

show and tell

chris wind

chriswind3@gmail.com

www.chriswind.net

june 11.dear brad...work on the *Pathétique* is going well. i have finished the first and second movements: the first is very exciting to play, one cant help but get caught up in the emotion of it – god i wish i could write like that; the second is just *so* beautiful – i cringe because i dont do it justice, i dont have the smoothness and the subtlety it deserves. tomorrow i shall begin the third movement.

would you believe i have found someone up here who has a grand? – a yamaha no less. he is letting me play on it once a week, just for a few hours – not enough – not nearly enough! but still it is better than nothing. certainly better than the stupid upright i have. oh well. one makes choices. if i taught full time, in a few years i could have a yamaha grand too. but i'd have a lot less time for my work. no, i like it how i have it.

i finished a fugue yesterday! yes, i actually wrote a fugue – theyre much more fun to compose than to play. it turned out to be in the key of c minor. cant get away from that old diatonicism no matter how consciously i ignore the harmonies. i could go back and, say, naturalize all the b flats, so it'd be in a different mode, but what the hell, i wrote it this way because thats the sound i wanted.

now that it is getting warmer, Chestnut and i go for our walk in the evening instead of in the afternoon. the beach is quite nice at dusk. very peaceful. and Nut still runs ahead then comes bounding back then runs ahead again – such a joy to see him so free and happy. did i tell you he's become friends with Sheba? – a german shepherd who's here at the same time. it is really quite amusing considering that Nut comes up to about Sheba's knees, but they romp around quite delightfully. last time Nut didnt want to leave, and every ten yards or so he'd turn around, sit down, and look back toward the beach. all the way home.

i've started running again. its an anti-depressant and it gives me more energy to work – which is what i need now. i'm up to a nice five miles and wont go any further. i've given up the idea of a marathon, i shouldve done it three years ago when i was doing ten and fifteen mile distances. but now, well, i'm into other things, i guess.

...love, amanda.

june 13...dear brad...well i have finally finished my analysis of Gagnons music. you know his stuff is ridiculously simple and he uses repetition all the time. and its incredible how conventional his harmonic structure is. and yet, for all that, i find his music very beautiful, very satisfying. thats curious. perhaps i'm using my head too much when i compose, trying to avoid all the cliché patterns. but when i dont consciously attend to its composition, it turns out quite mundane, 'pretty' at best. maybe its just that Gagnon creates such touching, haunting, lyrical themes, perhaps their beauty carries the whole piece.

its been only ten days since you've been gone and already this is my fourth letter. i expect

it'll slow down. sometime, soon, maybe.

yesterday i acquired two more new students. so that brings me back up to my minimum of twenty. no more worries about rent! and theyve both been taking lessons for a few years already – a nice relief among all the beginners i seem to have.

by the way, my idea of incorporating composition into the lessons by starting with sound effects seems to be going over quite well. most of the kids just love the idea of figuring out how an elephant falling down stairs would sound or angels singing out of tune. a few days ago one came and did 'someone eating corn chips and chewing bubble gum at the same time'. neat, eh. after the sound effects, we move into telling a story while playing the soundtrack for it. i can hardly wait for that last kids stories!

Canary developed a painful rattle this morning. its at the garage now. hope its nothing too costly. maybe i shouldve kept your car after all, instead of selling it.

...love, amanda.

june 16...dear brad...The National Academy of Music called today offering a job. if they had called a week or so ago i wouldve accepted, but i have enough students now, i dont need any more money. and anyway when you teach at an academy, they skim off half the students fee for themselves, so on my own i make much more per hour.

have finished analyzing Supertramp. i have always been impressed with their music – and now i've found that it actually *is* as interesting and innovative as it sounds. Hodgson sure likes to use the bVII chord.

work on my Pieces, Opus 2, continues to go slowly.

Anna dropped by the other day, 'to see how i was getting along'. she brought her photo album of her trip, apparently i need seme 'cheering up and distraction'. she says it is unnatural to be alone so much, especially at a time like this. i tried to remind her that I've lived alone all my adult life and i like it that way, but, well you know Anna –

we actually spent a whole hour looking at those – those awful snapshots. they werent photographs, i cant call them that – i almost brought out all your work to show her the difference, but no, i didnt.

'thats us in those caves up at Collingwood, you know, where they make that blue mountain pottery..and heres us at the Calgary stampede...here we are getting on the ferry to Vancouver Island...here we are getting off...'

my god. why do people keep photo albums. not for aesthetic pleasure, thats for sure. as a record of their experience, i suppose. no, its more than that, its a *validation* of their experience, their very existence. the album 's something to show to other people: see, this is where have been, what i have done, here is proof, look, i exist.

funny how important, how necessary it is, to show and tell. how we need to verify our *subjective* existence by exposing it to an *objective* existence. a reality of the self depends on an interaction with a reality of the other.

and its the *giving* in that interaction that matters, not the *taking* – the transmission, not the reception. Anna didnt even notice if i was interested or not, if i nodded at the right time or asked a question here and there. it mattered to her only to be able to show the snapshots to me and tell me about them.

its like that old riddle, does a tree falling in the middle of the forest make a sound if no one hears – well, the tree doesnt care, that blessed oak or pine just needs to be able to fall. its existence is validated by the mere calling – whether it is heard or not is irrelevant.

...love, amanda.

june 17...dear brad...today when i looked at that picture of you i have one my billboard, you know, the one taken in your Vancouver apartment after we made love all morning – i suddenly realized that you are my snapshot, you are my way at validating my existence.

no, listen. when we talk about love, what do we mean? i'm not referring to that general love of humanity, that impersonal respect for individual life in all its manifestations – i'm talking about personal, specific, one to one love. what is it?

well, lets take away all the business that goes on between two people in a love relationship. take away the family business – the kids need new shoes, johnny went to the dentist. take away the household business – what do you think about new furniture for the den, dont forget to pick up the meat. and take away the social business – the bowling league starts thursday. now what is left of this loving couple, what is left of their interaction, their relation? – i had an awful day at the office, so and so called this morning, i did the basement rug: show and tell. thats what passes for love. just show and tell.

and we're no different. oh we dont have any family business – neither of us wanted to be the mother. we dont have any household business – we've lived apart, so each to their own, no need to interact on this dimension. and we dont have any social business – again, living apart leads to separate social circles, though neither of us is very social to begin with. yet we do have a relationship, we have had a very stable and satisfying love, for seven years.

this lack of 'business' in our relationship just makes it easier to see what that relationship, what that love is. and look – our telephone calls are like progress reports, our together times every two or three weeks are part piano recital, part photography exhibit: show and tell, affirming our subjective existences by showing and telling to an objective existence, the beloved. that is love. nothing else. nothing more.

...love, amanda.

june 18...dear brad...and in our relationship, in our love, its been the transmitting, not the receiving, that has mattered most – like the tree, it matters not whether i am heard. as long as i could say, listen, i finished that piece i was writing, or hey look, i tried this out and it worked. as long as i could talk to you, share my life with you, as long as i can show and tell to you, love you – then my life is valid, it is real.

so that is why i am writing letters to you. weeks after your funeral.

...love, amanda.