

Mundy 22 March 1993 (Spring!)

Brian McLaren -- using one of those labels since I assume that it's what you want during the settling period....

Greetings from Down South ===

Took till Saturday to use up all the water I had saved in rain-barrels and pails for the front yard. Still lots of drying and rearranging of the back yard to do, and Jonathan is not around very much at this time. That might get better; he promised.

I have a new slogan: indeed I am going to xerox it when I do copies of some new stuff. As follows:

THE NINETEENTH CENTURY HAS NO FUTURE!

This merely Educated guessing, but from 75 years of experience, of many moves, some of which were because my mother loved to move (we had a house 6 miles south of downtown Portland in a suburban winding road with some 25 families all of whom were well-to-do except us, that was lonely and isolated so my mother had the right to move into town and take an apartment for three months or so -- that happened some four times. I am talking about the 1920s of course.

Then leaving Portland for California and many forced moves and other things, and then the Glendale cottage going to pieces and the plumbing going stark raving mad in 1985 and no place in L.A. and Glasiers rescued me. From very co-operative landlord and landlady in Glendale for 9 years to the nastiest new owners and real-estate moguls that Glendale could have, overnight!

Accordingly I can presume you have having difficulties in moving and settling so I have held back even the good news that has happened here, various little things.

Now what could be bad news but I don't think it is as important as it might seem: the San Diego Reader, last Thursday, published a long article about one Donna Dawson, Juilliard and other posh music places Graduate, who has taught piano in the Classical/Romantic period for the last 25 years, and who apparently lives just a few blocks from where the Glasiers live.

John Brizzolara, who I believe mainly writes about pop and rock personalities for the Reader and must write for other publications, interviewed Mme. Dawson and so far as authorship and interviewing technique and literary style and decorum and restraint and careful phrasing are concerned this is tops.

(as I type this, loud raucous racket of my new Tape No. C 419 being copied on the Duplicator at Double Speed. High pressure 19-tone when heard that way.) I am making seeds and oodles of copies of C419 and C 420 which is in 12 and 22-tone thints on earlier reels and a Megalyra Group Demo which turns out to be worth copying part of.

Back to the Dawson/Brizzolara Affair: Dawson really organizes her thoughts carefully and would be a formidable enemy. Frankly, I believe that both Brizzolara and Dawson should not have gone to Journalism and Music Colleges respectively, but should have both gone to Law School and become expensive successful wealthy Trial Lawyers. They would have won most of their cases and gotten clients off scot-free! I mean this interview article builds Air-Tight Cases.

Restraint and care and decorum and KIN KNOWING WHAT TO OMIT AND

WHEN AND WHERE TO CHANGE THE SUBJECT SO AS TO AVOID "BLOWING IT" or losing the case by a careless reply or thoughtless remark that gives everything away. This must have been well thought out and is a lesson in competent writing for me to heed.

The course of argument was to hammer away on Bach, Beethoven, Schumann, Mozart, Scarlatti, Mendelssohn, you know the rest, and that period, end of the 18th century and first part of the 19th, in Central Europe, as the ONLY THING and nothing else matters or will ever matter, and therefore and accordingly it is supremely worthwhile to be a Religious Masochist practicing boring tiresome finger exercises too many hours a day and taking all the fun out of life. The 20th century and our native United States composers are not even mentioned--the loud persistent silence is eloquent to show what Dawson thinks of Today's US or San Diego. True the Present Day is mentioned indirectly by paying due respect to the pupils who necessarily are here in 1993 San Diego rather than in 1845 Vienna. That indeed is part of their skill in writing this piece. I am giving equal credit to interviewer and interviewee for never losing their Cool. Even when electronic keyboards had to be mentioned, this was done with exemplary restraint. Any other interviewer/interviewee combination would have blown it by invective or sarcasm or other signs of amateurism.

