

GG: The Gould Variations

To: "f minor" <f_minor@email.rutgers.edu>

Subject: GG: The Gould Variations

From: Katherine Lee <klee@dna.bc.ca>

Date: Tue, 15 Oct 1996 11:00:43 -0700 (PDT)

This weekend, I watched a movie called The Gould Variations, directed by Manuel Hueriga.

It was a very interesting film. Some of the film editing techniques are a little unconventional, but overall, it's a very good representation of the man and his ideas. The Idea of North and his other radio and musical compositions are emphasized, as are Gould's "unconventional" interpretations of Mozart and Brahms, (specifically his performance with Bernstein and the NY Phil).

Some of the ideas discussed had to do with Gould's relationship to music. There is a Hungarian pianist who appears throughout to talk about Gould and his work. (I didn't catch the pianist's name in the opening titles S and annoyingly, the name was neither subtitled in the movie nor listed in the end credits. If anyone has seen this movie and can fill me in on this, I'd appreciate it!)

One of the archival clips included in the film is of Gould explaining his early keyboard technique, which was developed on the organ, with its emphasis on the bass pedalling. Gould then goes on to explain that Mozart is conventionally played with a softer left-hand and more emphasis on the right hand and upper melody. He then demonstrates how HE does it, with a much greater emphasis on the left hand and the bass parts.

Clips from the film versions of the Idea of North and Gould's "ode" to Petula Clark are accompanied by clips of Gould explaining the compositional technique to a producer? a critic? and by the Hungarian pianist's analysis.

The pianist talks about how he regrets there weren't more radio compositions S he found them a great deal more interesting than Gould's musical compositions. He then continues to explain his theory of Gould's relationship to music S in that he didn't believe that Gould was so much enamoured of the music as he was with sound S and the IDEA of SOUND. Controversial perhaps, but so profound.

There are other archival clips, of the young Gould performing at home, at the recording studio and of him explaining the studio microphone placement techniques, for example.

Because of the language/translation issue S there were some funny errors.

For instance, the Estate of Glenn Gould is credited as the State of Glenn Gould (if only)! And I'm sure the credit listing Jerry Grieg should have been Jessie Grieg.

Throughout the film I kept thinking of the members of the f_minor list and how comments, such as the one about the idea of sound, would be met. Has anyone else seen the film, and if so, how did you find it?

Katherine Lee, Multimedia Developer

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Re: GG: The Gould Variations
To: "f minor" <f_minor@email.rutgers.edu>
Subject: Re: GG: The Gould Variations
From: derekw@direct.ca (Derek Wong)
Date: Tue, 15 Oct 1996 18:34:14 -0700

At 11:00 96-10-15, Katherine Lee wrote:

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His name is Zoltan Kocsis. His own recordings are on Philips. I actually found his commentary in the film rather tedious.

Were they showing it on Vancouver TV again? Did they only show this one? About a year ago Bravo celebrated with a Gould marathon day by showing 3 hours worth of material over and over again:

Tribute to Glenn Gould #1 (30min)
Glenn Gould: Off The Record (30min)
Tribute to Glenn Gould #2 (30min)

Glenn Gould: On The Record (30min)
Gould Variations (60min)

There are sooo many interesting bits and pieces in them. They also showed in between the shows many short interviews with people who have worked with Gould. Also a hilarious Walton duet that Gould sang.

Derek (Vancouver, Canada)

GG: The Gould Variations
To: f_minor@email.rutgers.edu
Subject: GG: The Gould Variations
From: Anne-Maree Kate ENGLUND 9104791
<e9104791@rainbow.anu.edu.au>
Date: Wed, 16 Oct 1996 11:37:46 +1000 (EST)

This weekend, I watched a movie called The Gould Variations, directed by Manuel Hueriga. Throughout the film I kept thinking of the members of the f_minor list and how comments, such as the one about the idea of sound, would be met. Has anyone else seen the film, and if so, how did you find it?

Yes, I saw the film on television a couple of years ago. It was part of a series called Masterpiece, where they have a documentary about a different person each week.

I enjoyed it very much and was particularly amused by Glenn's comparison of Richard Strauss to a chocolate sundae.

I found the Hungarian narrator quite irritating and not particularly informative. (Oh! The second recording of the Goldbergs is so COSMIC!!!!), and would probably have been happier if they'd used more footage of Glenn to narrate the documentary - he speaks fairly well for himself. Certainly it seems obvious from his "contrapuntal radio" and recording experiments with different mike perspectives, that he was interested in sound. But was he more interested in the "idea of sound" than in music? I doubt it. There isn't a lot of intellectual meat in the idea of sound unless you're a physicist, and I don't think the idea could have satisfied his obvious delight in musical structures.

I thought it was interesting that they finished it up with the bit about Voyager, just like in 32 short films. Is this where Francois Girard got the idea from?.....

Anne-Maree Englund
Dept Engineering, ANU Canberra

Re: GG: The Gould Variations

To: Katherine Lee <klee@dna.bc.ca>, "f minor" <f_minor@email.rutgers.edu>

Subject: Re: GG: The Gould Variations

From: Robert Clements <clemensr@mailhost.world.net>

Date: Wed, 16 Oct 1996 13:27:20 +1000 (EST)

At 11:00 15/10/1996 -0700, Katherine Lee wrote:

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Zoltan Kocsis. Personally, i found the film a bit over-edited; & yes, i _do_ feel the same away about GG's radio documentaries at times....

All the best,

Robert Clements

clemensr@mailhost.world.net