**Figura circulorum (1993)**

The work fulfills an NEA grant awarded in 1980 or 81. I had hoped to have finished the work at the MacDowell Colony that winter but made little headway beyond generating sketch collections (later used in *The Opalion and Canto*). The title and the figure of circles itself—fig. 3 in the Musica speculativa of Jehan de Muris (c.1325)—came to hand through close doctoral advising of the editing of that work by Susan Fast. Jehan taught Boethian mathematics (a form of music) at the Sorbonne. Especially fascinating to me was his concept of chaos as a positive container of all musical sonorities and relationships. (It might be thought of as "The De Muris Codex.") The title names a found early on in the treatise, with the annotation:

This figure of the perfect consonances of music virtually contains all the harmonics and principles of music. Were these to be unbound and brought forth, they would make known nearly the whole of music. Thus it is reasonable enough to call the figure a kind of chaos in which many forms are hidden.

The nonce-ensemble includes the 7 Tibetan singing bowls acquired by me (some with Kathryn Lukas) in 1990 in Nepal (Kathmandu Valley Tibetan settlement) and later in Bloomingston IN, and 2 dingsha (finger cymbals); as well as the tanpura I purchased on a 1992 visit to Chennai. The bass quartet nods to R-Music and Eulalia's Rounds, the 12 violin writing to Canticum B.V.

The notion of the work is a kind of medieval clock, tallying years rather than hours. (The tallying occurs in the metallophones.) The clockwork mechanism is the representation of Oct. 4 from anno 1937 and into the 21st c. [m. 177] and the age of the composer in each year, terminating at 73 (as the reverse of '37). The scheme for the 20th c. is an exploration in the violins of the complex sonorities of the singing bowls; the shift into the 21st can be heard when the sonorities exchange date-keeping functions, the tanpura and harpsichord enter, and the violin scheme shifts ultimately into a series of 12 solo violin phrases. The score bears the completion date of 31 January 1993, commemorating the day of the funeral of my distinguished Iowa colleague, Kenneth Gaburo.

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**CENTER FOR NEW MUSIC ENSEMBLE**

**VIOLINS**
Scott Conklin
Kelley Arney
Arminte Chamasyan
Hilary Hoin
Gabrielle Harvey
Lucas Dager
Sam Stapleton
Evan Pratt
Jeremy Starr
William Gontzsch

**DOUBLE BASSES**
Wayne Thelandier
Brian Ellsion
Nicolas Coffman
John Stanford

**PERCUSSION**
Chris Sande
Ginny Armstrong
Andrea Verkoom
Meggie Aube

**HARPSICHOARD**
Liang-fang Chang

**TANPURA**
Christopher Gaimey

**CONDUCTOR**
David Gompper, conductor

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**THE UNIVERSITY OF IOWA**

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**CENTER FOR NEW MUSIC**

**SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 24, 2006, 8:00 p.m.**

**CLAPP RECITAL HALL**

**41st SEASON, CONCERT II**

*A tribute to the life and works of Donald Martin Jenni***

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**THE UNIVERSITY OF IOWA**

**DIVISION OF PERFORMING ARTS**

**COLLEGE OF LIBERAL ARTS & SCIENCES**
CENTER FOR NEW MUSIC
41st Season, Concert II  SEPTEMBER 24, 2006, 8 p.m.  CLAPP RECITAL HALL

PROGRAM

In Memoriam H.S. (Humphrey Sarle) Musique Printanière
Kathryn Lukas, flute and David Gompper, piano

Jusqu’au la Lièse
Katherine Eberle, mezzo-soprano and Pamela Weest-Carrasco, harp

Canto
Rene Leuwa, piano

Tymanorum Musices
Daniel Moore, percussion

Tio’s Foursome (world premiere)
Gina Cole and Mikiko Kanemitsu, alto saxophone; Jason Laczkoski, tenor saxophone;
Marc Graham, baritone saxophone

Sam Mhiria
Chris Sande, Meggie Aube, Jarrie Bahr and Ginny Armstrong, marimbas

INTERMISSION

Per Elysios
Melissa Walding, oboe; Kristin Thelander, horn; Christine Rutledge, viola;
Alan Huckleberry, harpsichord; Ginny Armstrong, percussion

Verbun supernum
Albinas Przigintas, organ

Figura Circulorum
Center for New Music Ensemble; David Gompper, conductor

DONALD MARTIN JENNI
(1937–2006)

Donald Martin Jenni passed away June 21, 2006 of metastatic bone cancer. He was 68 years of age. Born October 4, 1937 to Katja Malkova (Catherine Malek) and Francois (Frank) Jenni, in Milwaukee WI, he lived there throughout his primary and secondary education. At 17 he moved to Chicago, where he took a Bachelor’s degree in music at DePaul University and a Master’s in Humanities (medieval studies) at the University of Chicago. He completed his doctorate (music composition) at Stanford University in 1966, returning to Chicago in the position of Assistant Professor of music theory, history, and composition at DePaul, where he remained until invited to join the faculty of The University of Iowa (Iowa City) School of Music in 1968, as Associate Professor of composition and theory. He was promoted to the rank of Full Professor 6 years later and taught at Iowa until his early retirement in 1999.

Jenni played the piano from very early on and began to compose music in his childhood. Before graduating from high school in 1954 he had published several works for the piano, voice, brass ensemble, and orchestra. Several of these won national awards. By the time he joined the Iowa faculty, Jenni’s music had begun to be published by the American Composers Alliance. At Iowa, Jenni composed many compositions for performance by the school’s Center for New Music as well as other performing groups. In 1974 he signed a contract with Associated Music Publishers.

