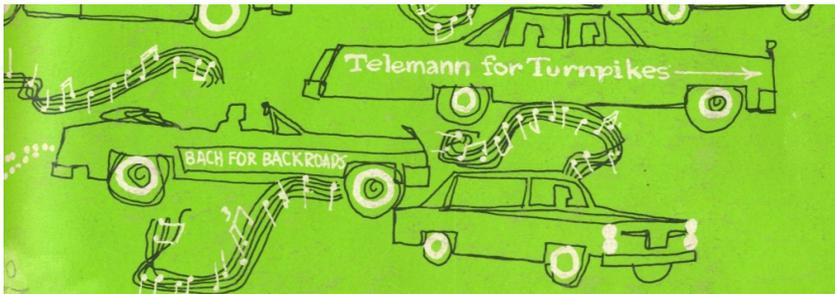


High Fidelity, May 1966

In May 1966, the month after Gould's expansive essay "The Prospects of Recording" appeared in *High Fidelity*, the magazine featured a cover story on car audio. The cars are all listening to their own music, and this independence seems to have carried over dangerously to their driving habits. If one looks closely, the car labeled "Bach for Backroads" seems to be Gould's big Lincoln.



Glenn Gould in his Lincoln



Detail from High Fidelity, May 1966

Gould was not the first to link nation-road-radio-relay-and-auto. Doug Brophy, Ron Hunka and Ken Frost of the CBC crossed the country in 1960, in a Chevy Impala complete with a heavy duty springs to take the unpaved sections of the highway and a heavy-duty battery to power the on-board Magnecorder tape-editing machine. They filed dispatches each day as they made their way westward, chatting up local politicians and on-site engineers.<sup>6</sup>



Brophy, Hunka, and Frost for the CBC

Again, it might seem that the difference between the CBC documentarians and Gould is that Gould's trip originates in, and seeks answers to, properly biographical questions. Yet the reporters' crossing points up exactly what is at stake in Gould's own journey: the shift from a linear narrative to a narrative that is, decisively, multitrack.

If the Trans-Canadian Highway and the CBC are the necessary media behind Gould's autobiographical allegory, the structure of that allegory depends more broadly on certain properties of the recording. Gould spends the long midsection of "The Search for Pet Clark" thinking through just what, exactly, is up with her records, how it was that she got from *Downtown* in 1964 through *Sign of the Times* and *My Love* before hitting *Who am I?* He pursues that path in two versions. One, an account of the songs' lyrical content, is simpler and I'll begin with that. The second centers on a critique of the diatonic; more technical, it is, nevertheless, consistent.

Lyricaly, Gould finds in Clark's singles an epitome of adolescence. "The twenty three months separating the release dates of *Downtown* and *Who am I?* being but a modest acceleration of the American teen-ager's precipitous scramble from the parental nest." (68) And while the biography is always present—"Pet Clark is in many ways the compleat synthesis of this experience" (68)—and while marketing is always there—"the title, tempo, and tonal range of a performer's hits should observe a certain bibliographic progression" (69)—there is something else. "Each of the four songs details an adjacent plateau of experience." (68)

Within "The Search for Pet Clark," the plateaus of experience are modeled on the plateaus of Marathon, almost literally: Clark's pop career is launched "Downtown" and "Who am I?" begins "The Buildings reach up to the sky." These are the resting points of the allegory, the irreducible nuggets that make it possible for one story to stand for another; the vertical connections. And while they could be understood as moments in a life or elevations on a fjordside they are, more abstractly, the precipitates of a particular sort of analysis, one that yields both plateaus and "progression" or "modest acceleration," what we might simply call nodes and links.

