

# Gould: bio of a classical Brando

By Paul Stuart

High atop St. Clair Ave., amid decaying furniture from the early sixties and the visions of genius, lives a giant of the world of classical music, pianist Glenn Gould.

Since he quit touring in 1964, Gould has become lesser-known to the younger generation. But in the fifties, he was something of a heart throb for the college set and was dubbed "the Marlon Brando of the piano" by the *New Yorker*. Gould has, however, continued to attract a good deal of attention in Canada with his steady stream of recordings, writing, and programs for the CBC. It is as a recording artist, with a disdain for live performances — a monk of the recording studio who believes that putting music to vinyl requires a new kind of artist — that Gould has continued to evolve artistically.

In *Glenn Gould, Music and Mind*, author Geoffrey Payzant probes the musical philosophy of the man who violinist Yehudi Menuhin calls "the most exotic of my colleagues." It is a lively and engaging book, one which could be read by anyone with an interest in recorded music — even if the reader is not a dedicated classical music fan, or lacks a technical vocabulary.

For the most interesting part of the book deals with what Payzant calls Gould's "New Philosophy" of recorded music. Gould is different from most serious musicians in that he is not interested in making

records that sound as though they were recorded live in a concert hall. His records are as edited and spliced together as a film (he does not usually record entire performances), and is willing to use the gadgetry of the recording studio to expand his instrument's range.

Does it sound like Gould is headed down the road to gimmickry that rock 'n' rollers set off on long ago, leaving his musical integrity in the dust?

Actually, Gould was experimenting with the recording studio as a new medium long before Sergeant Pepper's, but he seems to be rather isolated in his attitude to technology among classical musicians.

When *Music and Mind* was reviewed in the *Toronto Star*, William Littler wrote that "Gould's willingness to cut and splice for hours on end... has been aptly designated as creative cheating." Littler contended that Gould's New Philosophy "begs a moral question."

I suppose the question concerns the ethics of passing off a patch-up job as a complete performance. But, as Payzant points out, that's the way film makers operate. And look at it from the listener's point of view: Doesn't the record-buyer get a better deal if every piece is a montage of sections, each played to the hilt, rather than a single effort, which is bound to have relatively weak points? Payzant provides Gould's answer:

"In the New Philosophy neither composer nor performer has final control over any stage in the whole recording process, nobody has. Making a recording is a collaborative process which leaves open further modifications or adjustments at another stage, and there is no final stage because records are listened to repeatedly, and each repetition is subject to the (listener's) judgements and adjustments."

There is much more to *Music and Mind*. Tidbits from Gould's prodigal childhood, a chapter on his radio documentaries — which Gould considers to be a kind of music — all presented in Payzant's pleasant, straight-forward prose style.

There is nothing about Gould's skeletons in the closet, his vices and misadventures, or the women in his life (if there are any). Gould says his life is dull, apart from music, and Payzant agrees with him. Writer Norman Snider tried to get an interview with Gould a while back, and finally succeeded. The result is preserved in the May issue of *Toronto Life*. Snider came no closer to the "real Glenn Gould," than Payzant.

"Mr. Gould, Snider asked, are you lonely? The answer was quick and crisp. 'No,' he said. 'Certainly not.'"

Perhaps the music is the man. (*Glenn Gould, Music and Mind* by Geoffrey Payzant. 192 pages, \$14.95 hardcover. Van Nostrand Reinhold.)



GEOFFREY PAYZANT

## 'Me?' successfully juggles absurdity and frivolity

By Michael Korican

(*Me?* a two act play by Martin Kinch. 72 pages, \$4.95. The Coach House Press.)

"Ah...ah...ah...ahh...ahhhhh, AHHH," moans Terry while Chloe pants, "Yes, yes, ahhh, ah, yes." She switches into French and reveals her sexual politics, "oh, oui, oui, oh, oh, ahhhh!"

These opening lines of Martin Kinch's play, *Me?*, accomplish more than merely introducing Terry, a frustrated writer, and Chloe, a "pretty successful singer." They expose one of the play's central themes: modern love is a very selfish emotion, demanding much more than one might have to offer.

In the course of the play, every character demands some form of love from Terry. He's a Canadian artist, a writer of books about "real things that are important." Chloe makes fantastic physical demands of Terry, and represents society's swinging element: the "literary luncheon pick-ups" or "simpering female fungi." She doesn't leave him much time to work.

