

## “The Spectacle of a Young Man”: Glenn Gould, Graham Steed, and an Unpublished Concert Review for the *Windsor Star*

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Résumé de l'article

Cet article se concentre sur le contenu, les intentions et le contexte historique d'une critique inédite d'un concert donné à Détroit (Michigan) par Glenn Gould et l'Orchestre symphonique de Détroit, le 13 octobre 1960. Cette critique, dont l'auteur est Graham Steed (1913–1999) est conservée à la Bibliothèque et Archives Canada. Canadien d'origine britannique, Steed était un organiste et chercheur réputé et a été le critique musical du *Windsor Star* de 1959 à 1965. Il est intéressant de constater que des collègues américains de Steed ont publié des critiques très favorables du concert donné par Gould. En revanche, la critique de Steed était si polémique que le rédacteur en chef du *Windsor Star* a jugé qu'il était impossible de la rendre publique.

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## “THE SPECTACLE OF A YOUNG MAN”: GLENN GOULD, GRAHAM STEED, AND AN UNPUBLISHED CONCERT REVIEW FOR THE *WINDSOR STAR*

Barbara M. Reul

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Much has been written on Glenn Gould (1932–1982) and how contemporary audiences perceived him. His famous eccentricities—in particular, his unusual stage manners, which ranged from singing everything he played to insisting on tropical temperatures for his performing venues—were frequently cited. These could have been the result of a mixed personality disorder (Walter 2000, 89), autism, specifically Asperger syndrome (Maloney 2006, 134), or depression, combined with a narcissistic personality and debilitating stage fright (Mesaros 2008, 145–70), to name but a few recent theories that have been advanced by physicians and musicologists.

Gould’s idiosyncrasies upset many a critic during his lifetime, including Graham Steed (1913–1999), a respected British-Canadian organist and scholar who freelanced as a music critic for the *Windsor Star* from 1959 to 1965 and frequently reviewed concerts in nearby Detroit, Michigan. Steed’s activities as a music critic have received no scholarly attention; they are documented in two scrapbooks preserved in the Library and Archives Canada collection and were put together by Steed himself. One volume contains copies of the newspaper articles he wrote between 1949 and 1994 (Steed 1949–94), while the other consists of his 337 articles for the *Windsor Star* over the course of six years (Steed 1959–65).<sup>1</sup> Steed’s numerous reports and commentaries document first and foremost musical life where he lived and worked in North America. At the same time, they provide insight into how seriously and enthusiastically Steed approached chronicling and commenting on music-related events that caught his attention and captured his imagination.

This article focuses on the content and intent of an unpublished review of a concert performed by Glenn Gould and the Detroit Symphony Orchestra in Detroit on 13 October 1960 (Steed, Scrapbook *Windsor Star*). The concert review is preserved in Ottawa amongst materials that Steed donated to Library and Archives Canada in the 1990s.<sup>2</sup> In order to understand the unique lens that Steed

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<sup>1</sup> Both scrapbooks also contain press clippings of interest to, but not written by Steed. I would like to thank Richard Green, manager (retired), Music Division, Library and Archives Canada (LAC), as well as Derek Stevenson for their assistance.

<sup>2</sup> For an overview, see <http://www.collectionscanada.gc.ca/4/7/m15-495-e.html>. Unfortunately, copyright restrictions imposed by Steed’s three children following their father’s death in 1999 prevent all unpublished materials he donated to the LAC, including the concert review under examination, to be reproduced.

used in 1960 to describe Glenn Gould's performance in Detroit, we will first take a look at Steed's life and career, followed by an examination of his (previously unknown) attitude towards Gould's performance manner and stage presence. A comparison of how American newspaper critics had perceived Gould's performance that night, and an investigation of Steed's motivation for offering a different perspective of Gould's style, conclude this article.

