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the feel long in the tooth, but the playing is from the heart.

Bruce Springsteen & the E Street Band, *Live in New York City* (Columbia).

This one sizzles from first to last—and one has to wonder why Bruce ever broke up the band.

Molasses Creek, *citybound; Wildheart* (Molasses Creek)

Noah Paley, *Stick and Stones* (Soundside).

Like KWN, vacations or extended business trips inevitably have us scouring the local venues for indigenous music. This summer's vacation took us to Ocracoke Island, NC, The Back Porch restaurant, and the Village Craftsman, an all-around pottery, art, artifact, and local music outlet. Molasses Creek is very good blue grass band that is likely to throw in a Seldom Scene-type curve with the likes of "Gold Dust Woman" or "Blue Bayou." In addition to traditionals and favorites, their version of John Dawson's classic "Glendale Train" (*citybound*) leaves scorch marks.

A local guitarist, "discovered" by Molasses Creek's Gary Mitchell, Paley is the real McCoy, an authentic singer/songwriter whose offerings are alternatively poignant and pointed. Molasses Creek's work can be purchased directly from their web site: www.molassescreek.com or from their label at PO Box 596, Ocracoke, NC 27960. By happy coincidence Paley's label's address is the same. Oddly, Paley's web site, www.noahpaley.com, does not offer his CDs for sale. Both Molasses Creek and Paley can also be purchased from the Village Craftsman at www.villagecraftsman.com.

Pierce Pettis, *State of Grace* (Compass).

Pettis, both as a songwriter and singer, bears remarkable resemblance to Peter Himmelman and Jesse Winchester, although in spirit he's closer to Himmelman's earnestness. *State of Grace* is a lovely collection adorned with some of the New Nashville's finest sidemen and women: Alison Brown, Clive Gregson, Stuart Duncan, Tim O'Brien, Colin Linden, and others. The Reverend Howard Finster (Talking Heads' *Little Creatures*) crafted the cover painting...and "Georgia Moon" "...hanging down like a tear/From God's own eye" speaks volumes of the metaphors that dot Pettis's songwriting.

Jim Wilson, *Cape of Good Hope* (Hillsboro Jazz).

A while back my mother-in-law asked if we had any John Tesh in the collection. My look must have said all as she protested, "But I think he's *wonderful!*" We won't argue Tesh's musical merits here, but be forewarned that *Cape of Good Hope* is deeply earnest New Age piano with meritorious assists from Lee Sklar, Lenny Castro, Steve Lukather, Steve Porcaro and others. The CD is a soundtrack to a PBS special that may or may not have aired by the time you read this.

In the course of writing this column, Chico O'Farrell, Chet Atkins, John Lee Hooker, and Perry Como all passed away. They all caught falling stars, put 'em in their pockets, and never, ever let them go. *Requiescant in pace.*

-KE

It's the music, stupid... (and don't forget the composers!)

Being a history buff, I find it imperative to know as much as I can, not only of historical events, but also of the people involved in these events. Imagine, if you will, studying World War II without studying the individuals who were the leaders (losers and winners) of this historical event. Imagine, if you will, listening to the music of Mozart without knowing something about the man and his times. How does one go about learning more about Mozart, (and other composers) his life and his times, sans the myths that have accompanied the story of this great composer's life?

Well, one can read or listen (e.g., liner notes, articles in the popular press, discussion forums on classical music, etc.) as I have and pick up bits and pieces over many years, assembling the bits and pieces into a coherent and factual picture of a particular composer. Unfortunately the various bits and pieces are often contradictory. e.g., Mozart died of syphilis. No, he died by being poisoned. No, he died in an insane asylum. How did he die?

Popular sources of information, such as a play (*Amadeus*) and a movie of the same name based on the play, are dubious sources of factual information about Mozart and his times. It doesn't take an investigative reporter to know that *Amadeus*, the movie of Mozart's life, is a fictionalized account based loosely (!) on fact, and also on myths masquerading as facts, myths propagated as facts for more than 200 years. Facts go the way of the dodo bird when the movie industry decides to fill a knowledge void (and fill their own pockets) by producing and releasing a film of about the life of a famous person. So how does one go about learning more about Mozart (and other composers) and not have to be concerned with separating the wheat facts from the chaff myths?

A great start in the learning category lies in a marvelous course on tape (audio or video) made available by The Teaching Company (TTC), located in Springfield, Virginia (www.teachingco.com/1-800-832-2412). The course is titled, "Great Masters: Haydn, Mozart, Tchaikovsky, & Stravinsky—Their Lives and Music." The course is taught (lecture) by Robert Greenberg, an individual with imposing academic credentials and encyclopedic knowledge of music,

music history, and the lives and times of the composers.