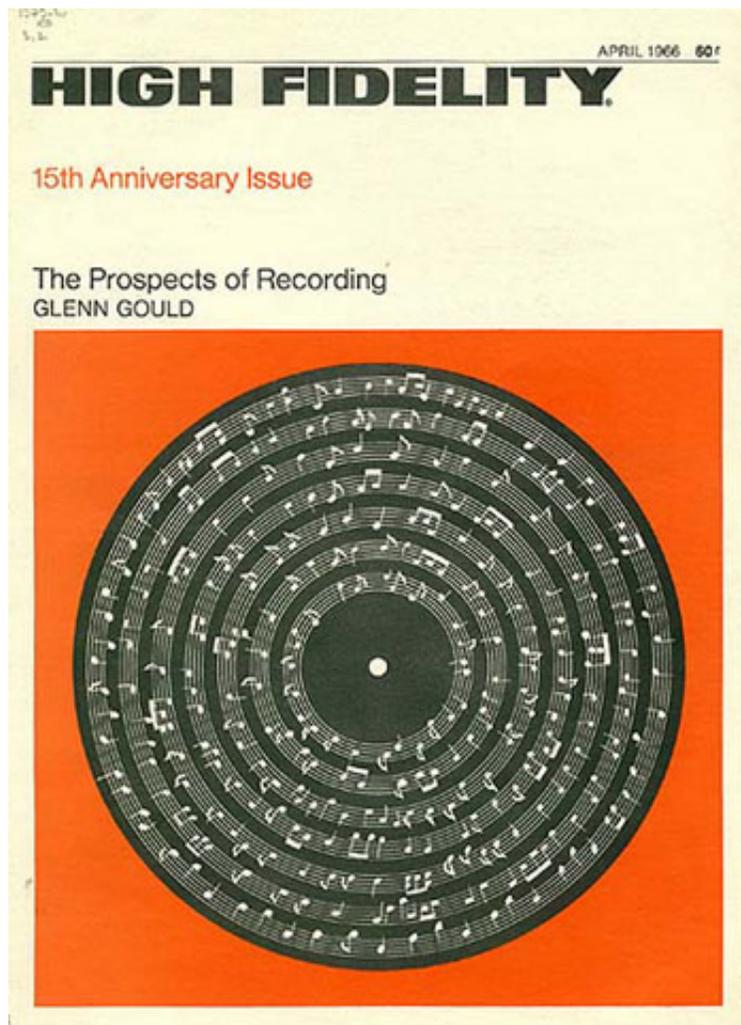
Musically, the "harmonic attitude is, at all times, hymnal, upright, and relentlessly diatonic." (69) How is it to be saved? Gould works through contrast. If Clark is diatonic, then so is virtually all pop. The difference is that the Beatles are lauded for their C-major—a

“credible ...accident of overtone displacement”—while Clark is looked down on. Their “common triad” is “purgative,” while Clark’s is hopelessly square. Gould uses the distinction to launch his disagreement. For producer Tony Hatch, tonality is “a viable and continuing source of productive energy with priorities that demand and get, from him, attention.” (70) What saves Clark’s songs, then, is not simply that the lyrical content is managed across a host of instances, but that the musical content finds itself in tension with the lyrical progression. On the one hand, the music matches its lyrics. The perfect fourth of “Downtown” embodies “the improvisatory fantasies of youth” while “Who am I?” is “locked into a diatonic spiral”—f,e,c; c,a,g (70). On the other, the fit between lyric and motive seems to support the idea that Clark’s emotions are too easy, that she and Hatch are today’s sentimental equivalent of Harriet Beecher Stowe and Felix Mendelssohn (69). Can Hatch’s commitment to form save the songs from their overwhelming tendency to pander?

“Pet Clark” works because at the moments we think Gould is overreaching—at the moments when Gould can’t possibly support the kind of distinction he wants us to uphold—he himself falls back from the claim to something like the urge to make the claim in the first place. It’s not that Petula Clark and Tony Hatch are secret Schoenbergians; rather, it’s that Gould can’t help himself. When the need became severe, he had to pull over to contemplate Petula. That need drives him to a consideration of the possible “vertical synchronizations” in the bass line. At length, though, he turns on his initial investment in the profundity of the song, and on Clark. Her voice carries no more than the “tenor of mindless confidence and the tone of slurred articulation.” Still, the possibility that there is some “vertical synchronization” between real existential dread and “mindless” pop interrogation remains; there is always the potential spur to analysis, Schenkerian or otherwise.<sup>7</sup> And the urge to analyze, however “biographical” it might appear, is, for Gould, profoundly tied up with his contemporary mediascape.



Gould in the Studio



High Fidelity, April 1966

For Gould, his sort of analysis only became possible, and desirable, with the advent of modern recording techniques. In “Dialogues on the Prospect of Recording,” a CBC radio documentary from 1965 published in 1966, he schematizes the basic difference between recordings that aim to reproduce the concert experience and those that aim elsewhere.<sup>8</sup> In place of reverb and rubato, the new style of recording depends on exceptional clarity achieved via close-miked intimacy. And while that description captures Gould’s own musical and vocal recording strategies, he makes his case most forcefully in a discussion of differing approaches to recording the early Schoenberg. Here is Gould describing Robert Craft’s version of *Pelleas and Melisande*:

Craft applies a sculptor’s chisel to these vast orchestral complexes of the youthful Schoenberg and gives them a determined series of plateaus on which to operate—a very baroque thing to do. He seems to feel that his audience—sitting at home, close up to the speaker—is prepared to allow him to dissect this music and to present it to them from a strongly biased conceptual viewpoint, which the private and concentrated circumstances of their listening make feasible. Craft’s interpretation, then, is all power steering and air brakes. (51)

Now, it is *possible* that Gould was thinking of driving around Lake Superior when he described Robert Craft’s approach to Schoenberg, and that the analogy originates with the automotive geology of the Pet Clark piece. But whichever came first, the decisive concept is indirect control through amplification: power steering and air brakes. At the same time, I want to stress that while this control is indirect, it is not virtual. That is, there are real amplifications of the driver’s actions in the car’s ideal response.