Graham Steed was an organist, choirmaster, and banker by training, who arrived from Britain in 1949 and held various appointments in North America and Europe until retiring in 1986 to Victoria, BC (see figure 1). Steed is best known for his trend-setting performances of, and numerous scholarly insights into the organ works of César Franck (1822–1890), Hermann Schroeder (1904–1984), and especially Marcel Dupré (1886–1971). Steed's seminal book on the French organist was published posthumously (Pendragon 1999) (Steed 1999). Steed also conducted the Victoria Choral Society and, periodically, the Victoria Symphony Orchestra, and founded the Graham Steed Chorale. Most importantly, Steed travelled the world as an organ recitalist for nearly four decades, recording several critically acclaimed LPs with French and British organ works. He liked working with instrumental ensembles, most notably the "Canadian Brass." Steed was also well educated. In addition to being an associate and fellow of the Royal College of Music, he held a Bachelor of Music from the University of Durham, published numerous scholarly articles, and frequently lectured at universities and organists' conventions. Prior to his retirement in the mid-1980s, Graham Steed enjoyed sharing his knowledge and hilarious British sense of humour as a TV and radio personality (Reul 2009; Zastre 1998).

However, unlike Sir Ernest MacMillan, Healey Willan, or Charles Peaker—all of whom Steed knew personally—he did not enjoy widespread name recognition in Canada.<sup>3</sup> This is not entirely surprising, given that Steed was first and foremost a church musician who changed jobs (and countries) frequently. Moreover, Steed composed little and showed no interest in teaching music in a large private studio or university setting. His career trajectory was shaped first and foremost by his love for the "King of Instruments" (Steed 1997; Reul 2009).

Prior to Steed's arrival in Windsor and working for the *Windsor Star*, he served from 1949 to 1958 as choir master and organist at Christ Church Cathedral in Victoria, BC. In May 1952 the first instalment of his weekly column *From My Organ Loft* appeared in the *Victoria Daily Colonist*. As the conductor of the Victoria Choral Society he engaged the Victoria Symphony Orchestra once or twice a year to perform large-scale choral works and enjoyed a loyal readership who appreciated his expertise, candour, and witty writing style (see Victoria Choral Society 2015). However, in the autumn of 1958, Steed himself

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<sup>3</sup> According to Steed's personal diaries, he met with MacMillan, Willan, and Peaker in Toronto in February 1949, shortly after his arrival in Canada. A visit of "Dr. Charles Peaker, probably sometime in 1956" compelled Steed to found the Victoria Chapter of the Royal Canadian College of Organists later that year (Peaker had served as the chairman of Toronto's RCCO chapter from 1937 to 1940). They must have stayed in touch over the years because in March 1972 Steed played an organ recital at St. Paul's Anglican Church in Toronto, where Peaker was the organist and choirmaster.



Figure 1: Graham Steed in his study in Victoria, BC, undated (author's personal collection)

made headlines, not just in Victoria but in the *Vancouver Province* (“Organist Quits over Girls” 1958). Evidently, Steed had turned away women who wished to join his church choir in favour of boy sopranos, following the British tradition. When the clergy at Christ Church Cathedral in Victoria failed to support him, he resigned and looked for employment elsewhere (“Leaving For Ontario Today” 1958).

In January 1959 All Saint’s Anglican Church in Windsor, Ontario, welcomed Graham Steed as their new organist and choirmaster. Two months later, he was formally introduced to readers of the *Windsor Star* as “one of the outstanding music authorities in Canada” (Steed 1959). Interestingly, the *Globe and Mail* had also publicly announced the appointment of its new music critic, Toronto cellist, teacher, composer, and author Leo Smith; his engagement in 1950 was evidently considered a coup (Eatock 2004, 14).<sup>4</sup> A nasty divorce in 1965 forced

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4 Smith’s “ascent to the position of music critic—he wrote on no other subject—was announced in a prominent column that catalogued his many talents” (Eatock 2004, 14). Interestingly, no attention was drawn to the appointment of Smith’s successor, John Kraglund, in 1952, who served as the newspaper’s music critic for thirty-five years (17).

Graham Steed to move back to England,<sup>5</sup> but he returned to North America a year later and worked as a church musician in Connecticut prior to immigrating to New Zealand in 1973. Upon arrival Steed realized that he had made a mistake and, together with his second wife, moved to work in Montreal in 1974. A year later, Steed accepted a position in Truro, Nova Scotia, and, in 1980, having converted to Catholicism, took up employment at St. Mary's Basilica in Halifax. Steed officially retired in 1986 and relocated to the West Coast, where he remained active as a lecturer and continued to travel all over the world as an organ recitalist (Reul 2013).