His interest in the Western Middle Ages, and especially Gregorian chant, led him to study the practice of Western monasticism. His annotated translation of the 13th-century abbot Oiger of Lociello was released this year by Cistercian Publications. In 1996, he was a claustral oblate of the Benedictine monastery of Christ in the Desert (Chama, NM). He composed an English chant office for that community. Upon retirement from Iowa in 1999, he moved to Chama to become the monastery’s choirmaster.

(continued)
Born into a polyglot family—his father was born in Paris and raised in Switzerland, his mother’s family were immigrants from Hungary and the Czech Republic—he grew up in a family that spoke French, German, Swiss, Danish, Slovak, and Hungarian. With this foundation he acquired knowledge of some dozen languages, and he traveled extensively to practice them.

In the 1990s he began to do research in South Indian Classical music, attending the Karnatic music festival in Madras (Chennai) annually. During his last semester at Iowa he offered a course in that musical tradition, cosponsored by the departments of Music and Asian Studies.

In 2002 he moved to New Orleans and took up residence in The Carol Condominium in the Lower Garden District. He quickly became an enthusiastic Orleanian.

Never married, he became in 1996 the legal guardian of a Gambian (West African) youth whom he had been sponsoring through the Christian Children’s Fund. He brought Sulayman Sambou to Iowa and enrolled him at Regina High School. Upon completion in 1999, Sulayman entered Mount Saint Clare College, and, in 2003, earned the MSW at the Jane Addams College of Social Work at the University of Illinois at Chicago. Sulayman married Aleshia Thoene of rural Illinois in New Orleans in 2004, and the couple moved here a year later.

TRIBUTES

The Martin I knew loved life and children and good food and words as much or more than music. I was in awe of him when I first met him, in 1973. He was my husband Peter’s teacher, mentor, friend first. I couldn’t imagine how someone so brilliant would react to a naïve, ordinary, nonmusician. Of course, he treated me like I was brilliant, too. He was easy to love, and I did.

I remember watching Monty Python’s Flying Circus with him and laughing uproariously. He enjoyed my attempts on a student budget to create a palatable liver dish and was sent home with the leftovers. We often took care of his feline friends, Ralph, Kabuki, and later, Alma, offspring of our own cats. When we played him a cat from one of our favorite records by the Butterfield Blues Band, he began using the song in his class. Eventually, he became godfather to our first daughter. How honored I felt when he praised my simple lullaby hummed to a crying baby: “Uncle Martin” did not intimidate her: she climbed on his lap, played her toy piano for him, and loved to hear him read stories. He would often ad lib or translate into another language; she would delight in telling him he was wrong: “Stop being so silly!”

Eventually we moved away from Iowa City and then across the country. We looked forward to those unexpected phone calls that came every year or two that he was not far from Raleigh and would like to stop by.

By then, we had four daughters. When one of his students was selling World Book encyclopedias (before there was Wikipedia), he bought a set for our girls. He loved to share items from his travels: ethnic dolls, picture books, whistles, games, candles, or soap. He brought glimpses of different cultures and exotic places to our lives.

My family and I were blessed to be a part of Martin’s life. I will never forget his wit, his laugh, his hugs. His spirit lives on in his music and in the hearts of those who loved him, in my heart forever.

Nancy Allrecht (Tamara, Jessica, Elena, and Johanna)
September 9, 2006

Martin’s teaching often consisted of gently (or impatiently) restating the obvious (to a not-so-quick theory and composition student). The unspoken message was that music was both elegant play and honest labor at the same moment. Specific lessons come to mind: remember everything you hear, know whom you hire, self-sufficiency is a necessity, and leave paths in life open, even if you are unsure of the outcomes. The lessons had much broader application than I realized at the time.

More than anything, Martin’s acceptance and friendship meant everything. He was a doting godfather to my oldest daughter, Tamara, and a loving “uncle” to her three sisters, Jessica, Elena and Johanna. For Nancy and I, he served as a wise and sympathetic friend as our daughters grew up. He knew instinctively that more than anything, raising a family required a sense of humor. All of us will miss him.

Peter Allrecht
September 8, 2006

“Unusual, unpretentious and possibly worth exploring” is how Classical Guitar Magazine (UK) reviewed Martin Jenni’s Variazione sopra Cruce fidei for solo guitar that he dedicated to me back in August 2002. In a letter, Martin described my instrument as “intimate, expressive and subtle!” These are all phrases that come to mind as I will remember Martin.
My introduction to the music of D. Jenni (published name on score) was by the way of a graduate professor while I was a student in VA. This music (Music for Friends #2) was different from previous music I had studied for flute & guitar. It was unusual enough that I decided to locate D. Jenni and write a letter. A few weeks later I received a warm and friendly letter from D. Martin Jenni filling in the details of this composition and a friendship was born. His music was included in my final graduation recital and was a personal highlight for me and my partner. Several years later I became interested in "older music". I had landed my first teaching position on the college level in NJ and wanted to plan something unique for the faculty recital. I wrote Martin to request a work based on medieval themes and two weeks later we were eating Italian subs in the Philadelphia area discussing the commission (by the way, he really enjoyed the sandwich). Thank you, Martin, for letting me into your world of peace and kindness.

Thomas Amedillo
Guitar Faculty, Settlement Music School-Camden, N.J.
July 6, 2006

Donald Martin Jenni taught a summer course on Tonal Music at Stanford University when I was a graduate student there in 1966. His teaching and piano playing were so memorable that I can never hear a Chopin Prelude or Brahms Intermezzo without thinking of what he said and how he played. Over the years I incorporated as much of his wisdom as I could into my own teaching, but I never achieved his gentle, articulate precision or his dry, sly wit. He was a remarkable musician; I was blessed to have known him.