It has been my experience that imposing academic credentials and encyclopedic knowledge of a subject do not necessarily translate into a good teacher! I'm happy to report that Professor Greenberg, who earned a Ph.D. in music composition from the University of California at Berkeley and is a regular music contributor to National Public Radio's "All Things Considered" doesn't fall into this category. Oh, he occasionally makes one reach for the dictionary (e.g., "Hegelian apotheosis") but I'll take that any day over a lecture using words better reserved for *Dick and Jane Visit Mozart at the Seashore*.

I became aware of TTC and their product via ads in various magazines. Being the curious type I ordered a video course, "Einstein's Relativity and the Quantum Revolution: Modern Physics for the Non-Scientist." No, it doesn't make one an expert but it answers many questions, via lectures by Professor Richard Wolfson, (a Ph.D. in physics whose writings have appeared in *Scientific American*) about relativity and quantum physics. These two subjects have been used (!) by some of the subjective clan to justify exotic and expensive cables, golden ears, and to prove (!) the fallacy of double-blind testing! Nowhere in his 24 lectures in this course does Professor Wolfson make the quantum leap of showing how Einstein's Relativity and Quantum Physics (Heisenberg's Uncertainty Principle) prove the fallacy of double-blind testing. Maybe he forgot, huh? Maybe it's not true, huh?

I noticed in one of the TTC flyers the availability of a new course dealing with the music, lives, and times of the above mentioned four composers. To wit: Mozart, Tchaikovsky, Haydn, and Stravinsky. I sent an e-mail to Tom Rollins, President of TTC, requesting the course to do a review and also to add to my knowledge of these four composers. Without any stipulations or qualifiers from Tom Rollins I received a copy of the course (audio).

The course consists of four tapes per composer, two lectures per tape, 45 minutes per lecture, which translates to six hours of lectures on each composer. There's more information packed into these eight lectures on each composer than one can digest in one pass. Included with each lecture on a particular composer is a course guide, which highlights in outline form the material covered in each lecture.

My first thought upon receiving the course in the audio format was to request the video version. I was wrong. This course really doesn't need the visuals that the Quantum/Relativity course required. It's ideally suited for taking along in your car for listening and learning. Most of the courses (not all) are offered in the audio or video format. Where a course is offered in both formats TTC gives a pro and con appraisal of both formats.

Professor Greenberg's lectures are informative, interesting, lively, and are interwoven with humor in places you might least expect it. Humor, added to this

dude's encyclopedic knowledge, makes for a listening experience that causes "time to fly." What is especially interesting for me is how Professor Greenberg associates a particular piece of music with a particular time in the composer's life. Included in this association are examples of the music (excerpts) and Professor Greenberg's insightful and, when appropriate, humorous commentary. Waxing humorous, I quote professor Greenberg, speaking of Mozart's opera, *Così fan tutte*: "...Mozart created *così fan tutte* in 1789. The role of Fiordiligi was created for Andriana Ferraresi...who was reputed to be ugly and arrogant. Mozart despised her and wrote her a difficult aria, full of monstrous vocal leaps, *Come scoglio*. Mozart was banking on Ferraresi's tendency to lower her chin on the low notes and throw back her head on the high notes, making her head bob back and forth like a chicken." And getting serious: "*Così fan tutte* met with almost no interest in Vienna when it was premiered in on January 26, 1790."

Continuing in a humorous and factual vein, and in language which requires no dictionary, Professor Greenberg comments on Mozart's *Symphony in G Minor*, K. 183, *Movement 1*: "Beethoven liked this opening theme so much he stole it and used it as his opening theme in his *Piano Sonata in F Minor*, Op. 2, No. 1" And when Professor Greenberg juxtaposes these two themes, via recorded excerpts, the word "stolen" is proof that he doesn't shy away from calling a spade a spade when appropriate!

I might also mention that Professor Greenberg doesn't confine the stealing of themes to composers of yesteryear. When the good professor juxtaposes recorded passages from the main theme of the movie *The Right Stuff* and Tchaikovsky's *Violin Concerto*, the word "stolen" is quite appropriate! The music for the movie (The story of America's seven original astronauts) was "written" by Bill Conti who won an academy award for his effort. Interestingly, I checked the Internet Movie Data Base web site. (www.us.imdb.com) Non-Original music for the score was credited to Debussy, Handel, and Holst; not even a mention of Tchaikovsky. So Conti is given credit and wins an Academy Award for the "Original Score" which contains music by Tchaikovsky; music which should have been listed under "Non-Original" music! Interesting.