Oliver, Terry's former university roommate and a closet homosexual, also needs Terry's love. A musician in despair over bad reviews, he begs for reassurance and respect. Consequently, he's very jealous of Chloe, calling her a "fugitive from a popsicle factory" as well as the two preceding quotes.

Kathy symbolizes marital love. She and Terry never really reconciled themselves to each other, so she now wants a divorce. Even though they're separated, Kathy still worries Terry, if only because her discovery of Chloe would provide grounds and mean the alimony he can't afford.

Wilf depicts brotherly love and, by implication, maternal love. Their mother has just attempted suicide and Wilf wants Terry to come home and show he cares. He

protests, claiming, "She's another human being, Wilf, like everyone else in this room...making another demand on me."

Kinch, a director and co-founder of the Toronto Free Theatre, assembles his characters on stage in terms of the victim theory so prevalent in Canadian arts. As long as Terry remains an unknowing fall guy of his own shortcomings he can't hope to develop. The play ends with Terry's realization that once he understands himself he'll interact more successfully with others.

Kinch's play is very engaging and both the plot and the dialogue flow smoothly and naturally. Small touches, like the choice of Jelly Roll Morton and the Well Tempered Clavier for music, make it further accessible.

Kinch presents a full spectrum of emotion, from the darkest hate to the lightest frivolity, usually in a pale existential light. Coach House Press' edition of the Playwrights' Cp-op original is highly readable, each page topped with a question mark, a symbol of the search for the self.

## Film premiere

On Thursday, October 12 at noon, Stong College in association with the Polish People's Republic will present the Canadian premiere of Jerzy Kawalerowicz's *Death of the President* in the Stong Theatre, 112 Stong College.

Mr. Kawalerowicz, who will be present to answer questions about the film and his work, is art director of *Cadre*, the new Group of Film Producers, and president of the Association of Polish Film Makers.

A specialist in psychological drama, his awards include the Polish State Prize, the London and Venice Festival Awards and prizes at the Cannes Festival and other centres for *Mother Joanna of the Angels*, 1961.



Once again York students can look forward to another series of high-energy musical evenings at York's Cabaret. And under the guidance of this year's artistic

director, Andy Lewarne, seated extreme left, any students interested in writing or performing are urged to participate in creating another successful

year of Cabaret performances.

For a detailed account of what *Cabaret* is really all about, see next week's issue.

## Basin Street blues explosion

By Gay Walch

Salome Bey is my Mama; she cuddles, she cooes, she sings, yells and snaps. She takes care of me, tells me where it's at, and because of it all I feel better.

Salome Bey is the blues revue now playing at the Basin Street Cabaret under the name of *Indigo*; she is the performer making it work. She jolts, she gyrates back and forth - a rudimentary dance into primordial acts of giving. She lures and teases; there is no mercy within her. Either I enter into the blues, swallowing the potent sounds, letting them stew or I don't. It's that simple.

For Salome Bey is a master of intimacy. She is a professional who understands showmanship. When singing her acid-sweet songs, she makes it appear as though she's

giving you her heart; but she can't give her heart away — she's a performer. So instead, you extend your heart and she offers a pulse. And you sense that that sound, that pounding filling of fibers, is not just her, but you too.

In the moments of darkness, the Basin Street Cabaret looms around me. For a couple of kidnapped hours, I've been grabbed, taken out of town; someone starts singing, then a shuffle of taps, and throughout it all I know that Salome Bey is the hostess; she does not stop inviting.

*Indigo* has no storyline. Instead, the audience is sucked into the spirit of the blues through blood-sweat-song and dance, galloping, rolling back and forth - a musical expression, a representation of a people's hopes and struggles.

But at the Basin Street Cabaret, what was once music stemming from the experience of a people, has been amazingly produced into a revue whose sounds and beats belong and speak to many different groups of people.

What separates *Indigo* from other Toronto theatrical experiences is simply that the company - Salome Bey and her two cohorts Rudy Webbe and Dennis Simpson - has chosen to give. It is exactly this act of giving that jets *Indigo* into a spiritual-physical communion with the audience.

In a way, theatre has forgotten how to give, and *Indigo* has forced me to hold and remember its act of giving. In so doing, it has taken me to an emotional height that I thought did not exist, only because I have not felt it for so long.