Let us now turn to Steed's unpublished review of Glenn Gould's appearance with the Detroit Symphony Orchestra in the fall of 1960. Gould was at the height of his career, charging concert fees that were among the highest in the business. Moreover, he had recorded a Beethoven album with Leonard Bernstein conducting the Columbia Symphony Orchestra and made his American television debut on CBS. He also gave fifty-one concerts that took him to both coasts of the United States and Canada that year. Among them were two performances in Detroit at the Ford Auditorium on 12 and 13 October, conducted by Paul Paray.<sup>6</sup> The program opened with Mendelssohn's Italian Symphony, followed by Howard Hanson's 1956 *Elegy to the Memory of My Friend Serge Koussevitzky*, the famous double bass virtuoso and conductor. Glenn Gould was the featured soloist in the second part of the concert, playing Bach's Fifth Brandenburg Concerto together with concertmaster Mischa Mischakoff and principal flautist Albert Tipton. The concert, which was broadcast live on the radio, finished with Beethoven's Second Piano Concerto.<sup>7</sup> In his preamble, the radio announcer described Gould as a "highly regarded Canadian pianist" and commented that it would be a long time before "a trio of such quality" would be performing together again. Furthermore, he noted that the piano had apparently been positioned directly behind the podium, and the flautist and violinist stood behind Gould, who was facing the conductor.

Steed's impressions of what took place that evening in Detroit run just shy of 1000 words, the usual length of concert reviews for the *Windsor Star*. He provides no title, probably because it was the editor's prerogative to choose something appropriate. Steed opens with a bold statement immediately supported by examples, as if writing an essay rather than a concert review. Perhaps Steed's British upbringing and university education is partly the reason for his professorial tone. Leo Smith, who, like Steed, hailed from the United Kingdom, often lectured readers of the *Globe and Mail* as well (Eatock 2004, 14).

There are three classes of musical performers whose public appearances are bound to partake to some degree of exhibitionism. Conductors, organists and pianists, by the very nature of their duties, or the instruments

<sup>5</sup> Steed had an extramarital affair; he and his first wife had three children.

<sup>6</sup> The concert on 12 October was not open to the general public and saluted the National Automobile Show. A picture of Glenn Gould and Paul Paray, the conductor, during a rehearsal for the two concerts, is included in Bazzana 2005, photographs (23).

<sup>7</sup> This concert performance was rereleased in *Glenn Gould in Concert (1951-1960)* 2011. See also "Bach Brandenburg Concerto No.5 ..." 2011.

they play, are much more prone to excess of bodily movements than violinists and singers. Flutes, oboes, trumpets and such other instruments as have to be held in both hands and brought into contact with the lips have the virtue of more or less immobilizing the player, except for the tips of his fingers, and the worst that can befall him is to make facial contortions that are inseparable from performance, being entirely unavoidable if good embouchure is to be obtained.

Steed then examines the role of the conductor, undoubtedly drawing from his many years of professional experience, which included conducting the Victoria Symphony Orchestra in annual performances of Handel's *Messiah*, and conducting several premieres of works by the twentieth-century British composers Ralph Vaughan Williams (whom Steed knew personally) and Benjamin Britten in the 1950s. "Even standing on his head [the conductor] will not persuade his players that he is any better than they know him to be (he may perhaps fool a small section of the public for a short time) [and] soon learns to conserve his surplus energy and restrict his movements to those essential to getting an adequate response from the orchestra."

Typical performance situations in which organists find themselves are discussed next. "The church organist is generally put behind a curtain or a screen so that his busy hands and feet will not distract his [*sic*] attention of [*sic*] the worshippers, whose thoughts are supposed to be on higher things. Not so in the music hall: in the few places where there is still a mighty 'Wurlitzer'—think Radio City Music Hall—the organist is expected to go through all the motions except that of falling off the stool, even though such antics add nothing whatever to the sound of the music."

Most importantly, Steed points out, "Pianists have less excuse than organists for any kind of secondary motion. Their primary motions can be, and usually are, restricted to digital control of a single keyboard never more than 48" wide and of there (sometimes only two) pedals conveniently placed in the centre of the instrument. There are no two, three or four-manual pianos, and no pianos have any of the numerous stops, pistons and other gadgets found on modern organs, which incidentally include a set of 32 notes played by the organist with his feet."