Marvin Brossick
New Haven, Conn.
July 14, 2006

I rather suspect that most of the tributes and recollections will concentrate on Don's musical accomplishments. (By the way, I will probably refer to the deceased as "Don" for the better part of this letter. We met as incoming freshmen at DePaul University in Chicago back in 1954; at that time he still referred to himself as Don, long before he switched to Martin during his later years.) I was privileged, of course, to be a first-hand witness to his musical gifts, but in this letter I would like to say a few words about his astounding linguistic abilities. I am not overstating his gifts in this particular area when I suggest that he was able to absorb languages as effortlessly as a sponge picks up water. I'm certain that everyone who has ever had the good fortune to know him and work with him will unhesitatingly concur.

During our sophomore year, the two of us decided to look for an apartment, and we subsequently found a small boarding house on Chicago's near North side which seemed to fit both our needs and our limited budgets. The landlord and landlady were Hungarians and Don decided that it would be "fun" (his word) to learn the language. And so, picking up a grammar book and a couple of phrase manuals, he tackled the job to the point that a mere two weeks later he was jabbering with the landlady who refused to believe that he hadn't grown up with the language. In fact, one morning over breakfast, he informed me that he had dreamed that night in Hungarian.

During that time Don also amused himself by inventing his own languages. I distinctly remember one called Sarsi, a mono-syllabic invention patterned after Chinese. He also devised an ideographic script for it, using Egyptian-like cartouches. (I remember my name came out as "da-san-u-wu-sao-zu", or "Gift of old Dragon's son").

This also reminds me that he was also a master of calligraphy, and I remember receiving letters from him that were worthy of being framed and hung on a wall.

During these last five or six years when we began using e-mail to communicate with each other, I was continually asking for his help in solving various linguistic questions that arose, particularly in deciphering passages from classical Latin. In every instance, not only were his translations accurate, but they were rendered into elegant English as well.

There were times when he erroneously assumed that others shared his gift for languages. I remember when Arnie and I were married in 1963, and I received a telegram from him that was rendered in cipher. It took me the better part of a week to decode it, only to discover that the original message was in Hungarian! I was flattered that he had assumed I could make sense out of that cryptic message, but I had to remind him that not all of us are linguistic savants.

I won't comment on our long-standing friendship which touches on deep personal feelings that I find hard to express, except to say that, like all of us who were fortunate enough to have had the privilege of knowing him, I miss him terribly.

Donald Draganetz
Evanston, Ill.
July 8, 2006

I was privileged to teach on the composition/theory faculty at The University of Iowa School of Music with Martin Jenni, from my arrival in Iowa City in August 1985 until his retirement in 1999. Martin shepherded our area through an especially difficult period in the late 1980s, following the premature death of William Hibbard, and Richard Hirsh's retirement. As head of composition/theory he worked with extraordinary dedication to revitalize the Center for New Music and to maintain and strengthen the area's programs. Among many other things, he insisted on reorganizing the lower-division theory curriculum, and then taught freshman theory for a couple of years. The course materials he left behind are elegantly written, thought-provoking exemplars of teaching as applied scholarship.

Of course, it could be a bit unsettling to have a colleague whose small talk revolved around to you that "barf" means "snow" in Farsi, and who spoke English in the accents of a small middle-European country not found on any map. He used to insist that in "making a piece" one had to plan everything out in advance: the word "planetary" somehow figured in. We shared, among other things, a love of early music, and had great fun doing a 1994 concert with the Cantores and UI Collegium Musicum featuring chant propers, and Ockeghem's Missa Cuiusvis Toni ("Mass in any mode") sung in contrasting versions. On the CNM tour to Moscow in the fall of 2001 we shared a room, where Martin, true to form, studied Russian grammar.

After Martin brought Sulayman Sambou to Iowa City from Gambia, West Africa, in 1996, we suddenly had something unexpectedly and wonderfully ordinary in common, both being dads. No small accomplishment, among the many of this brilliant, mercurial, generous, and enigmatic liberal artist, who, alas, left us too soon and whose like we shall not see again.

Michael Eckert
Iowa City, Iowa
August 14, 2006
Martin met me at the airport during the spring of 1991 for my job interview at The University of Iowa. I asked him if he hailed from England, since he introduced himself with an accent that from my own experience placed him midway between the two continents. "No, from Milwaukee," he answered. Thus began a wonderfully honest and supportive relationship that spanned a brief 15 years as senior and junior colleagues. We shared a common link with Humphrey Searle, whom he had known in Stanford just 15 years before I had Humphrey as a composition teacher at the RCM.

I found Martin's tastes refreshingly ecumenical. By then, not only was he traveling to India but quite often to Africa (yet another connection with sub-Saharan countries), returning with stories as well as musical materials and ideas for formal constructs. I went often with him to New Melleray Abbey, sharing his love of chant and liturgy—of course, he was the expert against my rather unfocused and sloppy attention to this tradition. His rendition "roast" at the JenniFest in 1999, together with slide show and a Festschrift concert, was fun to assemble, but then I sorely missed his presence and critical support during the few short years after his retirement. We were able to reconnect on the CNM tour to Moscow, where his Cuckoo Music was performed at the Moscow Conservatory, and where we all stayed in the free yet less than elegant Conservatory apartments that were originally the Tsar's horse stables.

My final visit with him was a two-day trip to New Orleans three weeks before his passing, at times, to my surprise, finding myself as a kind of father confessor, but witnessing in awe his quick wit and memory. We listened to recordings of his compositions, especially his favorite bits, as I sat on the floor and watched him describe in detail the background of each text or musical importance. Among other facets of my loss, I will miss in Martin an intimate connection to music that it seems only composers share, and the freedom to be critical without taking offense.