Why does that indirection matter? In part, of course, it matters because we are trying to account for the origins of a need for allegory, for masking, and this is a way of dragging an aesthetic preference closer to technology than biography. But indirect control matters more because it is essential to the recording studio. That is, if an older recording tradition attempted to reproduce the *auditory* experience of the concert hall, the new recordings attempt to capture and induce the *cognitive* experience of the studio.

It was that cognitive experience that drew Gould away from the concert stage, but he was not alone. The studio defined by multi-track tape-recording offered a new understanding of popularity—popularity as synthesized sociality—that proved irresistible to all sorts of culture purveyors in the decade. Most famously, the Beatles played their last concert August 29, 1966, but even then they couldn't play any of their most recent album, *Revolver*, because it was unreproducible live. Richard Poirier accounts for their turn to the studio as the result of “a self-delighting inventiveness that gradually exceeded the sheer physical capacities even of four such brilliant musicians. The consequent necessity for expanded orchestral and electronic support had reached the point where the *Sgt. Pepper* album had to be wholly, if randomly, conceived in studio.” 9 [116]

It wasn't “self-delighting inventiveness” but something that seemed more revolutionary that attracted Jean-Luc Godard to the Rolling Stones' marathon recording sessions in *One Plus One* from 1968. For Godard, and perhaps the Stones, process had replaced product, even at the heart of popular artmaking. Actually, replaced is too strong a term. What was necessary was a doubled dialectic. First, one needed a sense that process *might* replace product, that what went on in the studio might be as important as whatever emerged from it. Then one needed something to emerge *anyway*. Whatever that new product was, it would come marked as studio-project, as improvisatory, as the necessarily false concretization of the necessarily absent scene of authentic art(making). Whatever the balance might be between process and product in a given instance, though, the overwhelmingly important feature of the studio turn was the emphasis it placed on the control over the moment of emergence. Great artists exquisitely managed their workflow; against the metered drip of official releases came periodic floods of illicit tapes; while artists and fans conjured images of malign corporate powers hellbent on releasing material not intended for public consumption. The studio turned popularity from a matter of saturation into a matter of regulation. Who was in, and who was out.

There were other possible explanations for the studio turn. Writing in 1965, Tom Wolfe regarded Playboy mogul Hugh Hefner's new reclusiveness as part of a much broader trend. Like conservative social critics before and after, Wolfe aligned Hefner's cocooning with a general trend toward affluent suburbanization. He was not the marketer of a lifestyle but the avant-garde of a rebellion against

social climbing, “The King of the Status Dropouts.” In this he was different in degree, but not in kind, from the average American. “Through the more and more sophisticated use of machines, Hefner, and to a lesser degree millions of ...*homemakers* outside of New York, have turned their homes into wonderlands, almost complete status spheres all their own. Certain basic technologies, the car, the telephone, televisions, radio, have enabled them to keep in touch with the basic realities of the...*outside world*, such as making a living, keeping in touch and so forth.” (67)

Wolfe’s argument neatly glosses the difference between Hefner’s mancave aesthetic and the escape from manual drudgery that postwar domestic mechanization advertised. In reality, the Hefner version of autonomy and control relies on a highly developed studio sense. His revolving bed—“It goes 33 1/3, 45 and 78!”—carries him past banks of dials, “*the dials, the dials*” to control the hi-fi set up, and, most importantly, the self-taping apparatus. “I have a whole \$40,000 Ampex videotaping console,’ says Hefner ‘so I figured I might as well have the camera, too. It would be like having a tape recorder and no microphone.” (59) The console, the camera, and the Ampex technician on call 24/7 are necessary to make the sort of media-baron-by-remote-control possible. Gould had a similarly expensive taping system, beginning with two Ampex two-tracks and eventually graduating to a 8-track Tascam console.

Whatever the biographical reasons behind the self-sequestration of the Beatles, or the Rolling Stones, or the Beach Boys, or Hugh Hefner, in all of them the studio installs a dialectic of disclosure, a barrier that can be dropped or opened at will, a way of controlling and thereby cultivating intimacy. Some of that dialectic is a product of the actual layout of the place, as Susan Schmidt-Horning’s work has made clear, with its evolving *spatial* separation between performer and producer. But for that dialectic to become the figure of the popular as such, it required an emblem of its *operation*. That emblem took two forms, one technological, one temporal.

