

KALMIA STRING QUARTET SHAWN AND SCOT MOORE, VIOLINS LEAH GASTLER, VIOLA

TAMÁS ZÉTÉNYI, CELLO

MCVMMCVMCVMCVMCV STRING QUARTET IN C MAJOR MCVMCVMCVMCVMC

THE GARDEN OF FORKING PATHS JOSEPH SUMMER

CVMCVMCVMC BY JOSEPH SUMMER MCVMCVMCVMCVMCVMCVMCVMCVMCVMCVI

The Garden of Forking Paths (String Quartet in C Major)

1 I. Pierre Menard. Author of Don Quixote

II. Shakespeare's Memory [15:09]

2 III. Laudatores Temporis Acti [11:12]

3 IV An Examination of the Work of Herbert Quain

V. The Library of Babel [30:02]

Total Time = 56:29

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TRNY1340

15 BROADWAY, ALBANY, NY 12207 TEL: 518.436.8814 FAX: 518.436.0643



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PREFACE TO THE PROGRAM NOTES

On April 1, 2011, *The Garden of Forking Paths* was first performed at the Pierre Menard Art Gallery (now defunct) in Cambridge, Massachusetts. For the performance, I created simple program notes, reproduced below, which pithily summarize the relation between my music and the Jorge Luis Borges' short stories that I attempted to illustrate when composing the quartet. (Each premiere program was unique, printed on sundry pages of music, or flotsam and jetsam from what follows.) However, there was written previously a lengthy abstract that fulsomely captures the conceit of my lengthy quartet; entitled *An Epistolary Approach to Imaginary Program Notes*. Following the reprint of the short notes to the quartet, as they appeared at the debut, I offer the original nineteenth version of imaginary program notes.

PROGRAM NOTES FROM THE DEBUT

Preview Performance of The Garden of Forking Paths by Joseph Summer

The Kalmia String Quartet: Shawn and Scot Moore, violins; Leah Gastler, viola; Tamás Zétényi, cello Presented by The Shakespeare Concerts, April 1st, 2011, at the Pierre Menard Art Gallery in Cambridge Made possible by a grant from The Mattina R. Proctor Foundation and a generous gift from Franz and Sumi-Paik Maier

A program note about *The Garden of Forking Paths* by Joseph Summer The string quartet is in five movements:

I: Pierre Menard. Author of Don Quixote

II: Shakespeare's Memory

III: Laudatores Temporis Acti

IV: An Examination of the Work of Herbert Quain

I: The Library of Babel

Each movement is a musical interpretation of the named stories of the preeminent 20th century fabulist, Jorge Luis Borges. The first and second movements are played without pause, as are the fourth and fifth.

I: Pierre Menard is an author whose most intriguing novel is an attempt to rewrite Cervantes' Don Quixote, word for word. Borges' tale concerns Menard's fastidious and acknowledged plagiarism. The first movement begins with a mirror image of the opening bars of Mozart's "Dissonant" Quartet. After the avulsive introduction, the movement reflects those chapters Menard emulated (the violins and viola) and Menard's temporally displaced imitation (cello).

II: An Argentinan author, perhaps Borges himself, acquires the bard's memories, but doesn't lose his own. The second movement combines elements of the life of Edward DeVere, the 17th earl of Oxford and the author of the English Language's greatest plays under his familiar pseudonym: William Shakespeare; with the sounds of Buenos Aires. The Oxford March by William Byrd (written in honor of DeVere) becomes enmired in a South American tango.

Ill: Laudatores Temporis Acti concerns an Asian religious sect first brought to the attention of Europe by a fictional Portuguese sea captain in 1669. The sect believed the past was completely disconnected from the present, though they worshipped it (the past) as if it were an idol. The third movement explores this notion through the invention of an artificial "old" style music, which, however is deliberately inauthentic and thus disconnected from current musical schools.

IV: Another author explored in Borges' collection is Herbert Quain whose works are less interesting for their content than for their structures. Quain defined his novel's construction through musical like patterns of repetition and transition. The fourth movement is similarly constructed, taking the mundane material of a minuet accompaniment and allowing it to be framed in an unusually restructured minuet —trio— minuet form.

V: The final movement is a description of one of Borges' most satisfying deconstructions of artistic creativity. The library of Babel contains all possible combinations of a set of letters and orthographic symbols. Thus Shakespeare's Hamlet resides in the library as does a book that contains nothing but the letters "a" and "z" repeated ad nauseum. In my interpretation I have discovered a volume in a musical library of Babel that contains the music of my very own quartet, but not quite as I wrote it. It is one of the many variants that exist in the library. A theme and variations structure shows how my original music could have been generated in several different ways, some more outlandish than others. Also, it is discovered herein that the entire quartet is really merely a variant version of the one I thought I had written as musical conflicts from earlier in the quartet are resolved in a way I would not have chosen.

Additionally, the story *The Garden of Forking Paths* intrudes at times, and the piece finishes with a coda inspired by the story *The End*.

The program notes above are somewhat disingenuous. I have written a more honest and dishonest explanation, a novella entitled *An Epistolary Approach to Imaginary Program Notes*. It is a detailed account of the composition of the quartet. I should have forced you all to read it. Here is a brief excerpt:

... The essay began to spiral inwards and I took the fragments with me to the Philippines last month, so that I might work on them between dives. I also took *Doctor Faustus*, and reread it, for the first time since 1973. To my *delight*, I discovered that I had been misremembering the book for decades, citing it as proof of a contention regarding Schönberg and citing a true recollection — I think — of a letter from Schönberg as a contention about Mann's book. The circular path of my ratiocinations had caught even my professor in its vortex. (Indeed, he had, because of my arrangement of Joseph Hauer's *Apocalyptic Sonata*, arranged for me to meet with the composer he most detested, John Cage.) I had written parts of *The Garden of Forking Paths* as a musical commentary on these contentions, and in Malapascua discovered that at least half of the premise was untrue, videlicet: Adrian Leverkuhn was based in part on Josef Matthias Hauer, as proven by internal evidence, which explained Schönberg's alienation from Mann subsequent to the publication of *Doctor Faustus*. This all seemed marvelously uproarious stuff, until I began reading it to my daughter while she was ill in bed at Liberty's Lodge on the island of Apo in the state of Oriental Negros. From behind a white gauze veil which enveloped her and her sick bed she muttered, "This is of no interest to anyone in the world but John Wronoski. Why don't you just but this in a letter to John and foreet the essay."

Formed in the spring of 2010, the **Kalmia String Quartet** is comprised of students and fellows of the Bard College Conservatory of Music. Violinists Shawn and Scot Moore are brothers from Elgin, Illinois, and have played music together since their youth. They are joined by violist Leah Gastler, a native of Durham, Connecticut and cellist Tamás Zétényi of Hungary. The Kalmia Quartet has been coached by members of the Orion, Juilliard, and Mendelssohn String Quartets, and completed a summer residency at the Kneisel Hall Chamber Music Festival in 2010, where they studied and performed string quartets for eight weeks. They have given performances throughout New York, Connecticut, Pennsylvania, Maine and the Chicago area. Their current project involves performing and recording music by Joseph Summer.

Imaginary Program Notes

June 20, 2007 15 Brewster Road Worcester, MA

John Wronoski Pierre Menard Art Gallery Arrow Street Cambridge, MA

Greetings and Hallucinations,

I know we've talked about my returning the Orpheus book to my teacher, since you returned it to me after holding on to it for the last twenty years; but I still have an unresolved issue and an unfulfilled promise with and from Mr Hoffmann. As I promised you, though, here is the tale of Orpheus.

I had rented the second floor of a house at 190 South Main for the year. I occupied the back two rooms, Bill Curry the middle room. Curry remonstrated with me to allow his friend—who henceforth I shall refer to as Guildenstern—to have the front room. Reluctantly, as I found Guildenstern a vile sycophant, I permitted this. The lease was in my name, and it was for 110 dollars a month. The split was even between myself, Curry, and Guildenstern; though I had 50% of the floor. Greta Waltz, the landlady, accepted my sublease agreements with the guys. I was occasionally physically violent with Guildenstern, but only when it was deserved. A month or so into the semester and Curry's hired by some Virginia orchestra. He drops out of Oberlin, leaving me with his detritus, Guildenstern. Quickly and luckily I replaced Curry with a townie, an auto detailer named Faver. The townie and his girlfriend moved into the middle room.

Meanwhile, my girlfriend and I are having enormous difficulties, the which I've already regaled you with frequently. You'll recall that L and I were in Chicago, visiting her Bulgarian prep schoolmate, Elitza. I refused to marry Elitza and, oh, no, I'm telescoping my junior year into my senior year. No, L was already gone. That was junior year. I was returning not from Chicago, but rather from Boston, to discover that Guildenstern, with the assistance of Greta Waltz, had tossed out Faver, and replaced him with a grosser version of Guildenstern, whom henceforth I shall call Rosenkrantz. (The story of why and how Guildenstern

and Greta had conspired to banish Faver and replace him with Rosenkrantz in my absence I think you know well, but I would be glad to retell the whole story, at your command.) I produced my lease. I railed against this conspiracy. But Greta, Rosenkrantz and Guildenstern taunted me with my powerlessness. I conceded —or appeared to concede—and I managed to maintain my 50% share of the house by agreeing to pay 50% of the rent. This I did for the remainder of my time at Oberlin, this being the beginning of the second semester of my senior year. I continued to collect from Guildenstern, and now Rosenkrantz as well, monthly, for utilities, phone bills, and the like. Rosenkrantz and Guildenstern were happy, too, that I agreed to transfer the phone and utilities to their name. Of course, as part of my corrective actions I paid about five dollars a month on all the bills, while amassing huge debts to the companies in their names, especially the phone company which bills grew and grew as I called friends and acquaintances in foreign countries indiscriminately. The day I was leaving Oberlin I placed the immense overdue bills in Rosenkrantz and Guildenstern's hands, in front of Greta. They railed against my reversal of their fortunes and I taunted them with their powerlessness. It was condign.

That financial retribution for their perfidy was only a fraction of the justice I levied against them. The Orpheus theft however was part two of a two part correction I devised for Rosenkrantz. Guildenstern's treatment I shall not tarry over here.

Apprehend that the doltish duo were unaware of my ongoing plans to wrest justice from them, so, as we were fellow Oberlin conservatory students, and they thought I had seen that their attempt (an usurpation the addlepates thought successful) to gain control of the house justified — though what possible ratiocination they could have applied I know not, lest it have been manifest destiny — the pea-brained pair began to confide in me!

Rosenkrantz showed me a book he had borrowed from Professor Hoffmann: *Orpheus In New Guises*. It was a precious volume as it was a gift from its author, Erwin Stein, a friend of both Schönberg and Hoffmann, to Hoffmann. Later that day, I stole it. Later that week, Rosenkrantz expressed to me his immense anxiety over his loss of his teacher's book. He didn't know what to do, whether he should continue to search for it, which he had been doing to no avail for days, and not inform Hoffmann or whether he should simply report it missing. I suggested that as it was quite likely that he would soon remember where he had misplaced it, he should hold off on telling Hoffmann that it was lost, that if Hoffmann asked him of it he should say he was still reading it. Rosenkrantz thanked me for my calming advice. Whom the gods will destroy, they first make dumb.

During my next lesson with Hoffman (a weekly affair, beginning at 1 PM on Friday and lasting three to five hours, with copious reminiscences related by this last amanuensis to Schoenberg) I managed to steer

the conversation to Erwin Stein. This was easy enough, as all it took was a gentle deflection to Stein's performance at the Cleveland Institute of Music two years previously, which Hoffman and I attended together. After Stein and another pianist (whose name I can't recall) had played the Webern four hand arrangement of Schoenberg's first chamber symphony, the four of us (Hoffmann, Stein, the other pianist, and myself) went to a restaurant/bar to confabulate. Following his visit to the men's room, Stein went to the bar to order something, and as he stood there Hoffmann whispered to me, "Joe, you've got to tell Erwin that his dick's hanging out. I can't do it, because it would embarrass him were I to do it." So I ambled up to the bar and told Erwin to check his fly.

As Hoffmann and I laughed about the recollection a thought struck my professor. He told me that he had loaned Rosenkrantz his Orpheus, and then asked me whether I thought that was a bad idea. (Hoffmann was not fond of Rosenkrantz, despite his being a private student of his, as — so Hoffmann had told me — he smelled and he had a bushy beard. Hoffmann found facial hair affected.) I lied, "I hate to tell you this, but I loaned Rosenkrantz a score last year and every time I ask him for it he makes some excuse. I've had to reconcile myself with its loss."

Naturally, that poisoned forever the relationship between Hoffmann and Rosenkrantz. I couldn't very well give the book to Hoffmann after I stole it from Rosenkrantz, so I kept it, and eventually gave it to you, so that it might not weigh upon me. I wanted to revenge myself upon Rosenkrantz, but not on Hoffmann. But, the injury to Hoffmann was slight, so once I gave you the book to hold I forgot that portion of my revenge upon Rosenkrantz and Guildenstern.