David Gunpper
Iowa City, Iowa
September 11, 2006

I'll never forget my first meeting with Martin Jenni. I had just arrived at Iowa to start a master's degree in composition. I'd applied specifically to study with him. When I knocked on his door to introduce myself, it opened a crack and Martin peeked out. "I'm Jon Hallstrom," I said. "So?" he replied, and shut the door in my face. Things did improve, thankfully, and I was lucky enough to spend the next four years as his student. Martin was my mentor, my supporter, and ultimately my friend. I literally owe my career to him.

Testaments to Martin's many and varied accomplishments will, I imagine, abound, so I'd like to offer a few personal remembrances. I think pretty much everyone who knew him would agree, Martin was, well, a quirky guy, and anecdotes abound, like the time he invited me to dinner and asked him to bring a bottle of wine. He arrived with a copy of the Liber Unus. "I'm better at choosing chansons than I am at choosing wine," was his reply. (I still have that copy of the Liber and use it for sight singing with my own students.) On the time he left a copy of the New York Times crossword puzzle on his desk and we discovered that he'd done parts of it in three languages (and made it work)!

I last saw Martin in 2002 when I was in Iowa City for the SEAMUS conference. He came to hear my performance and over the next couple of days seemed uncharacteristically anxious to spend time with me. He must have known about the cancer at that point. I think that in his typical roundabout way he was saying goodbye. I'll miss him.

Jon Hallstrom (Ph.D, 80)
July 27, 2006

Two weeks ago I received a sad email, telling me that the composer Donald Martin Jenni had died, from a long and painful cancer. My first thought was that I was sorry I had not kept in closer contact, my second was that I was surprised to read in his obituary that he had ended up in New Orleans, with a new life and an adopted family. His life had changed so much since I had known him. I had been a masters student of Martin's from 1978 to 1980 at the University of Iowa, and although we had stayed in touch after I left Iowa—we would send each other music and he would come visit whenever he was in New York—the second that he retired he vanished. I lost track of where he was. For a while I had an email address that worked and we would write each other from time to time. Then one day the emails became undeliverable, and I never heard from him again.

Jenni was always something of a man of mystery. I could never figure out where he was really from, and when pressed he would tell amazing stories of traveling in Morocco or Eastern Europe or India. He had a strange and vaguely unrecognizable accent, the result of the backgrounds of his immigrant parents and a lifetime of speaking other languages. Even his name was mysterious—at Stanford when I had met him he was called Donald Jenni, with the accent on the "en." The next year when I went to Iowa everyone called him Martin Jenni, with the accent on the "ii." It seemed that people knew him differently in different worlds and places. It also seemed that changing his location was a part of changing himself.

I met him in 1976, when I was an undergraduate at Stanford University. I had already heard about him from my former and future teacher Martin Bresnick, so when he came to Stanford as a semester leave replacement I wanted to get to know him. At Stanford, Jenni taught a seminar called French Music. It began with Charlemagne and ended with Boulez. Each week we would look in depth at one piece or composer: the Messe de Notre Dame, La Mer, Leonin's Magnus Liber, the Berlioz Requiem, Solage, Faure, Messiaen. I was a snotty undergraduate and had no interest in this music, I thought, and I went into this class with great reservation, really only because Bresnick had essentially ordered me to. Nothing in my education had prepared me to enjoy a class so much.

The level of erudition was something I had never experienced before. Jenni's deep knowledge of the music and the history behind the music was mind-blowingly persuasive. Most of all, his ability to subject even the most seemingly obvious musical materials to a laser-like microscopic analysis was miraculous. It was by far the best course I had as an undergraduate.

In Jenni's class at Stanford was another student, composer Heinrich Taube, now at the University of Illinois. Without consulting each other, Rick and I both decided that we would follow Jenni to the University of Iowa for our masters degrees, and by some strange coincidence and a great shortage of office space we ended up sharing an office with Jenni. Iowa in those years was a great school, with a brilliant, diverse and active composition faculty of Jenni, Richard Hervig, William Hibbard and Peter Todd Lewis. Hervig was the chair of the composition department and he fostered a noble atmosphere among the composers, leading the weekly seminars with a probing gentility. The students were intense, ambitious and very talented. It was said that Iowa at that time had more BMI Student Awards winners than any other school in the nation. One could ask BMI's Ralph Jackson if it's true. He was a student (and an award winner) at Iowa then as well.

I felt that I had dropped into some oasis of enlightenment, and the teachers seemed to try to outreach each other with uniquely revelatory courses. I took a semester-long analysis course with Hibbard on Pierrot lunaire, for example. But the classes of Jenni's were the most wide-ranging, and by far the most amazing: a semester on the 114 songs of Charles Ives; a semester on William Byrd's My Ladye Nevell's Booke; a
terns, and I brought in the beginnings of a piece of music to my lesson, something schematic and very mathematically composed. Martin spent about 30 seconds looking at it and then moved over to another chair, picked up The New York Times and started reading. I didn't know what to do, but I didn't want to fall into any trap he was setting for me, so I just sat there, fuming patiently, waiting for the next student to arrive, one hour later. And so we sat. When the next student finally came Martin looked up and said "You know, sometimes something makes so much sense that you have to ask yourself, why do it?"

I have such a great memory of Martin, sitting in front of a harpsichord, a cigarette-length of ashes dangling from his lip, with his bright eyes and a slight smirk on his face, playing Bach and seeing something in it that amused him, something that I would never see if I looked at it forever. Whatever it was that he saw that day that amused him so I never found out. And I never will.