In a new paragraph Steed expands: "The average concert pianist therefore does not find it necessary to crouch or to wriggle, to sprawl or to stamp when he is about his business. Some of them, it is true, raise their hands above their heads, and bring them down in savage attacks on the defenceless ivories and ebonies, which, poor wee things, can only move a mere half inch in a downward direction no matter how hard they are hit, or how much they would like to get out of the way of these alleged champions of the keyboard."

Yet there was an important nineteenth-century piano virtuoso who enjoyed great success by making a spectacle of himself, as Steed is quick to point out:

It is recorded of Franz Liszt, whose pianist[ic] abilities, musicianship and showmanship were all of the very highest order, that he could reduce whole rows of his audience to tears, men and women alike, and that he

could and did break hammers and strings when his full forces were unleashed. This suggests that his fortissimo tone must have been brutally rough, but perhaps in the years 1839 to 1849, when Liszt was at the height of his recital career, the public liked to have their emotions aroused over the whole gamut of sounds and sights, musical and unmusical alike. Apparently they still do.

When reaching the end of this particular paragraph (543 words into the review!), I—and perhaps also the editor of the *Windsor Star* when he first read it—was certain that Steed was up to no good. Why was he not sharing information on who played when, where, what, and how, as one would expect from a typical concert review?

Some but not all the answers are provided in the next section, undoubtedly to keep the reader guessing. “We now have the spectacle of a young man of 28 whose musical talents are immense and undisputed, who is equally at home with Bach, Beethoven, Strauss and Schoenberg, who understands the philosophical and aesthetic aspects of the whole art of music and can convey this knowledge in well chosen words with admirable illustration from the whole range of musical literature, but who cannot behave on the concert platform except in such a way that one is obliged to shut one’s eyes or risk being physically nauseated.”

Steed then admits that he, like the audience, was fascinated by the artist and finally identifies him, but not without drawing attention to a particular stage prop in the process.

Such is the power, and he is undoubtedly conscious of it, that he exercises an unholy mesmerism over his audience, to the extent that instead of attention being focussed on the music, or on the orchestra as a whole, it is rivaled solely on the rather unattractive figure at the piano, and the sounds which that particular instrument is making. For make no mistake, even when his piano is silent, one is almost afraid to take [one’s] eyes off Mr. Gould, in case of missing the moment when he will decide to swallow his glass of water. Actually I didn’t see him use it last Thursday: it was left to the stage hands to spill the contents of the glass on the floor when they came too close to his piano after the concert was over.

An acerbic Steed proceeds to provide some relevant information about the concert in a new paragraph.

Sympathy for Mr. Gould’s health caused some strange things to happen in Detroit last week.

The temperature of the auditorium was raised several degrees higher than normal and all four of the music critics who reported [on] his health<sup>8</sup> and his playing kept silence on the disgusting, entirely unnecessary, loud stamping of Mr. Gould’s right heel during several lengthy passages in the

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<sup>8</sup> This implies that Steed had read the other critics’ reviews—which appeared the day after the concert—prior to writing his own.

Bach concerto. Nor did they mention the dog-like moanings which accompanied some of his flights of solo playing in the Beethoven.

Steed then openly criticizes the relationship between the soloist and the conductor prior to questioning Gould's health and the decision to let him perform in the first place. "If Mr. Gould was in disagreement with Mr. Paray's tempo he could have refused to play with him; if he was in physical pain, he could have stayed at home. The Detroit orchestra can now draw a full house without a guest soloist. It is time this futile clowning was stopped for it brings even good music into disrepute, and reduces the atmosphere of the concert hall to that of a circus."

Finally, Steed (who had served in the military for seven years, including all of the Second World War) compares Gould to a member of the Canadian Forces in need of personal grooming and better equipment. "If the performer in question were not a soloist but an ordinary Canadian soldier on duty with the army abroad he would require a haircut, a better-cut suit of evening clothes and cleaner linen, and his battered old chair would quickly be surveyed back to stores."

It is, however, the closing sentence that leaves nothing to the reader's imagination. "As an ambassador of Canadian culture abroad Mr. Gould should bring his undoubted intelligence to bear on these matters, for they reflect discredit not only on himself but on the country to which he belongs."