The technological form we have already encountered: “*the dials... the dials.*” “Dial twiddling is in its limited way an interpretive act.” Gould said in “The Prospects of Recording” (59). The reduction of performance, from public to private, from the sorts of manipulation required by a piano or a guitar or a string section to the sort of manipulation required by a Tascam console can seem to be a great loss. Gould’s analytic listening or the Beatles “self-delighting inventiveness” is hard to distinguish from the onanistic regression that Adorno ridiculed in “The Fetish-Character in Listening”—

those “countless radio listeners play[ing] with the feedback or the sound dial.” (310) The dial is the barest index of interpretive will. For Adorno, that reduction is a falling away from the challenges of real listening; for Gould, the attenuation of effort opens up the possibility of analysis. For analysis to take hold, then, it needed more than technological support; it also required a *temporal* form: ABA, counterpoint, Romantic revelation.

For Poirier, the Beatles’ form is revelation, and the contrast is with linear development of the sort Gould favored: “*Sgt Pepper* wasn’t in the line of any continuous development. Rather, it was at the time a sort of eruption, an accomplishment for which no one could have been wholly prepared.” (115) Gould abhorred those sorts of studio “eruptions,” and contrasted the Beatles negatively with Pet Clark. For him, the “amateurishness” of their material “is actually surpassed only by the ineptitude of the studio production method. (*Strawberry Fields* suggests a chance encounter at a mountain wedding between Claudio Monteverdi and a jug band.)” (70) Some of that animus is clearly a projection. “*Strawberry Fields*” was famously the product of several separate recording sessions in two different keys. George Martin slowed one and sped the other in order to intercut between them. And while Gould would have hated what we now call the song’s “pitchiness,” he also emulated the technique, splicing together different takes of a fugue and, more appositely, “pulling” the tape in order to emphasize particular words in his documentaries.

Ultimately, though, Gould’s documentaries have a contrapuntal form because he believes, contra Poirier and for reasons as technological as they are formal, that only through the establishment of a reliable basis of expectation can the possibility of transcendence be preserved. The citizens of Marathon remain trapped between Pet Clark’s promises of “escalation” and her omens of “decline [which] effectively cancel each other out. The result, despite the conscientious stratification of the town, is a curiously compromised emotional unilaterality.” (71) They live in one track. In contrast, on the road above Marathon, above Lake Superior, in his studio on wheels, Gould achieves “an astounding clarity of AM reception. All the accents of the continent are spread across the band, and, as one twiddles the dial to reap the diversity of that encounter, the day’s auditory impressions...recede, then reemerge as part of a balanced and resilient perspective.” (71) Down in Marathon, Pet Clark’s question, “Who am I?,” seems to be part of the stream of “interminable mid-morning coffee-hour

laments.” It is mere biography; it wears no mask. But at the highest point in Ontario, against the multitrack background, the trite question achieves its existential possibility. It takes form—individual, national, mediated. The driver performs his transcendental magic and the car becomes a mobile studio, uncovering the roots of Pet Clark’s popularity, and Gould’s own.

## NOTES

1. Biographical details from Kevin Bazzana, *Wondrous Strange: The Life and Art of Glenn Gould* (New York: Oxford UP, 2004).
2. “Glenn Gould: The Idea of South by North,” *Iowa Review* 15:3 58–65, 58.
3. “Glenn Gould as Radio Composer,” *The Massachusetts Review*, 29:3 (Fall 1988), 557–70, 557.
4. It appears in *High Fidelity* on 67–71, and is reprinted in *The Glenn Gould Reader*, Tim Page, ed., intro. New York: Vintage, 1984, 300–07. Some of the same material appears in Gould’s “Why Glenn Gould loves Petula Clark,” *Toronto Daily Star*, 11/17/67, 31. For this article and the drafts of the Pet Clark piece, see the *Glenn Gould Fonds*, reel 4, Canadian National Library.
5. Geoffrey J Matthews, Donald Kerr, *Historical Atlas of Canada* Toronto: U Toronto P 1990, Plate 65. The information on the Marathon relay is from <http://www.northpine.com/broadcast/on/radio.html>
6. [http://archives.cbc.ca/science\\_technology/transportation/clips/3899/](http://archives.cbc.ca/science_technology/transportation/clips/3899/)
7. In the manuscript discussion of the bass line, Gould contrasted the “delight of all Schoenbergian motive-excavators” with the “fury of all Schenkerian analytic pragmatists.” (Draft I, § 4 p. 2; *Glenn Gould Fonds* reel 4).
8. The version in *The Glenn Gould Reader* (331–52) is less satisfying than the *High Fidelity* version (April 1966, 46–63). The radio broadcast included input from a number of recording artists and media theorists of differing viewpoints. The magazine version reproduces chunks of their commentary in the margins, alongside Gould’s own running text. The *Reader* eliminates these other voices.
9. Richard Poirier, “Learning from the Beatles,” *The Performing Self: Compositions and Decompositions in the Languages of Contemporary Life*, 1992 (essay originally 1967?), 112–142, 113.

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