When you handed back that book after so many years, I understood I owed you an explanation, but I still don't know whether I should return it to Hoffmann, either, as he never fulfilled his obligation to me to let me xerox the Schoenberg/Hauer correspondence he showed me in 1975. That year, in celebration of the Schönberg centennial, Hoffmann, asked several members of his composition studio to write program notes for a Schönberg Concert at Oberlin. I was to write about Opus 23, the "first" serial composition. Hoffmann and I discussed what Schoenberg had said to him about the work and he opened up his personal Schoenberg library which included unpublished correspondence between many associates of the famous man as well as obscure scores of serial composers. One particularly intriguing article Hoffmann possessed was "Schönberg and the 12 Note System," from a London publication called The Listener, from August 10, 1961. In it, Egon Wellesz, an early pupil of Schoenberg, wrote that "...in 1915 a private in the Austrian army was sent to me because the military psychiatrists found that he was so neurotic and talked about music in such a peculiar way that they did not know what to do with him and wanted my advice. The man was Josef Hauer. Hauer had developed, in

his compositions, the idea of twelve note rows. ... I found his ideas very interesting." Wellesz told the music theorist Reti (who lived more than a hundred years, and whose analytical praxis is superior to Schenker) who in turn told Schoöenberg. Released from the military due to Wellesz' "favorable report," Hauer recommenced his composition with twelve-tones and received a letter from Schoöenberg asking him permission to combine his ideas with Schöenberg's to form a new "school" of music, or a book. Nothing of this developed, and in 1923 Schoenberg published what the world has since believed to be the first twelve-tone music. In 1926 Hauer did manage to publish his own explanation of his invention in a book titled Zwölftontechnik. The Arnold Schoenberg Institute has a catalogue of the books Arnold Schoenberg gathered and retained during his life. Schoenberg himself began the catalogue and listed 600 items (including scores) in 1918. It should be noted that in his library are three books by Hauer including *Vom Melos zur Pauke: eine Einführung in die Zwölftontusik*, published in 1925; *Vom Wesen des Musikalischen*, published in 1920 (!) and, of course, *Zwölftontechnik: die Lehre von den Tropen*. published in 1926.

The gem of Hoffmann's library—in my opinion—was a letter from Schoenberg to Hauer, written before Opus 23's publication, several years earlier, proving that Schoenberg had intimate knowledge of Hauer's twelve-tone theory before becoming recognized as the Papa Haydn of the Second Viennese School. That letter became the keystone of my program notes that Hoffmann allowed me to publish, though with greater restraint than I wanted, at the Schöenberg Centennial concert at Oberlin. Though I wanted to quote at length from the letter. Hoffmann exercised severe editorial control over my offering, and the result was a half page about Hauer and two pages of my tedious analysis of the musical material. But, Hoffmann did allow me to cite the precious letter. My professor and I continued to discuss Hauer and his importance or lack thereof to 12 tone music. One of my strongest arguments in our continuing discussion was that Mann had modeled some of Adrian Leverkuhn in the novel, **Doctor Faustus** after Hauer! Several of Leverkuhn's compositions are clearly references to the titles of actual Hauer pieces, including, most tellingly, Leverkuhn's Apocalyptic Sonata. Hauer's Apocalyptic Sonata is an atrociously bad piece of work, but it is a predecessor to all twelve-tone music. While I was working on the program notes to Schönberg's Opus 23, Hoffmann suggested, half in jest, that I arrange the Apocalyptic Sonata for orchestra or chamber ensemble. Because I am facile at arranging and enjoyed the nature of the dare, I told Hoffmann that I would arrange the sonata as soon as I could get my hands on a score. Hoffmann immediately produced said score, as well as several other Hauer pieces which he had in his personal library. I finished the dreadful arrangement in a few weeks and brought it to Hoffmann. He was greatly amused, and took the immense score pages (my self-designed over-sized 35 stave score) and

put the monster atop the grand piano in his corner studio on the first floor of the music building. A couple months later he returned my arrangement of the **Apocalyptic Sonata**, asking whether I had any desire to see it performed. I did not. When I was a teacher at CMU, I took the pages of the score and pasted them to the walls of my basement apartment, where they remained as decorative wallpaper even after I left. I remember soaking in the old tub (which sat on four talons) and staring around me at the pages of the orchestrated Hauer Sonata, flicking droplets at the pages to watch the ink run.

Of what I was unaware for three decades was that the **Apocalyptic Sonata** arrangement served one other function before becoming wallpaper.

A couple years ago, I think 2005, The BSO had invited Hoffmann to lecture on several Schoenberg pieces they were playing, but Hoffmann, never one to be hemmed in by those he considers less important than Schöenberg – for whom, you will recall no doubt, my professor acted as amanuensis in the fifties – ranted brilliantly at the Goethe Institute about why Schoenberg was really angry with Thomas Mann following the publication of Mann's portrait of the fictional serial composer Adrian Leverkuhn, which most cognoscenti know (though incorrectly) is modeled after Schönberg. In part, Hoffmann's mad ramble at the Goethe Institute in 2005 (or was it 2006?) was a continuation of a discussion we were having in the seventies about the real Adrian Leverkuhn, the mad Austrian inventor of Zwölftonmusik: Josef Matthias Hauer. Music History has propogated a myth in which Arnold Schönberg invents twelve-tone music in 1923, after eight years of musical silence, in the last movement from his opus 23 Fünf Klavierstücke. As I reminded the attendants of the centennial in the 1975 program notes, twelve-tone music was invented by Hauer in 1915, and his invention caught Schoenberg's attention not long thereafter.

Dining with Hoffman after his hebephrenic 2005 Schoenberg lecture for the BSO at the Goethe Institute, I asked my quondam composition professor if he would allow me to finally have a copy of the Schönberg/ Hauer correspondence. This request did not come out of the blue as his lecture had spiraled — incomprehensibly to nearly everyone else in the audience — around Mann, Schönberg, **Dr Faustus**, Wellesz, Hitler's final solution, and Adorno; even if that wasn't the advertised topic. During the lecture itself he took out some correspondence he was carrying, between himself and a son of Mann about the Dr Faustus incidents, incidents that caused Schönberg to cease speaking with Mann.

In response to my request about the correspondence, Hoffmann replied cryptically with what sounded to me like, "your hour of hour with cage." I admitted I had no idea what he was talking about. He repeated the cryptic comment, but with slow and deliberate pronunciation, and I now understood him to say: "your hour of Hauer with cage." I politely demanded amplification and he obliged me over dinner. But to explain what

"my hour of Hauer with cage" means I want to tell you about the string quartet I'm completing. It's called **The Garden of Forking Paths**, and I was thinking that it might be apt to premiere it at your art gallery, especially considering that the first movement, which is nearly complete, is titled *Pierre Menard*, the author of Don Quixote. One of my original thoughts about the first movement was that rather than write music for it, I should simply instruct the performers to play a movement from an existing quartet, and I fastened on Mozart's Dissonant as a potential candidate, but then I refrained, once I considered that having the Menard movement be an instruction to play a movement from an already existing piece seemed too derivative of the work of John Cage. Perhaps my avulsing the first movement of Mozart's quartet would be considered plagiarism — of Cage, not Mozart. I'll continue this later, as I've just spent hours composing this letter, when I should be on line completing details of my family's itinerary for our Philippines junket.

Yours truly,

Joe

PS: I wrote "Yours truly" because once I typed "Yours" my computer prompted me to add "truly" by pressing "enter." My computer also changes dues ex machine to dues ex machine every goddamned time I try to write dues ex machine.

June 22, 2007 15 Brewster Road Worcester, MA

John Wronoski Pierre Menard Art Gallery Arrow Street Cambridge, MA

Greetings and Hallucinations,

I once had lunch with Cage, back in the early seventies, when I was still a student. At the time, I didn't know why. I received a summons from the Associate Dean of Music, which normally meant I had offended some insecure professor (and as you will recall, once was to discuss my deal with the school after Professor

Coalsack had punched me in the stairwell of the Rathskeller after the Pauline Oliveros concert in front of Professors Young and Pellegrino—have you ever been punched in the stairwell?); but instead of some lecture on sensitivity—insensitively delivered— I was informed that I would be having lunch with John Cage. I wasn't thrilled, nor moved at all. I was too young and full of my own importance to consider a lunch with Cage anything more than a tedious school assignment. When I arrived at our lunch date assuming that there would be a gaggle of giddy composition students from the school's studio of conceptual music composers— conceptual music, at the time, meant sophomoric ideas wrapped in flute solos—there were no other composers, nor even conservatory students. Cage was sitting at a table with a professor I didn't know (someone from the philosophy department, I can't remember his name) and that professor's prize student. I assumed. I introduced myself, first to Cage, then added that I was a composition student. Cage nodded. He was depressed, it seemed to me. I wasn't sure what I was supposed to do; lie, and say I was honored to meet him? I didn't have any questions to ask him about music, as from what I knew of his art I didn't think he would have anything meaningful to say to me that couldn't be enunciated with equal perspicacity by some pot smoking fellow conservatory student. A waiter came, and took our orders. I had a cheeseburger and fries. I can't recall what Cage had. I think he ordered a beer, but then, as Oberlin was a dry town and the beer was a thin 3.2% odious urine smelling compound, I wonder whether I've just imagined it. My next recollection seems equally invented, not really experienced. Did Cage suggest that a mushroom was superior to meat patty? I think he said that, but maybe I wanted him to say that. More clearly I can remember several topics of conversation that are not—I firmly believe—fabrications. He did discuss mushrooms, a lot. He complained about the Oberlin composition department's cheapness. He said "cheapness," but did not add any insulting imprecations that I would like to add to spice up the lunch conversation. The Oberlin composition department had not and would not pay him to give a lecture, he explained, which he considered very insulting. He said the music school was paying for lunch, and that was all they were doing. Cage also whined that Merce Cunningham wasn't paying him enough, a complaint I found surprising, because I thought that he and Cunningham were, you know, friends.

His performance with the dance company consisted of sitting in the gym where the Cunningham dancers were plying their craft, and typing. Next to him sat another typist. That was the extent of the musical accompaniment for what seemed an eternity of meaningless dance and tedious clicking and dinging. Back then, typewriters clicked and dinged. Back then, there were typewriters. The work would be different today, much as Cage's original composition for radio receivers won't work anymore, now that there are no longer vast empty bands with which to play.

I should mention that Cage was ticked off with the other "performer," who was typing while the Cunningham dancers counted to eight in their heads and danced something clever. (The counting to eight comment is mine, not Cage's.) Cage felt that the second typist was simply stealing his typing idea, and he found it difficult to concentrate on typing up his next lecture while thinking that the guy sitting next to him was copying his concept. I don't recall the philosophy professor saying anything, by which I mean I think he really did say nearly nothing at all, except make some quiet assents to Cage's comments. The student did say quite a lot, about Cage, at the beginning of lunch, in an attempt, I gather, to elicit some wise words from the illustrious man, but Cage was disinterested in him, his accolades, and divesting himself of any wisdom. I said nearly nothing, and listened without remark to the lengthy mycological blathering. I didn't say a word about me or music after my initial self-introduction. After an hour of tedium, the philosophy professor said some words of thanks, and we all got up from the table and - I suppose - went our separate ways. (I want to begin a new paragraph, here, but every time I try, this computer inserts a row of dots that I can't remove, so pretend I indent this next sentence.) I didn't learn why I had been invited to dine with Cage until more than thirty years later when I was dining with my quondam composition teacher, Hoffmann, following his lecture on Schönberg at the Goethe Institute. By the way, prior to the lecture, when Hoffmann spotted me in the audience, he came over and started to reminisce about the Pauline Oliveros lecture and our debate, which he had been recounting to Oberlin undergrads for decades since the incident (and my subsequent receipt of the painless sucker punch following the performance of her Amelia Earhart homage in the Oberlin gymnasium.) I had to tell the sponsors of the lecture, while Hoffmann was amusing himself speaking with me, that the only way they could get him to the podium was by physically removing himself from my presence, which they gently and repeatedly and uselessly attempted, before I walked with him to the lectern, and, pointing at the gathered throng, insisted he address.

Later, at the post-lecture dinner, Hoffmann spoke of my "hour with Hauer and cage," as I wrote previously, and eventually enlightened me as to his meaning. I learned that the reason I had lunch with Cage was due to an exchange between the renowned conceptual composer and Hoffmann. Irked at the cold shoulder he was receiving from Professor Coalsack, that year's head of the composition department (a position that rotated, somewhat, annually); Cage made a surprise visit to Hoffmann's studio, to see whether Hoffmann could speak with the current chair about paying Cage to do a lecture. After exchanging pleasantries, Hoffmann told me that Cage noticed my outrageously large music paper on which I had inked the **Apocalyptic Sonata** and asked what it was. Hoffmann told him it was a student's arrangement of music by Josef Hauer; and Cage — I suppose to continue to appear collegial — told Hoffmann that he was a devotee

of the music of Josef Hauer. Certainly, Hoffmann could not believe this claim, and nor can I; but I am not personally attesting to Cage's having said that he was a fan of Hauer, I am merely reiterating Hoffmann's assertion that Cage made the statement. In any case, Hoffmann suggested then that Cage meet with me so that we could discuss our mutual fascination with Hauer. At the time Hoffmann did not mention this to me. He simply went to the associate dean and suggested that Cage and I have lunch.

What was I meaning to write to you?

Joe

July 20, 2007 Cocobana Resort Island of Malapascua The Visayas, The Philippines

John Wronoski Pierre Menard Art Gallery Arrow Street Cambridge, MA

Greetings and hallucinations,

My flight to Manila left July 4th. My mother's flight to Manila left a few days earlier, as she was leaving from St Thomas. Lisa, left on the 4th as well, but earlier in the morning than my own. She was on a different flight because we paid for my flight with frequent flier miles she earned on United Air, which Lisa redeemed on Singapore Air for me. Eve is still upset that Lisa allowed me to fly on Singapore Air, which is luxurious, while she was sent on cheap Philippine Air. During one leg of her trip she awoke rudely, bumping her head on the seat in front of her due to turbulence, the collision with the seat breaking her glasses in twain. I criticized her for wearing her glasses while sleeping. Such behavior begs for turbulence and bifurcation. Her divided glasses flew off her head and fell into a river that was flowing in the aisle next to her. Happily the river running through the aisles was from bottled water and not a malfunctioning toilet.