David Lang
July 28, 2006

I was privileged to know Donald Jenni when I first went to DePaul University. I have to agree with everyone who ever knew him in the least, (and I am sure no one ever really knew him completely) that he was one of the most amazing, talented and gifted humans ever to walk the earth. I am including Mozart, and anyone else you might want to debate me about.

We all know his musical abilities. They were without equal. His wit and thirst for life are legendary. We are all aware of his linguistic prowess.

I only took two semesters of orchestra with him as a student, but I spent many an hour with him as a friend. Here is a true story of a conversation we had. One day I was complaining about having to do an orchestration in the style of Mendelssohn. I thought it was boring. Donald said to me, "Someday you are going to have to score a film in that style, and you had better know how." I never said anything about film scoring to him. So I think you can add seer to his list of talents.

I do not know what made me find him on this day, but I can tell you that I mourn his passing, and I so deeply regret that I never thanked him enough for his mentoring, friendship and for sharing his joy of music with me. Rest in Peace, Donald. Thank You.

Harry Manfredini, film composer
September 9, 2006

Since I was fortunate to be Donald's teacher (he was named Donald by his parents) from age nine in 1947 to thirteen, I watched this tremendously talented boy leap in strides toward the musical giant he became even in his early years. I say watched, because I considered myself more a mirror of his learning than a teacher in the traditional sense. After studying piano with Mrs. Olive Gillard, Donald enrolled as a piano student in the pre-collegiate department of Alverno College. At the first lesson, it became clear that his interest was more in composing than in reproducing already composed music. He played for me as an original walzr that had surprisingly good organization. At the semester wore on, I began to realize that he needed an extra lesson in theory to further his understanding of harmony, counterpoint, form and other aspects of composition - lesson two! At this lesson he would note a two or three part contrapuntal exercise as fast as I played it.
In following semesters, Donald asked to take organ lessons so he could play in his church. He would walk to the college each morning and practice on a pipe organ before he went to school - lesson three! When he was in high school he expanded his playing knowledge of several other instruments as they were need in the orchestra. While studying with me, Donald sometimes created not only the music, but the titles as well, such as "Jiggesgantor" and "Skagel". Once when he was offered a dime to get a bite to eat, he refused. The donor said that if he didn't take it, the dime would cry. Fifteen minutes later there was a piece of music entitled "The Crying Dime" slipped under my door. You could never predict anything about Donald!

After Donald completed the eighth grade, Sister Theophane Hyytrek, who was studying composition with Dr. Leon Stein at De Paul University, obtained for him a scholarship for a weekly lesson with Dr. Stein as well as for piano lessons at DePaul.

His first published composition was a bi-tonal piano work in the keys of C and D, "Midnight Promenade", which was a prize winner for a contest in the Emedia magazine. As a reward, the magazine published it in one of its issues. In his last semester with me, I gave him the Heacock orchestra book, which he returned the next week saying he had read all of it. His prize-winning "Fantastic for Orchestra", written for our chamber orchestra, showed that he definitely understood the concepts of good orchestraation. He copied all the parts and critiqued a live rehearsal of the composition. At this time, Donald had reached the ripe old age of thirteen!

While he was pursuing his music career, Sister Janet Shurt, teacher of freshman music literature at Alverno, assigned each student the task of writing to a composer asking to describe his/her style of composition. After Donald had responded intelligently, we asked him to come to Alverno to speak to the students, which was enlightening to the students and faculty. Later when he was studying at Stanford University, he came to Alverno again to discuss his more mature chamber music with an advanced theory class.

Donald was the closest I have ever come to a genius. He was gifted with a fabulous ear and a photographic memory. That is why he could learn and speak so many languages. In high school he wrote me a letter in Latin, which I had to get translated! All of his letters were works of art with beautiful script. I treasure all of them.

Above and beyond his mental, artistic and musical gifts, Donald had a wonderfully integrated personality. He never flaunted his abilities, but always remained a simple person with a delightful sense of humor. He was deeply religious and very devoted to the Catholic faith which he embraced when he was in college. After he was baptized as Martin, he spent some time in the Trappist Monastery in Gethsemani, Kentucky, and late in other monasteries. As I recently reviewed his works, it was clear to me that he was deeply immersed in the music and liturgy of the early church. He kept in contact with me through the years, except the last year or so. I could not communicate with him because I did not know his whereabouts. My last meeting with him was 1999, the summer he retired from teaching, when I met his African "son" Salayman. The memory of Donald has been burned into my mind and heart forever, and I am sure that whoever knew him joins me in mourning his passing.

Sister Agnes Meyenburg (formerly Sister Sylvestra)
Milwaukee, Wis.
August 15, 2006

Upon reading of Martin's passing this evening (July 11), I was greatly saddened. He was a very important and wonderful supporter of mine through my studies at Iowa, and I will be forever grateful for the open-minded, wonderful way that he taught. I find myself drawing regularly upon his teaching methods, and I know that I would not have come to the degree of success that I have had as a musician without his support and tutelage.

Dr. Jenni, I wish I could have said goodbye. I love and miss you. My sincere condolences to his loved ones.

Dr. Tim O'Dell
Brunswick, Maine
July 11, 2006

Martin's "Verbturn supernum" is indicated to be played allegro estatico. Much like his mind - quick and fascinating. I can still see Martin tripping the light fantastic across St. Charles Avenue, arms blithly flapping hied like, as if demonstrating the art of levitation gleaned from the tutelage of Hindu guru.

To know Martin was to become acquainted with the Metaphysical. To converse with him one might feel precariously perched at the threshold of two worlds where all was preordained, devoid of the merely accidental and always magical; it was here Martin could be found in his element, expressing familiarity with Urdu, Classical and Medieval languages, oriental calligraphy, exuding an intimate acquaintance with an expansive holistic body of arcane wisdom.