Over thirty years later, on 29 July 1993, Steed placed a carbon copy of his critique in a white envelope and put it in the inside cover of the *Windsor Star* Scrapbook, noting, "The article herein was written for [inclusion in the *Windsor*] St[ar] on] 22 Oct. 1960, but it was not published: it is the only article in over 6 years that was not printed. W. L. Clarke 'killed it'!!" Given the highly inflammatory content of Steed's review, the editor's decision seems hardly surprising. But North American critics, including Canadian-based writers, had been permitted to chide Gould since he was fourteen years old.<sup>9</sup> Had Clarke (and the *Windsor Star's* readership) perhaps expected more restraint from Steed?<sup>10</sup> One also wonders whether the editor had asked him about the concert critiques that were published in local Detroit newspapers on 14 October 1960.<sup>11</sup> Steed's American colleagues were, in general, much less consumed with Gould's comportment. In the *Detroit Free Press* J. Dorsey Callaghan praised

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<sup>9</sup> See Maloney 2006, 121–22, for a selection of typical responses to Gould's mannerisms on stage; see Eatock 2004, 18–21, for an examination of how John Kraglund, long-time music critic for the *Globe and Mail*, viewed Gould.

<sup>10</sup> Other editors, especially in the United States, did not suppress similarly obnoxious reviews by their critics. Perhaps the most egregious was Harold Schonberg's review in the *New York Times* of Gould's April 1962 performance of the Brahms D-minor Piano Concerto with Leonard Bernstein and the New York Philharmonic Orchestra. Schonberg wrote a sarcastic letter to a long-deceased friend and renowned early twentieth-century pianist, Ossip Gbrilowitsch. See Mesaros 2008, 251–56, 269–73, which includes an examination of Bernstein's ambivalent comments offered prior to Gould's performance that night.

<sup>11</sup> Only three published reviews could be located in the Glenn Gould Archive, LAC. I would like to thank Steven Posen, Estate of Glenn Gould, for his kind permission to obtain copies of the press clippings.



both the orchestra and the soloist who ranked “above any of today’s younger pianists.” After reminding his readers about Gould’s previous Detroit visit in mid-March 1956, he commented on “the perfect joining of two musicians of genius in the making of perfect music.” The concerto by Bach, misspelled as “Brandenberg,” appeared to be Callaghan’s favourite, as he noted Gould’s “exquisite delicacy and controlled strength” on the piano and listed the other soloists (Albert Tipton, flute; Mischa Mischakoff, violin), whom Steed had ignored completely. Moreover, unlike Steed, Callaghan chose to mention the opening piece, Mendelssohn’s Italian Symphony, rather than Beethoven’s Second Piano Concerto which featured Gould as the soloist (Callaghan 1960).

The *Detroit News* published a review by one of its most experienced journalists, Josef Mossman. Like Callaghan, Mossman opted for a more balanced approach by focusing on the efforts of the Detroit Symphony. But he also chided the audience for not clapping as hard for Mendelssohn’s symphony as they did for Hanson’s *Elegy*. Mossman noted that Gould “displayed the profoundly searching musicianship that ranks him not only as a great young pianist, but as a great among the pianists.” Gould and his fellow soloists had “played brilliantly,” specifically in the second movement of the Brandenburg Concerto, which Mossman described as a “memorable moment of superlative music-making.” Curiously, he also pointed out that Gould turned his own pages for the Brandenburg concerto, except in the “long, demanding piano solo passages, when Mischakoff stepped over to add page-turning to his other duties” (which are not specified). Granted, Mossman could have included this comment in an attempt to help his readers visualize the performance. At the same time, it would have helped deflect attention from Gould’s antics on stage. Mossman closed by emphasizing that “Gould was equally impressive in the Beethoven . . . , music in which his great artistry glowed and glistened,” but failed to provide specific examples to support his argument (Mossman 1960).