I flew from Logan to La Guardia; JFK through Frankfurt to Singapore and then from Singapore to Manila.

Lisa flew first to Washington, D.C., then Beijing, then Xiaman, and on to Manila. Eunice was scheduled to fly from St Thomas to Miami. St Louis. San Francisco, and Guam before arriving in Manila, Your friend Eve flew on July 3 from Boston to Milwaukee, then Los Angeles, said hello to a former fellow ballerina and juvenile delinquent (her accomplice in the 2 AM curfew violation in Pomona seven years ago, when they went to a doughnaught shop to celebrate; and the police arrested them—and one other ballerina who was also in on the scheme—and woke me out of my peaceful happy slumber in order to release them from their lawful detainment—Eve crying and her accomplices quiet and worried—the evening after they had all debuted with Inland Pacific Ballet, if you recall), and then continued on to Guam (arriving a day later than my mother) and then Manila. The plan was for my mother to stay at the Trader's Hotel in Manila for a few days, and then be joined there first by my wife, and then by my daughter. Following this three quarter reunion, they would meet me at the Manila airport upon my arrival and we would all board a Cebu Pacific airplane for the next stop; the city of Cebu City on the island of Cebu; on our way to the island of Malapascua. My mother called me at 3 AM on July 4th to ask what she should do because she had been delayed in St Louis. I told her not to call me at 3 AM to ask me a question she could answer herself, videlicet: cancel the first night of her stay in Manila. I was curt with her. She was appalled that I didn't want to call the hotel in Manila for her. "Joev, I'm too exhausted to call, I just can't do it." I told her it was unnecessary to involve me at three in the morning with a problem she could solve herself. "I just can't," she whined. Later, when we were all in Malapascua she brought up my refusal to help her, again, at a dinner, saying I was "mean." I told her that if she couldn't solve simple problems herself, but needed to wake me up at 3 AM to do them for her, then it was time for me to put her in a home for the elderly or for the spoiled and lazy.

Later that morning of the 4th (my wife having left prior to my mother's call) Lisa called me from some place between Boston and Beijing (I was too tired to catch where she was) to inform me that our visas for the Philippines were too short and we would be denied entry. I asked her who had made such a statement and I think she mentioned some ticket agent. I had the (mistaken) impression that some young Chinese woman in a green Mao uniform and a sub-machinegun was harassing her because Lisa was not properly participating in the communist dialectic.

I told my wife not to worry about the visa issue, and just talk her way through to Manila where I would set everything aright by some appropriate bakshish. Lisa replied worriedly that she had been warned that the People's Republic of China would not take lightly the visa issue. I replied that the People's Republic was unlikely to detain a US citizen merely passing through some Chinese airport on her way to Manila, and reiterated my promise to find a visa solution once we were all together in the Philippines. Lisa was not con-

vinced that we would even be able to enter the Philippines, but to that hypothesis I could offer no practical solution. Meanwhile, I e-mailed my daughter's fiancée — as she was unreachable by phone but (I knew) would be in contact via the internet with Andy between flights) and asked him to inform Eve to flirt her way through any punctilious martinet's interpretation of visa restrictions until we met in Manila. The visa issue turned out to be trivial, nothing that 10,000 Philippine pesos (or pisos as they are now officially labeled, though no one calls them anything but pesos) placed in the hands of our dive operator couldn't ameliorate.

Still, the unsettled state of my family's varied locations in time and space was provoking within me great anxiety as I began my own sojourn on July 4th. Leaving Worcester by van in the morning, I couldn't sleep on the way to Logan. My anxiousness increased on my flight from Logan to La Guardia and worsened as I rode the shuttle between La Guardia and JFK. I had six hours in JFK to stew over the whereabouts and destinations of my mother, wife, and daughter. I pictured them as photons, being shuttled through the gates of directional possibilities. I could choose to know their direction or their location, but not both. The analogy calmed me. Yet, with the knowledge that my family should not be thought of as the sum of their subtomic particles and the statistical probabilities of their location or direction, I decided to attempt to contact my wife by e-mail so that we could arrive at some plan to save the phenomena. I wandered the halls of the JFK international terminal in search of free internet service, as they have in Singapore. Of course, they didn't have such at JFK. I noticed an internet café, but it required payment and since I have some sort of wireless connection possibility on my laptop the idea of paying for the internet was loathsome to me. I'll continue this later, John. See you when I return. Say hello to Heide for me.

Joe

July 21, 2007

Dear Frank.

"I am going into seclusion to write a book."

July 24, 2007

Dear Frank,
"I am retiring to construct a maze."

August 8, 2007 EWHA U Seoul, South Korea

Dearest Joe,

I really miss you, even though we've only been apart a few days. Not being able to speak with you, or e-mail you. I wonder whether you and Eve are having a great time, if everything is okay. . . I've been very busy here at EWHA, and I'll tell you all about it when I get home. I have been reading, when I've had a moment, your program notes to an imaginary string quartet, and I don't know whether they really say what you mean them to say, or whether there's some point I don't understand. Like when you say, "When I wrote The Garden of Forking Paths I was writing with a moment to moment accord with either the Borges texts or my reactions to them; or I was drawing a musical parallel to an aspect of text." Actually, your music is all talking to other composers who have come before you - telling them what you appreciate in their music, what they missed out on doing, like a son bringing his accomplishments to his father; or a student bringing his accomplishments to his teacher. And then you seem so weird and defensive when you write. "There are no moments of pure music, no measures that I deemed merited inclusion because they were pretty or followed from some musical instinct. Every measure has a textual ratiocination. Every note represents a word or thought, I'm fairly devoid of musical afflatus, and all my compositions are woven from intellectual ideas. When someone finds something in my music melodic or attractive, it's not because I was improvising and came upon a nice bit of sound. I can't play piano, and I no longer play French horn. My compositional process is deliberate and punctiliously pre-planned. My teacher Richard Hoffmann warned all his students against improvising; unnecessarily in my case, as I couldn't if I wanted to." That's just untrue, Joe, you are a brilliant improviser. I don't understand why you'd say something so opposite of what you are. And you know you can improvise like no one else, in so many styles and with humor or seriousness. You're not being humble, so did you just forget? It seems like what you're writing is just some peculiarly made-up version of you. I don't believe you are serious when you say, "Weighing these thoughts, I must say that though I hope The Garden of Forking Paths could be heard without a reading of the Garden of Forking Paths; Pierre Menard, Author of Don Quixote; Shakespeare's Memory; Laudatores Temporis Acti; An Examination of the Work of Herbert Quain; The Library of Babel and The End; it shouldn't be." I think you actually want almost everyone to listen to your music without referential meanings. However, you do want several people whose literary experience is superior to yours to listen and appreciate the effort you put into it. All others should actually think you are just writing pretty music. I love you,

Iris

August 9, 2007

Dearest love,

It's funny that you write something that Eve just said to me about the program notes. I was reading to her some passages, all of which sounded true and false, and she said that since the program notes were apparently directed to an audience of one: John Wronoski, that I should simply write a letter to him discussing it. Aesthetically, she opined, it wouldn't be so "disgusting, retarded, and pompous" as my ambage through the garden of my wondrousness.

In regard your criticism that all my music is conversation with prior composers, had you continued to read further in the program notes you would have arrived at a series of (contradictory) statements about my imagined audience(s) including this:

All my compositions are personal conversations with composers, and mostly dead composers. That's the audience I imagine in my head. I sit down with Bartok and a score, over cognacs and cigars. We don't really need to have a quartet there to play it; that just detracts from the experience. In JFK international airport, last month, I had an opportunity to sit with a composer over drinks—no cigars, as smoking is prohibited in the terminal—but, alas, when I took the score of The Garden of Forking Paths, string quartet in C major, from my carry-on bag, my compatriot

only took a perfunctory glance. We were both about to embark upon lengthy trips; he to the United Kingdom and me to the Philippines; so I can understand his reluctance to read through a lengthy string quartet, presented to him by a total stranger. Still, I was disheartened, because if a composer finds merit in my music, I have succeeded in my task. There can be no better judge of the meritoriousness of my music than the educated ears of a fellow traveler.

I had already made your point, and several others to boot, about my listeners.

Love, Joe

August 12, 2007

Dear Frank.

On August 7, Eve and I were making arrangements for our first morning dive on Apo when the dive master reminded us that Apo time is fifteen minutes faster than Philippine standard time. I thought he was kidding, then remembered that on our way to Zamboanguita to catch a boat to Apo it seemed my watch was suddenly 15 minutes slow. The dive master went on to explain that every island in Negros Oriental has its own time. Though this seemed ridiculous, it dawned on me later that because the people rely so much on the tides — you can't launch a boat from just any beach at any time, as there may be no beach or your boat may be in the middle of a bay—that this seemingly absurd temporal eccentricity might be logical. The published tide charts all use standard time, of course, so if it says that low tide for August 7 is 12 noon that could mean 12 noon exactly in Cabilao, but fifteen after in Apo. Four days later, at dinner—which is when Dive Master Dave goes from table to table arranging the next day's dive schedule—we were informed that the time was changing from 15 minutes fast to seven minutes fast. My respect for the logic of the temporally anomalous Negros Oriental islanders is misplaced. Apparently I have discovered the home of the Laudatores Temporis Acti.

Joe

August 14, 2007 EWHA Korea

Dearest Joe.

Rereading your new improved version I have to say as you've said to me about my writing, that you are trying to write a 400 page book in a 20 page article. Maybe you should just submit some of the footnotes as the article. Here are my favorite footnotes:

- 2) When I was troubled because I couldn't enjoy Dante, Borges informed me that he felt the same—and for the same reasons—but that I should return, (with the original Italian side by side with the translation,) and reread the **Inferno** following his directions. That opened up Dante for me. Similarly, I was initially embarrassed that many pages from my twelve volume 1001 Nights remained uncut until Borges let me know that it wasn't important to read all thousand and one Nights, that the essentials were met by reading a fraction of the tales but owning the entire collection so that its fullness could be assaved on one's bookshelf.
- 3) I knew when I first read *Pierre Menard, Author of Don Quixote* that Borges was writing to me personally when he slipped in that extraneous detail about the "Countess de Bagnoregio, one of the most refined minds in the Principality of Monaco" having moved to my birthplace: Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania after marrying the "international philanthropist Simon Kautsch." The Countess de Bagnoregio is clearly a reference to my own fictional patroness, Madame Bouqvier whom my wife fears I will run off with, leaving her "in the dust," as Lisa once sung to me on the way to a meeting with a real patroness. The inescapable fact that *Pierre Menard, Author of Don Quixote* was written before the end of World War II and that I was born in Pittsburgh. Pennsylvania after the Korean War is irrelevant.
- 4) Of **The Eleatic Paradoxes**, Professor Walter Aschaffenburg remarked to my teacher Richard Hoffmann, at its premiere, "Where are the Indians?" I think he felt the piece was a little too rambunctious. In a letter of recommendation for me, written a couple years later, Aschaffenburg commented drily, "Writes reams, but quality questionable."

- 5) This required carrying an ink pad as well, of course. (I still have the stamp, and several ink pads. Though I no longer use that specific stamp, I do have the occasion to employ the pad. I have a set of letters and symbols and can construct crude stamps of my own devise, for sundry important missions.)
- 12) When I was a child, attending the Eastern Music Festival of North Carolina, the festival director, Sheldon Morgenstern, aware of my fledgling attempts at composition, introduced me to Karel Husa, who was in residence there. Morgenstern argued that though I was young, Husa should give the opportunity of one lesson. I arrived at my lesson with several orchestral scores I had been working on. Husa graciously reviewed them for a half an hour, then asked me whether I wanted to be a French hornist or a composer—as, he said, I couldn't be both—and I dutifully replied as I expected he expected. Good, he said, and instructed me to burn everything I had written—including the scores he had just inspected—so that we could begin fresh. (footnote #13) Then, he took four measures from one of my pieces, rewrote them on a green music sheet; wrote two imitative measures below them, beginning at the third measure, and instructed me to continue in this fashion, while keeping an eye and ear to Bartok's Microcosmos. "Two voices only." When I could write for two voices, he told me, then I could proceed to three.
- 13) I took all the scores I'd brought to North Carolina and obeyed his command, literally. I cried big stupid tears as I burned the trash.

Maybe that's enough?

Love, love, love, Iris

August 17 or thereabouts, 2007 Frankfurt Airport

Dear Mister Duck.

After Philip asked me to write an essay on my musical aesthetics—gag gag hack—for the Fulcrum I began to compose—forgive the term—imaginary program notes for the garden of Forking Paths string quartet. Then, in the Philippines, I really got to it, writing a lot of bomphilogous braggadocio during my brief stints on dry land. Then, Eve remarked that the program notes would be of interest to no one but you, so I decided to rewrite the program notes as an epistolary novella, with most of the letters directed to you. This letter is real, being written at gate C8 in the Frankfurt airport on my way back from the Philippines. I think it's the 17th, but it's been several days of traveling and sometimes it's now and sometimes it's before. Anyway, I'm a little tired. I watched another Philip K Dick based movie on the airplane, Next, based on The Golden Man, according to the credits. Nicholas Cage either acting stupid or too tired to present his part in a non-Elvis way. Not worth watching, unless you're on a plane. The amusing thing about it is its theme, which is similar to so much of my Garden Of Forking Paths.

What I mean to do with this letter is to assay your judgment of this reworking of my imaginary program notes for Philip. I want to know whether you think it has merit, whether it could win the Pulitzer Prize the same year as my quartet, thereby establishing me as the greatest person since Bo Jackson.

The original idea for my imaginary program notes was to show what a cool guy I am.