I remember Martin appearing at Trinity Church New Orleans during a rehearsal of my Yellowdog Prophet Choir. We were preparing for a Moses Hogan memorial concert including several of my original songs. I was happy to see Martin embrace this music by joyfully dancing and singing with feeling and swing. This was several years or so before his death.

Though doggedly pursuing yoga at the time, he found time to do the Moses Hogan concert with us, which was held in a largely black populated neighborhood. I could see during the concert, in which gospel groups and jazz musicians performed, together with Ellis Marsalis being present, that Professor Jenni was totally absorbed in black culture, aware of its ramifications, influences, depth, immediacy and beauty. This was the first of a series of concerts with Martin.

Martin became a good friend and a regular at Trinity Church New Orleans. He played preludes for church services, performed for our Trinity Artist Series, and for our festivals, such as the annual 20-hour Bach Around the Clock.

Martin lived just around the block in a very nice, fairly new doorman-type condo. It had a fabulous view of delightfully sandy establishment, which must have offered Martin some amusement. I visited Martin there, and shared a glass of wine on occasion.

Though Martin was quick to embrace and support unusual, new and off the beaten track kinds of things, I noticed that he also could be surprisingly conservative. He could not tolerate, for example, the idea of Mozart being played on the harpsichord; whereas I could just as well hear it on the banjo. He, nonetheless, often stopped by to visit my wife and me in my well-lit office as his health allowed.

My wife, Manon, Martin's French confidante, recalls the day when Martin presented me with his organ piece, Verbturn Supernum, and with Cheshire cat smile and beaded charm imparted that I play it.
What can we say about a man who has given everything and expected nothing in return. He has touched several lives for the better including that of ours. We are blessed to have experienced so many wonderful things with Dad in such a short period of time. It was truly an honor for us to have taken care of him in his final days. We wish we would have had more time together, but are happy to have all of our memories of life together. Our goal for the future is to make sure that his name continues to bring joy and enlightenment in people's lives. We miss him more than words can explain.

Sulayman and Alesha Sambron  
July 29, 2006

I studied with Jenzi in 1997-98 when I was at Iowa. I’ve never studied under a person that had such a command of his subject and a most elegant way of communicating his knowledge to his students. Both the time I spent with him in class and one-on-one, I was struck by the depth of his knowledge and his character. When I heard of his passing, those memories immediately came to mind; of hammering out counterpoint exercises at the piano, emailing each other in Latin, and just experiencing what it is like to come as personally close to genius as I think ever will. The way he thought of and taught music as language made a profound impact on me. He will be missed.

Ryan Sheker  
Ames, Iowa  
July 20, 2006

It is always difficult to find the right words to say at times like this. I first met Martin in April of 2003 when he came to a concert of mine at Trinity Episcopal Church in New Orleans, Louisiana. Life took a turn, and we met again in March 2004 after another performance, after which Martin and I began our friendship.

It was incredibly inspirational to watch Martin during the last two years of his life as he drove back and forth between Houston and New Orleans, taking cancer treatments in Houston and then taking care of arrangements for Sulayman and Alesha in New Orleans. While I am deeply saddened that I was not able to spend time with Martin after Hurricane Katrina, I do feel and will continue to feel blessed not only for knowing him but also for giving insightful, inspiring, and sometimes “no holds barred” advice.

Samuel Thompson  
Scholtz and substitute with San Antonio Symphony  
July 2, 2006

Friend, challenger, benefactor, father, monk, gadfly, medievalist, juggler with language, world traveler, seeker, teller of stories and keeper of secrets — Let no one say, “I knew him well.”

"ina ruitorum"  
July 10, 2006

Manon chides me on how ungracious I behaved, tossing the music aside and promising to play it later. I remember Martin asking then and again later, when that would be. Well, it appears to be now, remarkably late. It is a marvelous piece: lyrical, robust, thoughtful and pitch perfect. I am deeply moved to play it for the D. Martin Jenzi Memorial Concert.

Algernon Prigionis  
New Orleans, La.  
August 10, 2006

My first contact with Martin was on the phone in 1990 when I was applying to doctoral programs. Martin made me feel welcome; because of him, I came to Iowa. So, in August of my first semester, I got involved with his chant group. I was amazed at his ability to bring to life this ancient notation. By November, the sound of chant had found its way into my music.

I sometimes found Martin's abilities—like his phenomenal skill at languages—difficult to believe. During a lesson my first semester, I brought in the piece I was working on. He looked it over with what seemed like boredom. He was going though the motions and really wanted to be somewhere else. In less than a minute he had finished with my 12 pages. Then he asked me, "What's the connection with the second theme to the rest? It sounds like "We're in the money.”' I was shocked that he figured out that I even had a second theme. And he knew what it sounded like! His speed at assessing music, even from a pencil sketch, stunned me. He went on to make other observations of my piece that revealed that he had no difficulty quickly taking it all in. Perhaps my music wasn't even challenging!

Martin made the Friday afternoon Composition Seminar memorable, if controversial. The composition students were a diverse lot, and the conversation often wandered off the topic. But Martin would always steer us back, eloquently reminding us of significant historical events and people who contributed to the topic under discussion. He had a way of cutting through the malarky, of abruptly turning us away from the tangents of our undisciplined minds. Martin made seminar feel like graduate school.