The third critic, Harvey Taylor, was writing for the *Detroit Times*. Like Steed, he decided to ignore the pieces that did not involve Gould and to comment on his performing habits, albeit in much less detail. Taylor first compared Gould’s particular physical approach to piano playing to that of a “method actor” before praising his playing as “impeccably clear and luminous” in the second movement of the Brandenburg Concerto. In Beethoven’s second piano concerto Gould was “brilliantly lucid in exposing every note of the work and every subtle graduation of volume.” Taylor continued, “At twenty-eight, he must be considered one of the world’s more important pianists,” and defended Gould’s “idiosyncrasies of stage presence,” as they had evidently “diminished since he first played here four years ago.” Finally, Taylor referred to the famous baseball player Al Simmons, whose “‘foot in the bucket’ batting stance” was deplored by writers, but “none e v e r ventured the opinion that he wasn’t a great hitter despite it” (Taylor 1960; emphasis in original).<sup>12</sup> It has not been possible to identify the fourth critic Steed refers to in his review, but “for every critic

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<sup>12</sup> Emphasis on “ever” added in original.

who deplored [Gould]”, there was “another [who] pronounced himself dazzled” (Bazzana 2005, 254).

Interestingly, the same three American music critics who praised Gould in 1960 were not favourably impressed when Gould first performed in Detroit on 15 March 1956, despite six curtain calls.<sup>13</sup> Callaghan reported in the *Detroit Free Press* that “Gould’s storm-tossed mane of hair, his invertebrate posture at the keyboard and his habit of collapse at the end of each solo line was sheer show business” (Callaghan 1956). Harvey Taylor’s overall assessment for the *Detroit Times* read, “It is [Gould’s] tragedy that his behavior at the piano produced laughter in his audience” (Ostwald 1997, 133). Gould’s repeat performance on 18 March 1956 in Windsor compelled Mossman from the *Detroit News* to comment the day after that “Windsor concert-goers must have wondered what all the Detroit shouting was about.” Three days earlier, Gould had been close to physical collapse but did not wish to cancel the concert in Windsor. He should have, argued Mossman, and concluded that “Gould’s performance was not great, and so no credit for heroism need be extended” (Mossman 1956). In 1956 Gould evidently also became “extremely self-conscious about everything” he did (Maloney 2006, 122); this might explain his more restrained performance on Canadian soil.

Perhaps Steed would have been less scathing if he had reviewed Gould’s concert in Windsor in 1956. Could Gould’s eccentric performing style have caught him by surprise in 1960? Hardly, as Gould had given several concerts in Victoria between 1955 and 1957, and while Steed did not discuss them in his weekly column, it is safe to assume that he would at least have read the mixed reviews in the *Victoria Daily Colonist* (The Glenn Gould Archive). The headlines ranged from “Pianist Uses ‘Stop,’ ‘Go’ Pills” (Johnson 1955) to “Young Canadian’s Piano Magic Fires ‘Meet Symphony’” (Johnson 1955) and “Youthful Pianist’s Artistry Excites Symphony Audience” (Lowther 1955). Two years later the concert inspired “Awed Admiration for Gould Mastery” in the critic (Johnson 1957).<sup>14</sup>

It is more likely that, at the same time as Detroit music critics (and their European counterparts<sup>15</sup>) had apparently become accustomed to Gould’s eccentricities, Graham Steed’s pride and general frustration about Canadian musical culture caused him to cast doubts on Glenn Gould’s suitability as a musical ambassador abroad. It had been questioned before. On 5 June 1959, following Gould’s third European tour that spring, the editor of the *Toronto Daily Star* reprinted an acerbic review of Gould’s playing that had originally appeared in the *Manchester Guardian* (Editorial 1959). While it has been impossible to determine whether Steed had read it, it is remarkable that the majority of the British press had been as distracted by Gould’s “extra-musical behavior”

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<sup>13</sup> “The orchestra’s manager told a journalist, ‘No guest artist has received an ovation like that in my experience here—and, believe me, we get only the very best on the world circuit’” (Bazzana 2005, 157).

<sup>14</sup> Gould also addressed his eccentricities in a radio interview (Gould 1958).

<sup>15</sup> For an overview of Gould’s successes in Europe, see Mesáros 2008, 115–31.

as Steed and gone on to “betray the Canadian virtuoso” in 1959 (Mesaros 2008, 137).