The original idea was for me to describe how the movements of the quartet reflect the Borges stories; but when I started to write the descriptions, they seemed stupid. For instance, when I was rereading The Garden Of Forking Paths I wondered how I could name the city of Albert — Borges has Hsi P'eng murder Stephen Albert to alert the Germans — musically. Of course, the anomalous inclusion of an Alberti bass in the quartet would be perfect. My superiors on my home planet would know that an Alberti bass makes no sense within the framework of the last movement, and they'd bomb the town of Albert. (Earlier in the last movement, the ¾ variation in measures 190-258 is Hsi P'eng's moment of triumph for the Fatherland.)

August 17, 2007; definitely New York

I'm back in the USA. I'm in the waiting lounge for USAir in LaGuardia airport. I've been in transit eternally, I'm losing my mind. It began August 15, on the island of Apo. At about eight in the morning (their time, which is twelve hours and fifteen minutes ahead of Eastern Standard time) Eve and I walked from Liberty's resort across the island (through the village) to Sanctuary, waded through the waves onto a little banca and rode across the channel to the port at Zamboanguita. Then we walked through the marketplace and picked up a van to motor to Dumaguete. We arrived in Dumaguete, the capital of Oriental Negros at around 11 in the morning, walked around for a couple hours and then took a tricycle to the pier. At 2:30 we left Dumaguete on the ferry that brought us to Cebu City, the capital of Cebu, in about five hours. From the pier at Cebu City we fought off mischief makers and cab drivers sans vehicles to discover a real taxi driver. We had him drive us to Mactan island and then investigated a bunch of flea-bag hotels until finally finding an overpriced room without a miasmic cloud of hovering prostitutes. I didn't tell Eve that at one place I got out of the cab to investigate I was informed of the hourly rates. We overnighted on Mactan and the hotel supplied a van to transport us to the airport at 9:45 in the morning, Cebu time, which is twelve hours ahead of EST. At half past noon, Eve and I flew to Manila, under an hour in the air, and then transferred via bus to the Manila international airport, which is a complete dump (as is the domestic). There Eve and I had to separate, and Eve. still ill from her various tropical ailments, was pretty steamed that she was going to have to wait until midnight to fly out of Manila. I left at 6 and arrived in Singapore at about 9:30, had a roti prata at the Indian vegetarian restaurant (on the upper floor of the Singapore airport terminal,) which name is the Indian Vegetarian Restaurant, then boarded my third flight of the day, this one to Frankfurt, I think the Singapore to Frankfurt flight was about twelve hours long, though I'm not positive. Time zones began changing by more than the accustomed six to fifteen minute differences of Oriental Negros. Following a two hour lavoyer in Frankfurt, it was off to JFK airport, an eight and a half hour flight that arrived at 11 AM EST on August 17. I got through customs fairly quickly, only one delay for a "survey:" nothing compared to the lengthy lines through airport security and customs and the like, the worse of which was the Manila International airport, though Eve and I were expeditiously escorted to the fastest lines by a very attentive security guard/line manager—because, I believe, we are white—but we weren't spared the chaos of the irrelevant immigration line (in Manila). But, I'm wandering. At noon I caught the JFK/LaGuardia shuttle bus, an hour ride to where I sit now, waiting for my 4 PM flight to Boston. I'm going to go change my clothes in

the bathroom, and continue this journal of the endless day odyssey later. My father took me to the movie The Longest Day when it first came out, back in the sixties I believe. I think I slept more then than I have since leaving Apo Island.

The longest day waxes. It's 5:23 PM and thunderstorms in Boston have grounded all USAIR flights. My first flight out was cancelled and my 6:00 replacement flight seems doomed. It's just been announced that flights are probably delayed 220 minutes at best. Does that mean my 4 PM flight is delayed 220 minutes or my 4 PM flight has been delayed to 6 then delayed an additional 220 minutes. I am so tired. This trip home is so long I expect to find Lisa home with forty suitors. Is that the number of Penelope's suitors? I can't remember. There are hundreds of guys in suits here, speaking into cell phones about "product" and saying, "What do you think Bob about the such and such deal so and so is offering?"

What am I going to do?

Thursday, August 23, 2007 15 Brewster Road Worcester, MA 01602

Dear Philip,

I'm glad Lisa and I decided to ignore our undeserved exhaustion—from our trips back from Asia, which effects linger—and drive to Katia's reading at Pierre Menard last night. Besides Katia's poetry and fond reminiscences of the thylacine wolf, I was relieved —which relief I discovered later on the drive home, when Lisa explained to me why I should be relieved—to hear your suggestion that I send you the essay in its incomplete form.

It may be somewhat—the word isn't incoherent—vermisht, as its construction is currently in a state not unlike the stage in my composition of *The Garden of Forking Paths*: a number of interconnected fragments without form. My initial impulse was to write imaginary program notes wherein I described in detail the connections between Borges' stories and my music combined with the story of some unfinished business between my mentor, Richard Hoffmann and myself in regard the composer Josef Matthias Hauer. The Hauer business concerned Hoffmann's unfulfilled promise to send me a letter from one of Thomas Mann's sons about his father's *Doctor Faustus*, a promise Hoffmann made to me two years ago when visiting Boston. This letter from Mann's son reminded me of vet another letter, one from Schönberg to

Hauer, which I had read in Hoffmann's office at Oberlin in 1973 or 4; and which I subsequently used as the evidence in a premise I presented in 1975 for program notes at the Oberlin Schönberg centennial concert. This reminiscence, in turn, reminded me of a letter I had composed to John Wronoski about a purloined book I had placed in his care for two decades, a book I stole from a student at Oberlin in 1976.

The essay began to spiral inwards and I took the fragments with me to the Philippines last month, so that I might work on them between dives. I also took Doctor Faustus, and reread it, for the first time since 1973. To my <code>delight</code>, I discovered that I had been misremembering the book for decades, citing it as proof of a contention regarding Schönberg and citing a true recollection—I think—of a letter from Schönberg as a contention about Mann's book. The circular path of my ratiocinations had caught even my professor in its vortex. (Indeed, he had, because of my arrangement of Joseph Hauer's <code>Apocalyptic Sonata</code>, arranged for me to meet with the composer he most detested, John Cage.) I had written parts of <code>The Garden of Forking Paths</code> as a musical commentary on these contentions, and in Malapascua discovered that at least half of the premise was untrue, videlicet: Adrian Leverkuhn was based in part on Josef Matthias Hauer, as proven by internal evidence, which explained Schönberg's alienation from Mann subsequent to the publication of Doctor Faustus. This all seemed marvelously uproarious stuff, until I began reading it to my daughter while she was ill in bed at Liberty's Lodge on the island of Apo in the state of Oriental Negros. From behind a white gauze veil that enveloped her and her sick bed she muttered, "This is of no interest to anyone in the world but John Wronoski. Why don't you just put this in a letter to John and forget the essay."

Here's the excerpt from the original essay, *Imaginary Program Notes to The Garden of Forking Paths,* string quartet in C major, which I was reading her when she offered her assessment:

"Two circumstances showed me the direct solution to the problem. First, the curious legend that Ts'ui Pen had proposed to create an infinite maze, second, a fragment of a letter which I discovered." This passage from *The Garden Of Forking Paths* reminds me of Richard Hoffmann's unfulfilled promise to me to finally allow me to have at least a copy of the letter I saw, in Schoenberg's own hand, in which the famous composer asks the unknown Hauer for permission to collaborate with him. The letter is the proof of Schoenberg's indebtedness to Hauer. Recall that from 1915 to 1923 Schoenberg wrote nothing, caught in a dark silence which only Hauer could illuminate. In the last movement of my string quartet I employ a six tone trope as the germinal

material for the movement and the piece. Later in the movement I expand the Hauer style trope (he would use two six tone tropes to create twelve-tone music) to twelve-tones, as Schoenberg did. My trope, which begins the Babel movement in form of a fugue, is first heard in the cello. alone. It consists of the pitches C, F, D-flat, D, A, and B-flat (footnote #9). I chose a fugue for the commencement of The Library of Babel because of the seemingly mechanical application of pitches and rhythms which its use implies. This seeming, though actually untrue, application of sequential procedures reflects the inhuman sequential procedures that Borges alludes to in the construction of the content of the books in the library. Many otherwise perspicacious music lovers have attributed Bach's genius to his fugues. Actually, any semi-competent composer can write a fugue. It's the easiest form to duplicate and execute; and in the hands of most: hopelessly banal. That Bach's music is so marvelous despite the frequency of fugues, is a testimony to his nonpareil genius. In Douglas Hofstadter's wonderful book Gödel, Escher, and Bach (which uses analyses of the works of two genii: Gödel and Bach, and one clever craftsman: Escher); Hofstadter ceaselessly looks to Bach's applications of fugues and canons as the hallmark of his brilliance. Bach could write a fugue the way a short-order cook can prepare a sandwich. A sandwich doesn't earn a cook a plaque at the CIA. Zwölftonmusik, as it has been practiced by Schönberg and all of his followers, is at its core an extremely uninventive application of fugal and canonical procedures. The first twelvetone piece by Schönberg (the fifth movement waltz from opus 23) uses the twelve-tone row (c#, a, b, g, a-flat, g-flat, b-flat, d, e, e-flat, c, f) canonically without alteration perseveratively until measure 105 when Schönberg finally employs the retrograde form (the row played backwards) twice before ending the piece (at measure 109.) From this inauspicious beginning grew a long-lived monument to writer's block: serial music, the twentieth century's gift to academia. When the great Stravinsky ran out of ideas, immediately following the death of Schönberg, he began the least memorable period of his musical career: his serial compositions. My principal composition teacher, and my mentor, Richard Hoffmann, Schoenberg's amanuensis and last pupil, schooled me thoroughly in the second Viennese school of composition. He was repeatedly irked with my unconventional usage of twelve-tone technique. Twelve-tone technique is so hopelessly conservative, so mired in an odd and irrelevant obsessive compulsive disorder, that any divergence from its idiosyncrasies causes its disciples immense confusion and anxiety. My first twelve-tone piece, Waltz of the Thirteenth Bee, included an extra b-natural in every iteration

of the row. The piece was an homage to Berg, and other twelve-tone composers who have allergies to bee stings. Berg died from a bee sting. In the final measures of my waltz the French hornist plays a B-natural, then flattens it by sticking his fist in the bell of the instrument. Hoffmann was so amused by the final flat bee that he overlooked my abuse of the twelve-tone procedure. It is amazing to contemplate the hordes of serial composers engaged in the trivial pursuit of counting to twelve endlessly, in pursuit of some inconsequential mechanical precision. In my second twelvetone piece, I used a thirteen note row rather than a twelve-tone row. Hoffmann gave up on trying to mold me into a serial composer at that point, and we would spend the rest or our five hour Friday afternoon lessons looking at Beethoven for answers to my composition problems. My choice of a serially inspired fugue in *The Library of Babel* is not a tip of the hat to my serial roots. It is a sardonic commentary on Borges' contemplation of intelligence arising from random mechanical processes. Borges reduces the philosophical conundrum into a short and perfect essay. My interpretation of Borges' masterpiece depends on reducing his essay into musical terms. I picked a six tone trope because it is the Hauer created core to the twelve-tone row, the perfect realization of a mechanistic unraveling of pitches. The fugue is the perfect structure for the mechanistic unraveling of pitches and rhythms. A string quartet is the perfect vehicle for pure music, music unfettered by considerations other than pitch, envelope and rhythm. (The same could be said, perhaps, for piano, but the piano has little control over envelope due to the restriction of its percussive attack of every note.) The first measures I sketched for The Garden Of Forking Paths (after I constructed a twelve-tone row as its foundation) are measures 1 through 12 of *The Library of Babel*. As the movement took form, I altered measures 14 through 16, so the original measures 14 through 16 are never heard. After the initial fugue statement (measures 1-16) the second theme of *The* Library of Babel is introduced, or rather, reintroduced. Its initial appearance is in measure 22 of Pierre Menard, Author of Don Quixote. Measure 18 begins a section of canonical presentations of the fugue trope, though not treatments one often hears. The first treatment, beginning on the anacrusis to measure 19 places the fugue trope in a three voice rhythmic unison supporting the first violin's displaced rhythmic theft of the theme from the Laudatores Temporis Acti movement. The fugal treatment returns in measure 22, but in a nearly unrecognizable fashion, as the distance between subjects is not four measures, as at the beginning, but one beat. The fugue now takes place in one sixteenth the time as its first incarnation. Temporally distorted and abbreviated, I

hope that the fugue's unwinding is heard as anything but typical through measure 45, at which point a more recognizable treatment appears in the form of a retrograde inversion of the fugue subject (footnote #11). However, at measure 49, the standard treatment is abandoned as the cello interrupts with a drawn out retrograde inversion, revealing itself to be a portion of A section of Pierre Menard, Author of Don Quixote which upon further reflection appears to be the C section of Pierre Menard, Author of Don Quixote as well. The absolute sameness of all elements of the quartet shocks the piece itself causing it to leap through a gate at measure 52 into a version of the first movement of Beethoven's c# minor string quartet that though Beethoven didn't write, he did write in a score discovered in the musical Library of Babel. The c# minor excerpt passes through a gate into the Laudatores Temporis Acti movement (ever so briefly) which is in itself a gate back to The Library of Babel at measure 58.