There are also many stories of Martin's awkwardness in social situations, his insensitivity to students, and his moodiness during lessons, some of which are no doubt true, but all of which merely make him human. I think we sometimes expect that men or women of extraordinary ability should exhibit that same high level in all areas of their life. But this rarely happens. When I knew Martin in the 90s, he seemed to have come to a point where he felt he had nothing to hide, and with breathtaking candor, he would tell, when asked, about his attempts to get married and have children and how they failed. I heard him argue with his seventy-five-year-old mother. I saw him get livid because a student had tacked an insult on his bulletin board.

Although I witnessed some of Martin's shortcomings, I always found him helpful and supportive when I needed him to be. He gave me the guidance that helped me take the next step. After Iowa, his guidance took on a broader, spiritual tone. Still, he was careful to point out that there were certain subjects — like relationships with women — where he couldn't advise me, but only wish me luck. I'll always be grateful for that. Martin, you will be missed.

John C. Rass  
August 7, 2006
For me, Martin was a teacher, mentor, inspiration, and friend. What I recall most from my days as a graduate student studying with Martin, however, was the exceptional interest he took in each of his students, and the manner in which he freely and generously shared his life with others. This lesson—one of disposition more than composition—is what I think I gained most from studying with him.

Curt Veneman
September 3, 2006

In the aspects of this life in which I knew Martin Jenni, he was a brilliant man and a kind man. I was a graduate student under his care from January 1990 to December 1999, and under his watchful ear and his eagle eye, I was able to earn both master's and doctorate in music. Martin taught by example: to learn Gregorian chant, we sang it; to learn Baroque keyboard styles, we listened to him play Byrd and Couperin on his living-room harpsichord; to teach me Latin, he opened his Biblia Sacra and read to me so I could hear the music in the language; to teach me to write, he reduced and retitled my ten pages of rambling into four. If a traditional way to approach a subject was to work through it "horizontally," Martin took you through it "vertically," or perhaps "diagonally," arriving at (nearby) the same place, but having encountered new and unexpected turns along the path. To listen to Martin expound on any subject—music, language, life—was to stand at the edge and be amazed at his perception and his depth of feeling. I remember no time when, leaving his presence, my head wasn't spinning! There is no limit to the respect and admiration I have for this incredible man. His humor was subtle and curby, and his compliments, when paid, were of the jaw-dropping variety, due to their rarity as well as their obvious sincerity.

If there is one thing I know for certain about dear Brother Martin, it's that he loved and cherished his son Sulayman, and Aleshia as well. Martin fairly glowed with devotion and parental pride when Sulayman came to live in Iowa City. Since my daughter and son are of the same generation as Sulayman, Martin and I sometimes conversed about family matters. Once he asked me what I thought was the essence of child rearing, and I replied, "Discipline, from the day they are born." After a quick raising of the eyebrows, he realized I used the word in its original sense: "disciplina" as instruction and learning. As a loving parent instructs the beloved child, so the beloved teacher instructs the grateful student.

I would like to share with all those who knew and loved Martin Jenni some of his own words to me, copied and pasted below from an email dated June 24, 2005. Pearing the worst, I was inquiring after his health and well-being, and here is part of his response:

"One lives intensively in the Now; anticipation is counterproductive. Actually I feel splendidly alive. Hope you're all well. Love, Martin."

I miss you and will always hold you in a special place in my heart: Magister, Doctor, Amicus.

Beth Zmarzlaw
August 20, 2006

PROGRAM NOTES

In Memoriam Humphrey Searle (1992)

A formative disciple of composition, I met Humphrey Searle during his one-quarter residence at Stanford in 1964, my first year. I took his Webern course (running commentary on his non-yet published translation of a composerly biography). My Inventario super nomen naturally caught his eye: his name as soggetto cavato, Webern-esque microserializing, a decadent Viennese waltz-abstraction, and inspired in part by the performance (in which I played contrabass) of his Fifth Symphony. I reproduced its marvelous percussion "glissando" cadenza. I made several visits to his & Fiona's multi-storey house in St John's Wood; a regular pilgrimage whenever I was in London.

Composed for a memorial to HS at Southwark Cathedral and performed by Kate Lukas and myself, the work uses (exclusively) the 6-note series [B, C, E, F, D, Eb] constructed for Inventario super nomen. Dated Cornwall, 14 May 1982, shortly upon learning of Searle's death in London.

Musique printanière (1967)

I composed the duet in Chicago, during my DePaul tenure, for Kate Lukas and myself. Manuscript evidence shows an initial "take" in ink, with subsequent developmental expansions. A very intimate sense of chamber music, as also the earlier piece with harpsichord. Musique printanière was later included in a Composers Recordings Inc. LP.

Jusqu' où dans la lièvre (1997)

Montée du bel insolite, degré de la douleur,
(Ascent of the unprecedented, degrees of grief)
Degrés de l'effort, degrés du souvenir et de l'espoir,
(Pitches of struggle, heights of remembrance and of hope)
Degrés du temps, marches carrees ou tournantes,
(Points in time, grand or retrospective)
Dansantes,
(Dancing).
Étages palier de brillance et envols
(Top steps of brilliance and flight)
Comme volée de cloches vers une rencontre ultime,
(Like the flight of hells at the ultimate meeting)
Comme vous éloignez, vous évaluez,
(How you distance yourself, judge yourself--)
Qu'à jamais sombrentes sont vos mesures,
(sommon your measures,)
Vos musiques!
(Your music!)

Text by Iowa City poet Pauline Aspel, set to song for a performance at a summer Interlochen concert. (Aspel provided an English version as well, but I have lost it.) Rhapsodic response to Aspel's "vos musiques."
Tympanorum Musices (1968)

Written for 4 timpani and 3 bongos (high, medium, low) and composed at Canton, NY (13-15 March 1968) presumably during a visit to Richard Saylor (graduate co-pan, with wife Naomi, at Stanford. His first position out was at St Lawrence University in Canton, NY, which led to the creation of Axis). The work was written for Gary Chaiffe, and arose from my interest in exploring the expressive possibilities (both awesome and introspective) of the medium, as well as subtleties of pitch and gesture.