That was certainly never Steed’s intention in 1960 when he criticized Gould. An examination of other selected concert reviews he wrote for the *Windsor Star* between 1959 and 1965 emphasizes how unhappy he was with what a small Canadian-American border town had to offer to a university-educated British immigrant musician. One of Steed’s favourite early targets was the Windsor Symphony Orchestra. The headline of his first ever-published review in the *Windsor Star* on 7 March 1959 read “City Symphony Selections Weak” and led to a tongue-in-cheek article that showcased Steed’s excellent writing skills and great sense of humour: “[To be a music critic] after living only two months in Windsor may appear to be presumptuous on my part: ‘Good gracious,’ you will say, ‘he hasn’t paid the first instalment of his taxes yet.’ You are quite right.” But as an experienced ensemble conductor, Steed probably felt compelled to question the local orchestra’s rank amongst leading Canadian symphony orchestras. In his opinion, they were not good enough to claim the fifth spot nationwide: “Ottawa, Halifax, Calgary, and even Victoria, B.C., would contend vigorously and effectively for that place.” Steed concluded, “The orchestra exists and its potential is as yet undetermined. May it go from strength to strength” (Steed 1959).

Apparently it did not, as Steed reminded readers in many of his elegant, honest, and often controversial assessments and commentaries published in the *Windsor Star*. His tone occasionally resembles that of John Kraglund of the *Globe and Mail*, who “wore his conservatism as a badge of honour” and considered the standard concert format and the canonic repertoire “immutable traditions” (Eatock 2004, 21). It is unclear how many of Steed’s articles were accepted by the editor without revisions; perhaps Clarke asked Steed to rewrite his review of Glenn Gould’s concert in Detroit on 13 October 1960 but was turned down. That their professional relationship had not been affected adversely by this incident is evident from the fact that Steed continued to share his insights with Windsor’s musical community for five more years. In the process he ruffled many feathers, including those of Gerard Labelle, a cellist with the Windsor Symphony Orchestra. In a letter to the editor of the *Windsor Star* Labelle called Steed an “egghead” and inquired why Steed kept coming to the orchestra’s concerts when he hated them so much (Labelle 1960). John Lindblad, author of the *Windsor Star*’s popular Now column from 1960 to 1970, countered, “[I] think Mr. S[teed] has a perfect right to say what he [wants]—EVEN IF HE’S ... RIGHT! (Lindblad 1961; emphasis in original; see also Hall 2011; Shaw 2012).

Steed had clearly insisted on being “right” in his description of the events that transpired on 13 October 1960 in Detroit, rather than chronicling musical life by offering respectful and constructive criticism. The notion that “Gould’s unusual and often iconoclastic views could be of greater value to the world than the conventional correctness of a thousand lesser artists” (Eatock 2004, 21) had evidently never crossed Steed’s mind. By not printing his petulant review aimed at Canada’s own wunderkind, the *Windsor Star*’s editor not only

taught Graham Steed a valuable lesson, but also prevented a gifted music critic from making a spectacle of himself and his readership.

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## ABSTRACT

This article focuses on the content, intent, and historical context of an unpublished review of a concert performed by Glenn Gould and the Detroit Symphony Orchestra in Detroit, Michigan, on 13 October 1960. The review is preserved at the Library and Archives Canada and was written by Graham Steed (1913–1999). This respected British-Canadian organist and scholar served as the *Windsor Star*’s music critic from 1959 to 1965. Interestingly, Steed’s American colleagues reviewed Gould’s performance favourably. In contrast, Steed’s own highly controversial critique was deemed unfit for public consumption by the editor of the *Windsor Star*.

## RÉSUMÉ

Cet article se concentre sur le contenu, les intentions et le contexte historique d’une critique inédite d’un concert donné à Détroit (Michigan) par Glenn Gould et l’Orchestre symphonique de Détroit, le 13 octobre 1960. Cette critique, dont l’auteur est Graham Steed (1913–1999) est conservée à la Bibliothèque et Archives Canada. Canadien d’origine britannique, Steed était un organiste et chercheur réputé et a été le critique musical du *Windsor Star* de 1959 à 1965. Il est intéressant de constater que des collègues américains de Steed ont publié des critiques très favorables du concert donné par Gould. En revanche, la critique de Steed était si polémique que le rédacteur en chef du *Windsor Star* a jugé qu’il était impossible de la rendre publique.