Horrible, yes? Footnotes even! Speaking of the footnotes, when my wife was reading my miserable essay prior to my daughter's animadversion, she suggested that I just send you the *footnotes*. Seeing Eve's point, but loathe to trash the pages of self praise, I restructured the essay into a series of letters, most to John Wronoski, but with other correspondents as well. This reformulation facilitated as well the interweaving of my bifurcating and trifurcating and fourfurcating trains of thought in regard several issues that had arisen during my omphaloskepsis. An intermediate version of my essay consisted of oddly numbered paragraphs that I explained (though not at the beginning, but rather near the physical middle) thus:

[143] Ergo, I have constructed here an essay that is to be read as one takes paths in a garden labyrinth. Each paragraph of this essay will be preceded by a number. This paragraph, in example, is preceded by the number 143. At the conclusion of every paragraph will be a group of numbers contained in brackets. These numbers will indicate choices that you, the reader may make in reading this essay. For example, this paragraph ends with the numbers 144, 187, 213, and 000. You may, after finishing this paragraph, then choose one of those numbered paragraphs as your next paragraph to read. (When a paragraph ends with the number 000, that indicates that the essay

may be considered finished. If there are other numbers as well as 000, then it may be finished, or you might care to continue.) Any path of paragraphs is an equally valid and true commentary in regard my composition of *The Garden of Forking Paths*. [087, 144, 187, 213]

This solution, of which I am immensely proud, but which I have abandoned, allowed me to write contradictory, but true, statements about my string quartet and about my music in general. Thereby I could write an emetic and frighteningly "Echo" like encomium to a Nepomuk yclept Zeph—All my compositions are personal conversations with individuals in the audience. At the most recent performance of my music for which I was in attendance, a Jordan Hall concert in March 2007, a young man, less than ten years of age, was in attendance. His name is Zephaniah, perhaps. He and his family have attended several concerts of my music in the last several years and Zeph especially enjoys my music. I told Zeph after the concert that he is my most important audience member because he comes with no preconceptions, no prejudice. no agenda. If he likes my music, then I have succeeded in my task. There can be no better judge of the meritoriousness of my music than the pure ears of a child—or a sexy—All my compositions are flirtation. I have always written music to impress attractive women. I want women to long for me because my music is so passionate. All women in the world should consider me the greatest man alive. They should consider my wife the most fortunate of all women—or slip in a seemingly unselfconscious Shakespearean glimmer, with a wink—All my compositions are an attempt to make myself immortal, to make future generations wonder at my gift; to make those unbred regret my passing. "Ah," future musicians will think, "I would have been so lucky to know Joseph Steven Summer." This might be a little stupid. Though, seriously, Philip, all my compositions are simply suggestions to younger composers who have more musical skill than I do, in regard structure and style. At heart, I'm really a teacher who has no students. I would be a fantastic composition teacher, maybe the best, because I have a wonderfully sharp critical sense and can help improve the works of potentially great composers who are stymied by their improper ways of organizing their material, their clinging to pleasant sounds, their shortsightedness, I would be a great composer if I had a real musical heart, also if I weren't so lazy. If I weren't so lazy I would finish this essay and send it to you and it would require only the lightest editing. But, you asked for it, as is, so I am complying.

The material is comprised of 1) letters with specific correspondents, some sent to me, some sent by me, some real, some imaginary, some dated, some not; 2) letters with as of yet unspecified correspondents,

all imaginary, some dated, some not; and 3) fragments from the intermediate version which have yet to be placed within an epistolary frame. As you will see, I began constructing a detective story in the shape of *The Approach to Al-Mu'tasim* through which I am revealed to the reader as the composer of *The Garden of Forking Paths*, a perhaps imaginary piece by a perhaps fictional composer; but the story is told in the temporally elusive fashion of Herbert Quain. I think the presentation of letters in the chronological order of their composition is the only satisfactory solution, other than tossing the letters in the air and letting the reader assemble them at his discretion. Tell me whether I should finish some of the stories, or just cease and desist. Sincerely.

Joe Summer
In a message dated 8/23/2007 11:23:13 A.M. Eastern Daylight Time, editor@fulcrumpoetry.com write:
May I show this to Igor too?
PN

From: josephsummer777@aol.com

Sent: Thursday, August 23, 2007 10:15 AM

To: editor@fulcrumpoetry.com

Subject: the imaginary epistolary program note debacle

Of course, Philip, show it to Igor, and to whomever you think has a strong enough stomach for my tripe. Ah, that's richly self-deprecating. Actually, as Igor's a composer, he might actually find some of the essay comprehensible, like an overlong analysis of my adaptation of the perseveratively repeated troika MCV from the Babel story into a perseveratively repeated triad of CEG in the last bars of the quartet. Schoenberg and

Hauer both would have been intrigued by Borges' "MCV" which they would have immediately recognized as 1,105 (which is 5 X 13 X 17.) Besides interpreting the factors or 1,105 as harmonics from which I derived a D major chord (for the Alberti bass), I also used the number to derive the meters (11 and 5) for the coda. These sort of games only a composer would appreciate. When I think about it, really think about, I believe I write for an audience of my peers, fellow toilers in the field of pitches. The quartet has so many anagogical revelations only an Igor could apprehend.

No offense, though. Indeed, without a complete reading of Ficciones, parts one and two, the quartet may not be capable of meaningful communication. Of course, this leads to other difficulties. Besides Ficciones, one should be intimately familiar with the c# minor quartet of Beethoven, and the Dissonant Quartet of Mozart. These should have been heard and enjoyed immensely before listening to my offering. And, true, to listen to the c# minor outside the framework of the other late Beethoven quartets would be not to understand the c# minor properly. It's a slippery slope now. I'm beginning to believe that the only persons who should listen to the Garden of Forking Paths are Borges, Mozart, and Beethoven—and Mozart and Beethoven would still need to read Ficciones; not to mention, I don't think Beethoven would have the slightest interest in my music. Mozart might, especially for the opening twenty bars where I put a spin on the introduction of his Dissonant quartet.

The spin is my response to a problem too many physicists blithely ignore, a disturbing paradox that plagues the status quo view of Quantum Physics. The physicists ignore this vile rub, averring that there is no problem because the math is right, the solutions unavoidable. Borges' presciently addressed the rub in *The Garden of Forking Paths.* "This web of time — the strands of which approach one another, bifurcate..." and embrace "every possibility." One of the inelegant solutions to Quantum Physics' problem of bifurcating paths is the multiple universe solution, in which every time an alternative action is possible, both happen, spawning new alternative universes. Despite my loathing for this approach to serenity, like Borges, I was compelled to address if.

Therefore, putting my misgivings aside, I included, in the form of a classical introduction, an alternative solution to the Pierre Menard movement, inelegant—as the multiple universe solution—but the math is right. So, the Menard movement has two interpretations, the aesthetically pleasing one (beginning after measure 31) and a correct one which I found troublingly unsatisfactory. In every piece I'd written previously, I had been "faced with alternatives," from which I would "choose one at the expense of others." In my own garden of forking paths, I would choose "—simultaneously—all of them."

Taking the Mozart "Dissonant" Quartet introduction and reversing its polarity (spin rather than location), I inverted the pitches and instrumentation to arrive at a consonant preamble. Pierre Menard's act of copying Quixote is represented by a literal reflection on that act. As the Mozart unravels in inversion I begin adding elements of all the upcoming movements so that by the end of this brief introduction the Mozart has been transformed into a summary of all the musical material that is to come. It's a distasteful task to be so transparently clever, but in this multiple universe it happened. There's nothing I can do about it. The luxury of the garden is that unlike the grotesque Quantum Physics multiple universe solution, in the Ts'ui Pen, we can experience the alternative universe as well. "We do not exist in most of them. In some of them you exist and not I, while in others I do and you do not, and in yet others both of us exist. In this one, in which chance has favored me, you have come to my gate."

Interpreting the gate to Stephen Albert's garden as a metaphor for the classic Quantum Physics gate experiments (in which light waves enter and exit alternative gates before arriving at predictable alternative locations in time and space) I placed musical gates throughout all five movements of my Garden of Forking Paths, gates which open conventionally to the subsequent measure, or alternatively (and hypothetically) to other locations within the quartet. One example is the gate at measures 53 through 54 in the third movement that opens to measure 55; but can open as well to measure 307 of the fourth movement. This gate can be entered from either direction, and it is equally plausible to move from measure 306 of the fourth movement through the gate to measure 55 of the third movement. The feature of the gates is only one element of my construction of the quartet, as I explored the idea more fulsomely in an earlier work: *Ten Sonnets; Not White, Nor Black, Nor Red, Nor Green,* for four vocalists and chamber orchestra. In my original essay I included a lengthy footnote in which I described my use of gates in the Ten Sonnets; Not White, Nor Black. Nor Red. Nor Green, but it was so anfractuous and arcane I decided it was best to delete it.

I pondered the Pierre Menard movement for a long time. Though it is the first movement, and I began working on it before any of the others, I finished it last, not unusual for me. In the original essay I began with a simple statement regarding the composition of the quartet, which I think should appear in the essay, if you and Igor deem it publishable. Though I think it was a good way to begin, now—what with the wildly anachronistic meandering of the program notes, I don't know whether it can be included at all. Nevertheless, here is the original beginning:

"'I leave to various future times, but not to all, my garden of forking paths.' I had no sooner read this, than I understood. The Garden of Forking Paths was the chaotic novel itself. The phrase 'to various future times, but not to all' suggested the image of bifurcating in time, not in space." I don't have one procedure when composing, though I most often write first what is last and proceed in a generally backwards direction. That way I know where I am going before I begin the task of filling out the required notes. This is not the way I proceed in life. I began composing **The Garden Of Forking Paths, string quartet in C major** in April of 2007 following the final event that year of my **The Shakespeare Concerts series**. The first movement was the last finished, on June 29 (though I incorrectly dated the last page thereof as June 30, because I tend to lose track of time in my composing oubliette.) I needed to finish before I left for a scuba diving vacation with my family in the Philippines.

I don't know. Maybe the entire article is too convoluted to unravel and publish. If I were you I'd tell me to forget it, and start over, this time without trying to reflect the imaginary novels Borges describes within the program notes. Already, since this morning when I sent you the sketch, I've made so many changes that the morning version is obsolete. So, if you do decide to send Igor my article, please delete the version I sent this morning (titled *Thursday*) and send the newer attached revision which I title *Friday*. Thanks Philip, for wading through this mangrove swamp of jejune self-glorification,

Joe

August 27, 2007

Greetings Tom,

I wrote you a letter last week, which I didn't send. At first I didn't know why—just some feeling that the letter seemed disingenuous—and then I realized it was, in part, just so. I've been ruminating about the Fulcrum Journal article and now every e-mail and letter I compose has an ulterior motive; viz: performing a role in the essay. I thought you might enjoy seeing how I was going to abuse our correspondence, so I'm sending you the letter, unedited, except I'm going to underline the passages that seem written for the Fulcrum rather than you. Here's my letter:

Sunday, August 19, 2007 15 Brewster Road Worcester, MA 01602

Greetings Tom,

I just returned from the Philippines. After dealing with overdue bills, a malfunctioning computer, and sundry irksome responsibilities, I have finally gotten around to reading my mail. You write that you just began your 84th year on July 21, which—I presume—means that you just celebrated your 83rd birthday. (Do the Chinese traditionally figure age as you do, looking at what we consider a one year old as being a child in its second year?) My mother is 76, and is faring well. She was snorkeling on the coast of Malapascua while we dove, then left to visit the island of Tioman in Malaysia (again) by herself for more snorkeling. While together on Malapascua we rented boats several times and with my mother would snorkel on reefs in the ocean. She is stronger in water than on land where she walks with some difficulty at times. While walking back from an "Italian" restaurant in the dark she fell, but suffered only from sand in her eyes. Meanwhile I bruised a rib playing ping pong against the island's resident ping pong champion. I leaped onto the table at one point to rescue a point, but the table was concrete. I was not thinking about that, playing with youthful aggressiveness; and I lost the point. The champ remarked that he had built the table. Why build a concrete table? We played a half dozen games, of which I won once, though if I had

insisted on international rules he wouldn't have won one. His serves were all illegal. My rib healed after we left the island and was only painful when I had to ascend a ladder onto boats after dives. By the way, the diving was fantastic. We watched a thresher shark from less than fifteen yards away for twenty-five minutes. I bought a carved wooden thresher shark, made by a local that I've placed on my composing table. Lisa says it's a "transitional object." I'll stick with "souvenir."

That you last read CIB in galleys forty-nine years ago does not surprise me. I don't listen to my recordings, though I do reread my scores frequently. You write that you "never remember having written" your novels. When I reread old scores, I, too, often find myself forgetful of the process. My wife and I were playing a game that was called "drop the needle" back in conservatory days. "Drop the needle" is a game wherein one person drops the stylus of a record player on an LP and the other person has to guess the piece. Professors would do that for tests, as well. More frequently I would play "Drop the needle" at the piano. It's easier to do and makes the identification more difficult as there are no clues to timbre. I remember playing with my quondam friend, Bill Curry. We would reduce the clues to single notes and chords. I recall his playing a single pitch, the c above middle c, and I guessed correctly Le Sacre du Printemps, inferring from the way he played the c that it was the celebrated opening bassoon pitch. I responded with a single fortissimo e minor chord, with quadruple thirds (e,g,b,g - g,e,g,b) which Bill correctly identified as Stravinsky's Symphony of Psalms. (To play the chord requires large hands, which size Stravinsky and I share.) But, to return to the point: Lisa and I were playing the game, though with more extensive passages and I was guessing everything correctly until she played one passage that eluded my identification. I had her repeat it several times, remarking that I knew the excerpt but was incapable of identifying it. Lisa insisted that I knew it and wouldn't tell me the answer. I was completely stymied and frustrated, especially because I consider my knowledge of music written between Mozart's birth and my own encyclopedic. She informed me that the piece was an aria from an opera. I was still unable to name the piece. Finally she relented and informed me that the aria was "Dearest mistress," from my opera, Hippolytus.