It is simply happy Good Luck and Pure Chance that I did not read this article right after getting the March 18th Reader on Thursday Noon. I might have blown my cork and fired off some intemperate reply and ruined my chances in this town. I did not even glance at it till Saturday afternoon and was very surprised to see something so elitist in the Alternative or so-called alternative press.

We are confronting a Closed Mind Reactionary thing here which is done with dignity and care and professionalism, not the usual naked prejudice affair you would get from the average classical piano instructor. I am not sure how to deal with this. The good part of it is that anything in the weekly Reader is surely going to be entirely forgotten inside of a month from now. This is journalism, not enduring publication for time to come.

If I keep quiet enough, it will go away and not bother. What hurts is not the prima facie attitude, but the cleverness in building an AIR-TIGHT case. The between-the-lines final crushing verdict is that no composer born in this country is any good at all and all my lifetime of experience in composing and performance and building instruments and writing about musical matters counts for zero.

The bad part of Dawson's thesis is that all these students mentioned and commended and respected, are being PROMISED careers in something which no longer exists and has not existed during my entire lifetime. When they graduate from Conservatory or University and get a degree in music or whatever, it will be too late for them to learn something to make money and so they will be homeless paupers or sad ridiculed failures and as I said above, the Nineteenth Century Has No Future.

It will be as crushing and horrid a disappointment as losing \$100 000 at Las Vegas or in the Stock Market when a certain item plunges into oblivion. The piano cannot compete with the instruments and the computers and recording devices that will be out there when these young people graduate. By that time, 1999 or 2010, there will be no piano-tuners and no -- I am more sure of this latter! -- repairmen to fix actions and restring and pick at hammers and level piano keys. If they perform then at all, they will HAVE to change

their attitudes and minds c drastically and accept electronic keyboards and sequencers and recording systems after being carefully and expertly prejudiced against them, and this is going to waste waste lots of time and money and result in disillusion and s disappointment after all that intensive religious dedication, and here I am unable to do a damn thing about it and unable to help them or get somebody to heed my predictions.

The hardest part will be to carry out professional restraint equal to theirs (Brizzolara's and Dawson's) so as not to be publicly ridiculed.

...My father was a professor of European and American History at the University of Oregon, in Eugene as well as in Portland later on at the Portland Extension. Before I was born and when I was a baby, he was at Eugene teaching European History and so with a background like that I had plenty of time to learn about the environments and affairs surrounding Bach or Beethoven or Brahms or Schumann or Schubert or Mozart. o Osmosis as it were, even though my father and his family hated music. (Fortunately that did not extend to my many cousins on my father's side.)

By the way, somewhere around 1931 my father was teaching an evening Portland University Extension class about Bosnia and Herzegovina. I can't remember details 62 years later, but that he did so I sure do remember.

There is no harm in everybody studying those composers of Central Europe of 150 and 200 years ago; that is not the point. The point is that the article I am citing and a number of books and articles and commentators and people I have encountered since boyhood, assume that ALLWORTHY MUSIC HAD ALREADY BEEN WRITTEN BY 1870 or so, and nothing in this country and nothing in Europe after that time, should be played or heard or even mentioned. The attitude that music FINISHED before the 19th Century finished. Either we become Necrophiliacs or we should live in Silence.

Back in 1945 when I lived in Hollywood, some people even said that to me. "How dare you compose?"

In the above article this thesis is tacitly conveyed. That's the cleverness at work, and that also warns me that I would get nowhere confronting such persons. Anymore than I would have succeeded in promoting my instruments and compositions by battling Rob Bell publicly. He must be gloating hugely if he read that article. Perhaps he is too drunk to have read it.

Meanwhile: several people have sent funds for postage and xeroxing and tape-copying. I am getting votes that I did not expect. I did not ask for them. But it happened nevertheless.

Yours

Just heard from a Recording or something organization Newsletter and from Larry Hanson the advocate of 53, from whom I have not heard for several years. Evidence surely, that the chain-referral process is turned OB ON.