Canto (1994)

Composed from MacDowell sketches from 1881 (c. Figura circulorum). Largely sustained harmonic monotony, but with the emergence (and disappearance) of a second voice-persona. Recurrent periods interspersed with variations. In its single-mindedness, it is related to The Opaloon, Figura c., Ballfall, Musica dell'autunno etc. (C, a major arrival note, is also a friend's initial.)

Tio's Foursome

Tio = Tif[n] O[Dell], who asked for the piece and arranged for Augustana College to "commission" it. Brief, playful, and nearly monothemistic (Lydian diateessenarian).

Sam Mbira (1985)

This impressively gleeeful conceals metrical games and anagrams (explained in the inner cover). The musical layout (without pitch) was done chiefly in Switzerland at year end of 1984; musical realization took place in Iowa City, about a month into the spring semester of 1985. Theme V. is based on a repetitive set I concocted at a very early age (standing at an upright piano); after a dormancy of four decades, the idea found a home! It is the affective peak of the piece, utterly joyful fun. Theme VI. was consciously inspired by mbirama music that accompanied the Hartz Mountain Canaries radio broadcasts of my youth; this is immensely playful music, a kind of music theatre in its performance.

From DMJ's notes:

Requested by a graduate percussionist at Iowa, David Colson; before several times at Iowa and, again through Colson, at Rice. The inner cover of the score bears this note: sam mbira's game of composition is, like its title, anagrammatic. Fixed elements are: five numerators [sam 1, jeh 3, na 5, de 7, mbira 9] and six "themes." The numerators are ordered in a series of twelve: sam, jeh, na, jeh, de, sam, na, sam, de, na, sam, mbira. Each of the first four numerators has variable denominators [na and de: sixteenths, eighths, jeh: sixteenths, eighths, quarters; sam: sixteenths, eighths, quarters, half, whole] and mbira (sixteenths), is capable of many internal resolutions. The themes are initially ordered in periods, but their elements become exchangeable as the game progresses.

* meters: Resist the usual practice of resolving meter changes into a common denominator; think changing denominators! (e.g. 3/16, 1/8, 1/4, 1/2, and 1/1 should be felt as one of each respective denominator.)

* mallets: As there is no time to change mallets comfortably, varieties of nuance must be achieved by attack characteristics. These are indicated in the usual manner (dors, tenuto signs, accents, etc.) and suggestively (mezza voce, sotto voce, mezzo forte, forte, leggero, spiccato, dolce). Stick clicks are indicated (uniquely) at the beginning of the last period.

* spoken syllables: These are to be uttered in the manner of the Indian boles, at the prevailing dynamic level (unless otherwise indicated), and for the full duration notated (of the strike note under which a syllable occurs, or--voice alone--of the indicated value). Pronunciation: sam rhymes (more or less) with tom, jeh with English 'h' and (Canadian) eh, na as nah, de as if French, mbira as three syllables (as in prism) [disposition of instruments]

Serialization (modularization) of meter thus produces the numerator pattern 1|3|5|7|3|1|7|5|1|9. Variable denominators create a series of metrical variations, in addition to the thematic series. The first period (Ls) came before the work's plan and final medium; metrical analysis of that period (1/8, 3/16, 1/4, 5/8, 3/4, 7/16, 3/8, 1/2, 7/8, 5/16, 1/1, 9/16) suggested treating denominators serially.

Per Elysios (1990)

The work bears the subtitle William H. in memoriam. It was first performed the in spring following Bill Hibbard's death. A meter-driven composition (the measure being two beats, each subdivided into 5 eighths), Per Elysios (through the Elysian Fields) is loosely modelled on Couperin's Les Gondoles de Delos, i.e. a rondo with independent couplet-episode. The whole is obsessed with the soggetto cavato b-b-flat, b-natural). The farthest-out couplet cites R-Music Asphodel (the first work I wrote for Hibbard's CMM); the work ends in a 10-m. citation of the conclusion of Get Hence Foule Griege (1975) which, quite remarkably, is a mini-series of variations on a b-flat, b-natural cadence.

Verbum supernum - the supernatural word goes forth (1975)

The dedication reads: "In joyful memory of my father (1897-1971) and for the occasion of the dedication of the organ in Messiah Lutheran Church, Santa Cruz, California."

Exuberant, wild (quasi-Messiaenish) music, this work was to have been played by the organist of Grace Cathedral, San Francisco, but as (he claimed) the manuscript got to him too late, I was obliged to play it myself (somewhat under tempo).

Albinas Prizgintas adds, "Curiously, the Verbum Supernum is located in the middle of the thick old Liber Usualis - almost like rule perfectly centered. Not that Martin would stoop to such games of chance... or would he? When I first read through the piece I thought, 'aha, another Messiaen clone.' Messiaen's influence makes itself known in much of all organ music since his time. But Martin's piece is a work quite apart. It's modular. Parts are moved around like furniture. Call it a kind of serialization, if you will, as was Messiaen's also. But it is more influence by modern jazz harmony. The rhythms, perhaps also owing a glance back to Messiaen, have much more spirited dance to them, particularly in the pedal, and in the constantly changing meters. The piece has a satisfying unity of sound. It is a modern piece of organ music influenced by the jazz scene in Chicago that Martin must have known something about, and, also, the influence of Leo Sowerby, who Martin was quick to point out having heard him play."

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