You asked how I compose, whether I "hear it first in your mind's ear or do you use a piano as any kind of composer is always depicted in H'wood movies?" As I wrote to you before leaving for the Philippines, I was asked to write an article for the Fulcrum about my musical aesthetics and my compositional process. Between diving and dining the last two months I have been working on an essay that—in part—answers your queries. Writing about my composing process has proven difficult, and I found myself writing a labyrinthine tale aping the characters in the Borges' stories. After Eve read some of the piece she remarked that I should just write a letter to my friend John Wronoski, as the article seemed to her to be of no interest to anyone but him. I had

to agree with her, so I have begun rewriting the essay as an epistolary short story, a la Bram Stoker; a series of letters to John, Lisa, and Eve. Eve's and Lisa's criticisms of the piece I have reformulated as letters to me. (Lisa did in fact write her criticisms to me in an e-mail.) Maybe I'll use a shortened version of this letter to you, as well. It is less pompous to respond to the question of how I write, than simply to offer it unsolicited; (though the article was solicited by the editor, Philip Nikolayev, of the Fulcrum.)

The first step in my process is deciding on the gag. Each aria or movement has a musical gimmick that I want to exploit. It could be a rhythmic, or a harmonic, or a melodic, or a structural concept. In the case of the movement, An Examination of the Work of Herbert Quain, from the string quartet the concept was structural. Borges' story is about an obscure novelist, Herbert Quain, who has written an unappealing novel: April March, "made up of thirteen chapters. The first reports the ambiguous dialogue of certain strangers on a railway platform. The second narrates the events on the eve of the first act. The third, also retrograde, describes the events of another possible eve to the first day; the fourth still another. Each one of these three eves... is divided into three other eves..." Borges diagrams the novel's structure and an alternative binary structure Quain later proposed as preferable for those who would choose, in the future, to imitate him. I chose to first imitate the original structure of **April March**, as described in *An Examination of the* Work of Herbert Quain, (from Ficciones, the work you read) for my movement of the same name. I layered Quain's structures throughout the movement. On the large scale: the movement doesn't begin at the beginning. It begins with the trio section of the classic scherzo—trio—scherzo tripartite form. When the trio appears later, where it should, it has been altered to reflect the influence of preceding structural irregularities. I continued to utilize the Quain structures at smaller and smaller scales as well, even down to the musically atomistic. For example, the scherzo theme is three measures long, each measure is in three/four and each measure is further subdivided into three triplets. The triply recursive unfolding occurs throughout the movement. A secondary subject is a canonical reduction of Quain in which each duration and rhythm is triply embedded: a dotted half note is followed by its division into three quarters which is further divided into six eighths and finally divided into nine triplet eighths. The musical material which I employ is rather uninteresting, deliberately; but by employing unusual temporal distortions—such as development sections preceding their expositions, and the like—the result should be an aesthetic experience identical to that described by Borges in his corrected examination.

The second step, after the large structure, is to choose points of arrival. These points I think of first as basic ideas such as rhythmic unison or canonic imitation or quiet arrhythmic timbre. The third step is to write the notes, though often some of the previous ideas have worked their way down to the notes so that a

melody may be something that is determined by larger scale decisions. In Quain, the scherzo melody in the first violin I decided would be rhythmically imitative of the larger divisions and the accompaniment in the second violin and viola would be a simpler imitation. I wrote pitches in the first violin after determining the rhythm, pitches which I wasn't particularly attached to and which later I would change. I added the second violin and viola to underpin the melody, then changed the first violin to accommodate, as for instance when I didn't want the first violin to parallel a voicing in the second and viola; this is all elementary voice leading praxis that a composer learns when young. Then I wanted to counter the first violin with a cello commentary. I wrote some rhythms. Certain cello pitches I decided based on harmonic necessity but in between these pitches there is a greater freedom. I wrote notes based on what I thought would impel the listener from one harmonic area to another.

At this point in the process the work is nearly complete. For the fourth step I often use a piano, playing through what I've written and changing pitches when what I initially wrote seemed too predictable or tedious or derivative of some other work I've heard. I also sit with the sketch and listen in my head to the way the piece moves from one structural area to another. If there is something lacking, some feeling of incompletion or confusion, then I'll alter the structure by adding transitional material.

The fifth and last step is the inking. I rewrite the sketch, in ink, and as I do so I will make further changes. This too involves the piano, as I find myself continuing to question passages and will sit at the piano and play repeatedly one section and try to discern why it feels wrong.

When I was younger my mentor, Richard Hoffmann, taught me to disdain composing at the piano. "No improvising," he would counsel; and I have faithfully followed his command ever since. I've written a lot of music without touching the piano. On one of the recordings you have is my setting of *Leda and the Swan*, during which composition I never touched the piano, as an exercise in self-discipline. I do like to play through my music when I'm writing, but this is barely possible as I never studied the piano and play it without any proper technique. I took piano class at Oberlin, as did all students, but this was a perfunctory requirement and I simply did what I needed to do in order to pass the course.

That's my answer to you, but here is how I answered the question in my preliminary version of the essay I was writing for the Fulcrum. I even used a bold heading to initiate the chapter to what I intended to title: Imaginary Program Notes to The Garden of Forking Paths, string Quartet in C major.

THE PROCESS

In describing my process of composition I am caught on the horns of a dilemma. The process is not singularly explicable, not in regard any piece or movement. These imaginary program notes are an illustration of the process I used in *The Garden of Forking Paths*.

The first steps on that path are lost to recollection. Decades ago I sketched some ideas, but they were abandoned. Most of the sketches were frenetic four part fugues. I recall that I was dissatisfied because none of the sketches could approach the brilliance of the final movement of Opus 59, #3; of which Serenus Zeitblom, in Thomas Mann's **Doctor Faustus**, writes — though he is describing the opinions of critics, not himself, as related by Wendell Kretschmar in one of his ill-attended lectures—"Such a feeble effort as the fugue in the third quartet of op. 59 was not calculated to counteract the view that the great man (Beethoven) was a bad contrapuntist." I couldn't bear to write a quartet that didn't end with a fugue that was as thrilling and manly as the third *Rasympoysky*.

Then, after finishing my opera **Hamlet**, in the midst of my long caesura after beginning the fifth opera of my Boccaccio series, I felt the desire to approach the foreboding quartet again.

I began by sketching several versions of a fugue idea, based on descending fourths, which I labeled (on the inchoate sketch pages) the "quartal" theme. From these sundry alternatives I began sketching derivative material. Shortly I had amassed fifteen minutes of related material that had no order, no particular direction, and no container. I thought that there could be assembled from these fragments a dozen quartets, all based on the same theme. (Footnote 14) It was possible to begin with the quartal theme and proceed in one direction or another. The choices were equally valid. "In all fiction, when a man is faced with alternatives he chooses one at the expense of the others. In the almost unfathomable Ts'ui Pên, he chooses – simultaneously – all of them. He thus creates various futures, various times which start others that will in their turn branch out and bifurcate in other times. This is the cause of the contradictions in the novel." (Borges: *Garden of Forking Paths*) Borges story of the bifurcating infinite novel came to my mind, and I began to organize my musical material to reflect his garden of forking paths.

To me, the most astonishing and mesmerizing realization of forking paths is the unparalleled beauty of the basket star. Unlike the typical crinoid, the basket star does not have ten, twenty, or forty arms. Rather, it has an incalculably diminishing bifurcation of arms, exactly like fractal computations. The basket star hides in recesses of the reef during the day, then crawls out at night to unfurl its myriad arms and reap the plankton from the sea. On night dives it is not unusual to encounter a basket star as it unfurls itself from

its tortured ball of arms. Shining a light on it, however, causes it to contract the arms, so it is best viewed with an indirect source of light. My most recent communion with this siren was July 23rd on a night dive at Chocolate Island, near Malapascua, north of Cebu.

Before beginning the composition, though, I had been asked by Philip Nikolayev, at an art opening at the Pierre Menard Art Gallery, to write an article on my "musical aesthetics" for his poetry and philosophy journal, The Fulcrum. At first I demurred, but after beginning the quartet I decided that it might be intriguing to write program notes explaining the literary references in the music to The Garden of Forking Paths. I explained to Philip my idea, and he may have agreed. I'm not sure, as I can't recall exactly how he responded, but I think he said something about my answering some questionnaire he was developing for the journal. Regardless, I decided that when I went on vacation with my family in the Philippines, I would write up the essay on the quartet.

The essay began as did my quartet. I began by writing uncontained analogies and anecdotes about my process. Sometimes the strands of the explanation ran across each other. My writing about my composing had taken the shape of my composing of the quartet. Last night, after a long snorkel at a reef named Sanctuary on the island of Cabilao, off the coast of Bohol in the Visayas, I reviewed in my mind the problem with the construction of this essay and realized that there is no single path of explanation for my compositional process. Some paths aren't even taken until after a composition is complete and I can fabricate an ex-post-facto rationalization.

Tom, you can see from the above how hopeless I was at writing anything about my craft. Nevertheless, I'll send you the essay once it is in some coherent shape, if ever that happens.

Monday, August 27, 2007; addendum

I've entered the domain of those who rehearse their acceptance speeches in their minds. I once had a student who had great potential. Good mind. But never could complete a task. He'd always get 97% of the way through, and then stop. Anyway, we were having a lesson and I was trying to get him to stop writing new material every bar when I noticed a far-away look in his eyes. I stopped hectoring him about his music and said, "What are you doing, thinking about your Pulitzer acceptance speech?" He said that that was indeed what was on his mind. This whole exercise in writing about my own music seems to be turn-

ing into that sort of nugatory excursion. I have rehearsed in my own mind some lines that I'd like to say to interviewers.

"Mr Summer, when will you be satisfied that you are indeed a great composer?"
"When I win the Nobel prize."

That allows me to add the response to the interviewer's retort of "But, Mr Summer, there is no Nobel prize for music." to:

"Which leads you to three reasonable interpretations of my response: first, that I am unaware of that fact; second, that I am being adroitly facetious, implying that I will never be satisfied; or third: that I believe the Nobel committee should decide that due to my singular achievements the lack of a Nobel prize for music should be corrected, beginning with an award to me. I lean to the third."

I hope I can get the quartet and the cello sonata performed this coming concert season. I want you to hear them. Our next scheduled The Shakespeare Concert performance at Jordan Hall is March 17, 2008; where, if the \$50,000.00 I've been promised materializes next week, I'll premiere some big pieces, including my setting of *If Music Be The Food Of Love*. For that, I set the entire first scene of **Twelfth Night**. Also: Hath not a Jew eyes, though the title for that is *I Say My Daughter IS My Flesh and Blood*, and some other Shakespeare texts.

Following up on Eve's setting of your Neighbors, I'm investigating whether a composer who asked me to create a "modern version" of a libretto for King Lear will consider having Eve do it rather than me. She's eager to do it, and said she'd do it from Cordelia's perspective and call the text Cordelia. I'm going to send the composer Eve's treatment of your novel to encourage him to accept her as the librettist. (I've been asked to write a King Lear myself, but I don't want to do it.) I hope we can meet someday, Tom. Your friend,

Joe

From: Richard
To: josephsummer777@aol.com
Sent: Mon, 3 Sep 2007 12:59 pm
Subject: Fulcrum dialogue
Greetings, Joseph!

As I'm sure you know, Philip Nikolayev would very much like us to meet and "dialogue" on the present state and future of sound art, with a view toward crafting our conversation into something worthy of being printed in the "contemporary music" feature of his 2008 edition of Fulcrum. I'll also be writing an Introduction for that feature and am currently inviting the participation of composers from around the world. (See the attached "official invitation" and questionnaire, the latter devised by Philip along with Igor Tkachenko.) About 170 pages will be available for the music feature.

I'm coming east on Thursday, September 6th, with a couple big projects in NYC, but I do plan to be in Boston for a full day or two before my September 18 return to New Mexico, so I hope that we can find a way to intersect. Thereafter, we might continue our discussion via telephone or e-mail.

I've gleaned a bit of your background (such as it's possible) from the Web via Google and, if you're interested, you might wish to read my biographical profile at MySpace Music: www.myspace.com/richard-cameronwolfe. I'm hoping to hear from you by Wednesday evening concerning your availability to meet in mid-September. I look forward to it!

Best regards, Richard

Richard Cameron-Wolfe

From: josephsummer777@aol.com

Sent: Monday, September 03, 2007 12:28 PM

To: Richard Cameron-Wolfe Subject: Re: Fulcrum dialogue

Greetings and Hallucinations,

Actually, Philip neglected to tell me about the Fulcrum Dialogue—this despite the fact that I saw him last week at his wife's poetry reading—but that's of no matter. Philip did ask me, I think, to write an essay for the issue, which I began while I was in the Philippines this summer. The essay is about my recently completed string quartet *The Garden of Forking Paths*. At Katia's reading he asked me to send it to him, incomplete as it was, which I did. So, I'm not sure whether he wants me included in the questionnaire or not, but I would be delighted to bestow all my tediousness upon you when you are in Boston. Let's meet and talk. Give me a call at 508-363-4460 or e-mail me. I'll be glad to meet with you in Boston or Worcester or in-between.

And sorry about the lack of information about me on the internet. The sponsors of The Shakespeare Concerts have been after me to make a web-site so that there can be a central internet site for information, but I am too otiose to obey their wise admonitions. If you want, I can send you some stuff about me. I looked at your website, and it is very useful in gaining an understanding of you.

Yours, Joe Summer

I answered the questionnaire below, though the answers are extemporaneous and may be true only for today.

1) What is the nature of human "musicality"?

I have no idea.

2) What is the relationship between your work and the [classical] musical "tradition"?

I consider myself a follower. My compositions are steeped in German romanticism, Stravinsky, Bartok, Mahler, and Strauss.

3) What is your opinion of the current state of "art music" [contemporary classical, sound art, etc.]? What is its role in contemporary culture? How did it come to be this way?

Art music is currently trapped in a boring morass of politically correct milquetoast offerings, as usual. Like Philip Roth said about the anti-nuclear-proliferation plays of the seventies, I too am moved to root for the nukes. This opinion must be tempered with the mitigating factor of my relative ignorance of contemporary music.

4) What trends do you see in the current musical landscape? Which do you consider "healthy" trends for the art? Which [if any] "unhealthy"?

I spend most of my life either in my basement composing, or in the tropics scuba diving. I can't read the papers or music journals, and I rarely venture out to concerts; lest I become apoplectically enraged. Just today my wife expressed her regret that I had watched the Tan Don't premiere at the Met on TV last night and was now enmired in the horror vacuii. (She was working on her PhD and too focused to notice that I had strayed into the world above.) So, I am not aware enough of the current musical landscape to offer a meaningful opinion.

5) Does it matter to you whether your music can reach a wide audience? Explain.

After garnering prizes and performances through 1983, I decided I needed to absent myself from the world. With my wife's support I composed in isolation from 83 to 2001. During that time I wrote a great deal of music, but attempted no performances. Then, around the new millennium, I suggested to my wife that as no one was listening to my music I could save time by eschewing the writing. Why not simply think the music, I asked her. Lisa said that I needed to write down the music and told me to consider producing my work. So, I stopped ignoring the requests of one of my few supporters, Jeff Hutchins, and with his

assistance began producing some of my smaller works. Now, I am in the sixth year of running a concert series. The Shakespeare Concerts, which produces and records much of my shorter vocal music. It has grown in popularity and in financial support, but earlier today, coincidentally, I had an anti-epiphany and told my wife that I should drop the whole business. The desire to withdraw came from a combination of my having dropped in on the Met broadcast of *The First Emperor* and the recent beaching of a thresher shark in Queens. Our recent trip to the Philippines was motivated in part by my desire to observe thresher sharks. We went to Malapascua, an island in the Visayas off the the Northern tip of Cebu, which is known for the regularity of its visits by thresher sharks. We dove to 23 meters to watch thresher sharks at a cleaning station. One shark wheeled around us for fifteen minutes. The "us" was a group of four or five divers who. led by a local dive guide, went to a cleaning station on Monad shoal at 6 in the morning, where and when it is known that the threshers visit. Later on our trip we dispatched of this dive, and simply explored Monad shoal, where we did encounter threshers in a less scheduled manner. This morning I awoke from a dream in which I was a shark. I was irked by the presence of admirers at the cleaning station, and when I related this to Lisa, I added that I felt like taking a bite out of one of my submerged audience. Lisa reminded me that those of us who extend ourselves to visit the threshers where they live deserve some respect. Anyway, we got into a conversation about me as a thresher, the thresher that died beaching itself in New York, and my audience. I wrote a note to myself. I'm going to paste it here:

The thresher shark that beached itself in New York was trying to get to the Met.

That sums up my feelings today about the wider audience. No doubt tomorrow I'll feel differently. I also discuss at length several contradictory positions about audiences in the program notes I wrote at Philip's request. In my first version of the essay I wrote "All my compositions are written to impress my teachers." That is also true, as I always think, "What would Karel Husa think of this? Or "Will Hoffmann be amused?"

6) What is the relationship between music and language? Address from the philosophical/aesthetic perspective and/or as interrelated in yocal/choral/opera.

I've written the libretti and music to seven or eight operas, so my answer to this query would be too long to write down here. One of my operas, *The Tenor's Suite*, addresses this question.

7) Has your musical work been influenced or inspired by literature [as a catalyst, subtext, programme, directly in musical text-setting, etc.]?

Every note. As for example the recently completed *The Garden of Forking Paths*.

8) Please comment in lay terms on your attitude toward the tonal/atonal divide/connection [including any thoughts on a new definition of tonality].

I was Oberlin's first acoustics and technology major in 1973, which double major (with composition) I dropped before graduating. I learned that physics determines tonality.

9) What is your stance on digital music [in the creative process as well as in terms of production, storage, reproduction, performance, etc.]?

Once Oberlin modernized its computer in 1975, and all that time I had spent writing commands on IBM punch cards seemed to have been time wasted, I left behind all cares about technological issues of that nature (pardon the pun.) I know nothing of current music technology. I write all my scores by hand, using a Platignum calligraphic left hand extra-fine oblique nib on paper I have manufactured to my specifications. I am a loon. By the way, on our way to a second diving spot in the Philippines this summer we traveled through the village of Loon, on the island of Bohol.

10) Has the 21 century begun to show a distinct musical character [or a polarizing of characters]? Where is your own music in relation to your observations?

Again, my eremitic isolation does not allow me to answer this question.

11) What relevance does your music have to the current and/or future state of the world? What responsibility do you feel that you have for or to that state?

I hope that my music may be seen by future operatic composers with greater musical skills than I have, and that they will realize that there are more interesting structural and dramatic solutions to operatic problems than

have been realized. I think I understood a few years ago that if I didn't participate in the world, and produce some of my compositions, then I could never pass on my opinion to better composers. That's why I reluctantly helm the The Shakespeare Concerts and engage in the self-aggrandizement and bomphilogy its running requires.

September 4, 2007

Dear Ken.

... Pursuant to our discussion on the phone about Babbit's crossword puzzle afflatus, the quartet has real crossword aspirations. To better appreciate that aspect of the piece, get a copy of Borges' Ficciones, which contains the **The Garden Of Forking Paths**. I'll send you a copy of the page from **The Book Of Imaginary Beings** so you can understand the **Laudatores Tempori Acti** movement. The **Shakespeare's Memory** story is from another collection, so you might want to read that as well, but to spare you the necessity of purchasing it, I'm going to insert here my explanation for the movement from my original program notes article which I abandoned in favor of the loony epistolary essay.

Shakespeare's Memory

Upon turning 17 years of age (during my first year at Oberlin) my quondam girlfriend, L, gave me her copy of Thomas Mann's **Doctor Faustus**. She was worried, she said, that I would become subservient to my composition, and wanted me to read the book. Much of what is written in this essay is based upon my memory of that book, which I had not opened again in over thirty years. I brought the book to the Phillippines, where, earlier this week, on the island of Cabilao, I have begun again to read. To my surprise, much of what I have believed about the book, Adrian Leverkuhn, Hauer, Schönberg, and Mann turns out to be untrue. I have been telling acquaintances for years that Mann must have known of Hauer through Adorno — and Professor Hoffmann agreed — but now I am not so sure. Perhaps I convinced Hoffmann of this. I have repeatedly stated as proof many examples from the book, but the proofs are erroneous. Chief amongst them: the "fact" that Hauer wrote the *Apocalyptic Sonata*, a pre-Schönberg twelve-tone work, and Mann credits

Leverkuhn with composing a sonata with the same title. My mistake. Leverkuhn's work is titled Vision of the Apocalypse, and isn't a sonata. I've stated repeatedly that Hauer and Leverkuhn both set the same Shakespeare texts to music. No. I've set the same Shakespeare texts as Leverkuhn. not Hauer. Still, I think my comments about Hauer are accurate, though I wonder. I have a copy of the Schönberg centennial program notes, and they do quote Wellesz from the Listener article, but did I ever see a letter from Schönberg to Hauer? I don't know. I think Hoffmann showed it to me, but memory is a liquid, and when disembogued conforms to the present container rather than retaining the shape of the original. I can't even be sure about the Listener article, as I don't have a copy, myself. Borges' short story, Shakespeare's Memory, is the subject of the second movement of my quartet. The movement begins without pause after the *Pierre Menard* movement, as the two stories seem to share several themes. I have avulsed from composer William Byrd his Battle march in honor of the seventeenth earl of Oxford. Edward de Vere, known more for his unequalled literary contributions under his pseudonym William Shakespeare, than his less impressive though authentic—martial endeavors. This music, which I've drastically altered to the point of being barely recognizable, represents one of the bard's memories, as described in the Borges. Shakespeare, I imagine, must have been proud to have a piece of music written in his honor, especially by William Byrd, a court favorite.

Sure, that doesn't make any sense to you yet, outside the rest of the essay, but I'm sending that to you when I finish it. Actually, upon rereading the above, I think you should find a copy of the story. It's about the temporary acquisition of the memories of Shakespeare, and at a deeper level: memory itself.

After you read the stories from **Ficciones** you will find that, as opposed to Babbit, I've actually made an effort to embed accessible literary meaning into my quartet. The fifth movement, The **Library of Babel** has a superfluity of "crossword" problems and solutions. The movement is a theme and variations. Measure 21 is the first variation, 45 the second, 58 the third, 78 the fourth, 104 the fifth, 139 the sixth, 190 the seventh, and 259 is the coda which is also the story "The End." Rather than compose all of Babel myself, I decided to have an alter ego write at least some of it. I created a fictional solution in the theme (measures 1 through 15), part of the fourth variation (beginning at measure 81), and especially the fifth variation, which begins at measure 104; solutions that a fictionalized Josef Matthias Hauer might compose. My Hauer, however, needed to be a much better composer than the real Hauer, so—though I aped his twelve-tone trope technique—I couldn't bring myself to write in such a doltish manner as the model. In effect, I

thought I was composing a la Adrian Leverkuhn, the composer Mann imagined — and that I assumed was based at least in part on Hauer. Only after I had written the last movement did I learn that Leverkuhn has no relation to Hauer, that the relation I had imagined for thirty odd years was simply a figment of my imagination. I don't think this detracts from the result.

I wrote a very long explanation of the Library of Babel movement, originally. But it's rather opaque to comprehension. Listen to this: "The last movement is not just a movement composed by a fictive Hauer/Leverkuhn amalgamation (and an amalgamation with flawed reflection on each original) but it is also a piece found itself in a musical Library of Babel, and it isn't the piece as composed by me in the guise of Hauer/Leverkuhn. It is a close approximation of that piece, an approximation as one might find in a musical Library of Babylon. For many pages, it is the piece, and then, it isn't. Twice it is the fugue from Beethoven's C# minor string quartet, though not exactly. Even the close approximation of The Library of Babel is slightly different from the close approximation I thought I found on the shelf. Like so: In the manner of my incorrectly remembered actual and fictional composers (Hauer and Leverkuhn) I composed a movement titled The Library of Babel. Let's call that Babel One as composed by Joseph Summer. A librarian in the Musical Library of Babel discovers Babel One, but he sees it is infected by non-Babel One music, just as a version of Shakespeare's Love's Labour's Lost, discovered in the Library of Babel might have within it some poetry by Marlowe. To find a LLL in the Library of Babel with just some Marlowe interpolations would be more than any librarian could ever hope for. The librarian in the musical Library of Babylon, noting the insertion of Beethoven's C# minor string quartet in the composition realizes that like the LLL contaminated by Marlowe, this Summer quartet has been contaminated by Beethoven. He labels this as **Babel Two**, reflecting its divergence from the original. However, the librarian has not looked closely enough, or he would have noted that the Beethoven contamination has itself been contaminated. It isn't the music of Joseph Summer contaminated by Beethoven; it's the music of Joseph Summer contaminated by a simulacrum of Beethoven, a Beethoven Two. This movement is removed further from the original, and should be labeled Babel Three. But, realizing that the original itself was contaminated by my faulty memory that linked the creation of Leverkuhn by Mann through Wellesz and Adorno from the real Hauer. the movement is further removed from reality by at least one to three more levels, and should be considered Babel Four or Babel Five or Babel Six. Amusingly, when I conceived it, I thought I was being clever by creating a third level Library of Babel movement, when in fact, due to my own erroneous remembrance, I was at best creating a Library of Babel Four, Five, or Six."

Once you read **The Library of Babel**, even the number of measures in the last movement will accord with Milton's musing. Borges' library would not only contain every word that could be written, but also com-

plete descriptions of every piece of music. It would take, on average, a page of words to describe a measure of music, so I made the Babel movement exactly 410 measures long, the number of pages in every book in the library. You're going to check that, because you always do, and you'll note that there are 386 numbered measures in the full score. However, measures 261 through 274 are repeated — that's an additional 14 measures — and the repeat also entails a first ending of six measures — that's a subtotal of 20 — and measures 207 through 210 are repeated — for a total of 24 measures. 386 plus 24 equals 410.

I await your piano reduction of *If Music Be The Food Of Love*. Having mailed you a package for less than four dollars, I am optimistic that you will be able to accumulate a similar amount shortly. You have to admit that I might find your explanation about the delay somewhat difficult to comprehend.

I was speaking with Jeff Hutchins and I brought up your name. You should know that he harbors no inveteracy, none.

You really can't find some loose change behind the couch pillows? Go Steelers,

Joe

Saturday, September 15, 2007

Greetings and hallucinations, Richard,

When Eve, who thought I was talking to myself when she happened upon us yesterday—remonstrated with me against my initial literary attempt to fulfill Philip's request to write about my musical aesthetics, I was engaged in an autobiographical exploration of my composition of The Garden of Forking Paths. The structure was simple: a movement by movement recitation of anecdotes and analysis. It began with a self-glorifying account of my journey towards the first movement:

Pierre Menard, Author of Don Quixote

Before I was a teenager I developed a predilection for science fiction, in particular the work of H. P. Lovecraft. When I was 16 I composed **Three Scenes For Brass and Percussion**, a piece consisting of musical illustrations of two short stories by Lovecraft, and a "hymn from the Necronomicon;"

the first scene, which though purely invention, was derived from Lovecraft's frequent references to this fictional eldritch encyclopedia. The second scene, "March on the Rue d'Auseil," refers to a story about a musician with technical powers granted him by the devil, or some metaphor for such. The third scene is based on a mad paranoid sojourn in a subterranean kingdom of pyramidal behemoths, located in the South Pacific. Not long after my Lovecraft homage I wrote **The Eleatic Paradoxes**, a seven movement interpretation of the four paradoxes of motion proposed by Zeno of Elea (plus two prior concepts of existence proposed by predecessors of Zeno, and one very ancient vision.) Both **Three Scenes For Brass and Percussion**, and **The Eleatic Paradoxes** were performed first at Oberlin. Where I studied composition with Richard Hoffmann. an Austrian raised in the South Pacific.

At Oberlin I found myself reading Borges ceaselessly and repeatedly. His regard for Lovecraft was reassuring. His essay "Achilles and the Tortoise," though not my favorite — because it fails to appreciate the necessity of the other three paradoxes of motion in contemplating the meaning of any single paradox — reinforced my conceit that Borges and I had much in common.

In Pierre Menard, Author of Don Quixote, Borges enumerates Menard's "visible works," the thirteenth of which is Les problemes d'un probleme, "which takes up in chronological order the various solutions of the famous problem of Achilles and the tortoise." Borges' fictional author, Menard, like Borges himself, fails to comprehend the necessity of reading Achilles and the tortoise (which is the first movement in my **The Eleatic Paradoxes**) within the context of the four paradoxes. Zeno is aware of the arguments against Achilles and the tortoise, and sets them out himself through the presentation of the other three (The bisection, the three chariots, and the arrow.)

Despite my objections to Borges' and his creation Menard's lack of sensitivity to the Eleatic paradoxes, I count *Pierre Menard, Author of Don Quixote* as one of my favorite works of Borges, and one of the most amazing works of literature ever created. On every reading of it I experience an epiphany of agreement when Borges compares the two identical versions of Don Quixote. To present the moment of epiphany for myself itself is too recursive. It begins with the first iteration of "...la verdad, cuya madre es la historia, émula del tiempo..."

It was a bore. I tried again, with the objective of writing something less hagiographical; but I still thought that the structure was valid. I began again with the Pierre Menard movement. In the midst of self-examination I found myself once again reflecting on my days at Oberlin. How odd that we began our talk vesterday with lengthy reminiscences about our mutual alma mater. I forgot to ask you vesterday whether

you had any classes with my favorite professor, Richard Murphy. Here follows an excerpt from the second version of my essay in which I discuss how he influenced my composition of The Garden of Forking Paths. It may be meaningless to anyone who hasn't studied with him, but at least you may find it amusing.

Richard Murphy, a professor of music history at Oberlin while I was a student there, offered a course on the Beethoven string quartets. It wasn't a very popular course. Besides myself and Professor Murphy there were two other students (violinists Peter and Goldie) who would sit together in the fourth or fifth row of otherwise empty seats. Every Friday the New Hungarian Quartet — which was in residence at Oberlin — would visit and play a quartet for the four of us; following which Murphy and I would discuss the performance and on occasion request the New Hungarian to play through some passage a second time. Peter and Goldie were studying privately with one of the New Hungarians and I don't recall them asking any questions. I was a great admirer of Murphy, who would often lapse unselfconsciously into his fluent German (which I could not follow), and yet had the wonderful strength of character to pronounce Wagner (especially in his equally unpeopled course on the opera composer which I also took)—when speaking of him in English—with an initial W, rather than V. To impress the professor I memorized the middle and late Beethoven string quartets and would take out a stamp with an impression of a stave, and during tests, write out a passage from a quartet when appropriate. (Footnote #5)

Despite the immature motivation in memorizing the quartets, the result was that I began to think of every musical problem in my own writing as soluble through an examination of one of the Beethoven quartets. I believe I understand how Pierre Menard could endeavor to write something "merely astonishing" and find himself rewriting word for word, the work of Cervantes. The Menard movement does not contain any note for note reiteration of Beethoven, as I thought that would be the equivalent of posing as Pierre Menard; not composing a piece about Pierre Menard, the Author of Don Quixote. Instead, I chose to illustrate the story by reflecting on Menard's praxis: the act of cogitating on Don Quixote and then disemboguing it unchanged. No arrangement of Richard Strauss (whom Murphy also pronounced without the slightest German accent) or any other less well known Quixote scores. Rather, I wrote a little quixotic subject for the violins and viola, which plays innocently for five measures, then repeats **note for note**, for the next five measures with the addition of Menard, in the person of the cello, guilelessly riding beneath. The movement continues to develop

this idea, the violins and viola presented as the Cervantes text and the cello as Menard. There are two main sections which alternate in the form ABABACA reflecting the ninth, thirty-eighth, and fragmentary twenty second chapters of part one of Don Quixote which Menard recompleted. (footnote #6)

Except for you, who cares? This then is my dilemma. The first excerpt, discussing H P Lovecraft and Zeno might be of interest to the poet Robert Kelly, as he is a devotee of Lovecraft and Borges and likes my music (having even written a poem about my Dance Of The Mechanics;) but I imagine Fulcrum will want the essay to appeal to more than one of its readers; and the second fragment may be of interest to you but of no interest to Kelly; which means that there is still only one reader who would not be turned off. My daughter—I might have mentioned this to you already—suggested that I just write a letter to John Wronoski, and so I did, which stretches the interested audience to two, just nine fewer than the eleven lonely people who attended the Saturday matinee of one of five poorly attended performances of my opera Hippolytus in Philadelphia.

While diving in the Philippines I reread **Dr Faustus**, and I began rewriting the essay to reflect my discovery of my misunderstanding and errant recollection of the work and its relation to the last movement of the quartet. I perceived that my imaginary program notes were a cryptomnesiac plagiarism of Mann's Dr Faustus, which itself seemed to me to be program notes to an imaginary cantata, **The Lamentations of Dr Faustus**, within which were program notes to yet another imaginary cantata, **The Apocalypsis Cum Figuris**, which I had misremembered for thirty years as **The Apocalyptic Sonata**. By the way, I composed an opera in the eighties, **Courting Disaster**, based on a story in **Dr Faustus**. I reread that portion (beginning on page 105 of my Penguin paperback edition) in 1984, without noticing my misidentification of the **Apocalypsis Cum Figuris** by Leverkuhn with **The Apocalyptic Sonata** by Hauer. In the eighties I also wrote a libretto, **The Making Of Dr Faustus** for an opera, which I did not complete, in which the Faust was a composer named **Manteau**, the latter of which was also a character in my 1979 opera **The Tenor's Suite**. I seem to be caught in the web of Mann. Like Leverkuhn, I've also set portions of **Love's Labour's Lost**, including the Dance of The Mechanics which is on one of the cds I presented to you, yesterday.

From Mann's Dr Faustus: "'I have,' Adrian said to me, 'not wanted to write a sonata but a novel.' This tendency to musical prose comes to its height in the string quartet, Leverkuhn's most esoteric work..." See the score to the quartet I gave you yesterday. From Mann's Dr Faustus: "then

a slow movement...in which the viola leads throughout...so that one is reminded of a song-scene" See the third movement, Laudatores temporis Acti, from the quartet.

From Mann's Dr Faustus: "'To hear with eyes belongs to love's fine wit,' he quoted from a Shakespeare sonnet, and asserted that in all time composers had secretly nested in their writing things that were meant more for the reading eye than for the ear." See the plethora of sonnet settings I wrote in my basement, which I never expected to hear. Here, too, I seem to emulate Leverkuhn's predilection for Shakespeare settings, what with my setting of over three score Shakespeare texts.

Beginning sometime in the past, maybe even when I was a boy, I invented a composer. The invented composer is me. I am my own invention. My invention, the composer known as Joseph Summer, invented a superior to regulate Joseph Summer's actions, an invention I call Big Joe. Big Joe is in charge of composition. Joseph Summer is allowed to write pitches and rhythms, but Big Joe is the maestro. In the Garden Of Forking Paths, Big Joe created a secondary composer, an amalgamation of an imagined Josef Hauer (imagined by me) and an imagined Adrian Leverkuhn; imagined by me, not Mann. My recollection of Leverkuhn was completely and absurdly disconnected from Mann's creation, as I realized upon rereading the Mann work those last few weeks in the Philippines while scuba-diving off the islands of Malapascua, Cabilao and Apo. From Mann's Dr Faustus: "...he (Leverkuhn) pretended that in the region of the Bermudas...he had himself gone down into the sea and been shown by his companion the natural phenomena of the depths. He spoke of this companion as an American scholar named Akercocke, in company with whom he was supposed to have set up a new deep sea record."

Did you notice that on my desk, above the photo of the white tip sharks at the "Landing Strip" near the island of Sipadan (which was taken while I was diving there) is a wooden carving of a thresher shark, which is a "transitional object," according to my wife, commemorating my dive to Monad Shoal where I witnessed this "phenomena of the depths?" I should have shown you my score to my Hamlet opera. On the cover is a photo I took of a fish that I regularly seek out when I am diving in the Virgin Islands, where I have lived and call home. The fish on the cover is the barred hamlet.

So, here, attached, is the epistolary essay, in its current incarnation. This epistle to you is included as the antepenultimate entry. What do we do next?

Sunday, September 16, 2007

Dear Mr Duck.

Sorry, John, I was preoccupied with other matters, and in the midst of describing my family's forking paths during our excursion to Malapascua, I realized I had to finish answering a letter to my imaginary friend, Frank Espano, so I interrupted my narrative to you, and commenced to write to Frank.

I also was wondering whether you remembered my vengeance on Guildenstern. Guildenstern's favorite piece of music was Wozzeck. He kept an expensive full score on a lacemaker's candlestand in his room. It sat atop the candlestand on a wooden contraption, not a tripod, as it was bifurcated, not trifurcated; the gizmo I use for my unabridged dictionary. What's that called? (I tried finding it in my collection of dictionaries of pictures, but to no avail. I did discover a picture of a platypus with the definition: "duck mole," which I like.) Anyway, the score was his prize possession. Maybe you recall what I did. I entered his room, and with an exacto knife, cut out the single page in the score where the fool says to Wozzeck: "Fool." That's the fool's single line in the opera. After cutting it out, I put it back in its proper place with a piece of transparent tape. That way, he would have no reason to replace the book, which back in the eighties sold for over a hundred dollars. And forever, his prize score would carry that blemish to remind him of his perfidy. Of course, that day I left him and Rosenkrantz and Greta, I told him of what I had done. No matter what course he took, even replacing the book, he could never escape the recollection of his misdeeds and my revenge. Also, it would stain his feelings about Wozzeck for eternity. Incidentally, we were both in Walter Aschaffenburg's Wozzeck theory class, in which we studied the score for a semester. I had memorized the work and was the only student to receive an A+ in the class. I just want to add that insult to Guildenstern's injury. I don't particularly like the work, by the way.

Here then is the conclusion to my peripatetic traipse through JFK.

Sitting on a stool at the window right next to me was a younger man (younger than me) with a laptop, and I imagined that he was less ignorant of the internet than I. I interrupted his contemplation of his screen and asked him whether he could inform me how to get on the internet. He explained that the bar wherein we were sitting was not a good location, but that I might try another further down the hall, (if I recall correctly he mentioned that the Korean Airlines Lounge had a wireless connectivity site, if that's the proper jargon. Since my wife was flying on Korean Airlines, as she was going to Korea on business following

her six weeks in the Philippines, I decided that that might be the perfect spot to calm myself about the current chaos.) My drink arrived. It was red. not green. I pointed this fact out to the waiter who applogized, and said he'd get me the proper drink. The idea of drinking a red liquid is disquieting. Now that I was stuck for the time being in this airport bar, I decided to impinge upon the time of the person who had just assisted me. I asked him what he did. He replied, "I'm a musician." That's what I always say when someone asks me what I do, as if saving straight off that I'm a composer is too blunt or frightening a response. I pressed him to tell me what kind of musician he was, and he said "I'm a composer." I said that I found that remarkable as I too was a composer, primarily of vocal music, and removed from my computer carrying bag a cd of some of my music entitled Shall I Compare Thee To A Summer's Day; Oxford Songs of Joseph Summer for voices and chamber ensemble. My counterpart removed a cd from his computer carrying bag and handed it to me. He introduced himself as Tarik O'Regan, a British composer on his way home from America. I looked at his cd as he looked at mine. His, titled **Voices**, featured the Choir of Clare College, Cambridge, and a chamber ensemble. Immediately my eye was drawn to the sixth track on Tarik's cd, Bring rest, sweet dreaming child. It was scored for harp, soprano (and choir.) The sixth track on the cd I had just handed him is "If By Your Art," scored for harp and soprano. This meeting by happenstance in a bar at the crossroads of travelers reminded me strongly of several of Borges' fictions, and specifically of the story I had used as a coda to the Babel movement of my quartet, but whose title I was suppressing for my own amusement. The end of Babel is also the story The End from Artifices, an account of a knife fight previously averted, finally consummated, a knife fight that arises from a singing competition between two fierce musicians. I wish I could tell you that after I handed Tarik the single copy of my recently completed *The Garden of Forking* Paths, (which I had made prior to leaving so that I might write these program notes,) O'Regan had "said with weariness, 'Leave off the guitar. Today there's another kind of counterpoint waiting for you,'" and that forthwith we had walked out of the bar onto the plain. "There is an hour of the afternoon when the plain is on the verge of saying something. It never says it, or perhaps it says it infinitely, or perhaps we do not understand it, or we understand it and it is untranslatable as music."

Joe

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Computer engraving of score and parts: Kenneth Mills

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For more information on Joseph Summer and his music, please go to www.shakespeareconcerts.com.

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The Garden of Forking Paths (String Quartet in C Major)

I. Pierre Menard. Author of Don Quixote

II. Shakespeare's Memory [15:09]

III. Laudatores Temporis Acti [11:12]

IV An Examination of the Work of Herbert Quain

V. The Library of Babel [30:02]

Total Time = 56:29

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