Professor Greenberg gets much of his material on Mozart from personal letters written by Mozart to friends and family and personal letters from friends and family written to Mozart. Need I say that even in today's world a personal letter is a most intimate and revealing form of correspondence, especially a letter written to a friend or relative. Think about how personal the letters you wrote to your future wife, if you doubt me. I have ordered two of the books Professor Greenberg references in the Mozart Bibliography, one book containing the mentioned letters and another book separating the Mozart myths

from the Mozart facts.

Perhaps the most telling of Professor's comments on Mozart are: "Most of today's Mozart scholarship is about debunking myths. First and foremost, no one who knew Mozart wrote contemporary and responsible accounts of him during his lifetime or immediately after his lifetime. Most accounts of Mozart were written decades after his death. With very few exceptions, these often inaccurate, self-serving, and sometimes even fabricated accounts of Mozart's life and personality became the backbone of Mozart scholarship well into the twentieth century." As Professor Greenberg points out, Mozart was not the idiot-savant as portrayed in recent theater and cinema.

I don't have the time or space to cover four hours of lectures on Mozart plus four hours of lectures (each) on Stravinsky, Haydn, and Tchaikovsky. But take my word for it, you'll find these lectures full of facts that are interesting, fascinating, and myth-debunking.

True or false: Mozart's middle name was Amadeus? False. His full name was Johannes Christian Wolfgang Gottlieb Mozart. Lecture one on Mozart corrects this myth and explains how the "Amadeus" came into being.

True or false: Tchaikovsky died of cholera? False. He died of self-induced arsenic poisoning. To quote the good professor: "In late August 1893, Tchaikovsky completed his *Sixth Symphony*, which reveals a composer at the height of his power. Two months later he lay dying. His homosexual affair with a young nobleman had been discovered and it was in danger of becoming a public scandal. A group of former classmates of the School of Jurisprudence decided that Tchaikovsky was jeopardizing the reputation of their alma mater. They forced him to commit suicide. The public was told that he had died of cholera, a not uncommon disease at the time." Whew!

Actually, Tchaikovsky wasn't "forced" to commit suicide. "Forced" implies having physical action being taken to accomplish a desired result. Tchaikovsky agreed to commit suicide and in return his former classmates agreed to saving his reputation by concocting a story about his dying of cholera. To quote Professor Greenberg, "The true facts of his death were hidden from the world for a century by Russians who were unwilling to disclose that he had been forced to commit suicide because of his homosexuality." How sad.

There's so much in these lectures, so much more. As I said, there's just not enough time and space. I hope that TTC and Professor Greenberg will collaborate on doing additional lectures on other composers. If I had my druthers I would have rather seen Professor Greenberg eliminate Stravinsky or Tchaikovsky from this set of lecturers and include Beethoven. Mozart, Beethoven, and Haydn were contemporaries; Haydn was Beethoven's teacher... for a while! All three composers interacted with each other, both personally and professionally. This could have been a four-part

lecture series, three lectures, one for each composer, and then a lecture on the interplay of these three personalities, and how their music was affected by this interplay.

And lest you think that I'm in blind obedience to Professor Greenberg's opinions I'll dissuade you of that very quickly. In the course notes on Stravinsky he mentions: "Igor Stravinsky composed what is arguably one of the two most important pieces of twentieth-century music: *The Rite of Spring*. (The other work is Arnold Schönberg's *Pierrot Lunaire*.)" Very few will argue about *The Rite of Spring*. Not so for *Pierrot Lunaire*. To be great a piece of music, no matter what its impact on the music world's intelligentsia-can't lay claim to great if it doesn't eventually make its way down to the hoi polloi of the music world. Works of Mozart, Haydn, Stravinsky, and Tchaikovsky meet this criterion. Works by Schönberg haven't. But...I want to fair and open-minded. I will be ordering a CD containing Schönberg's *Pierrot Lunaire*. I'm not expecting to be taken to new levels of musical bliss, but I'll listen with an open mind.

The bottom line is that I am extremely satisfied with TTC, and in particular, Professor Greenberg's lectures. To wit: I will be ordering Professor Greenberg's "The Symphonies of Beethoven," a 32-lecture course on the composer, his times, and his music. A customer can't pay a higher compliment than ordering additional merchandise!

One last comment. I ordered a course (mathematics) that was well done but a tad too elementary for my purposes. I returned the course and without any haggling TTC honored its No-Risk Money-Back Guarantee. This prompt refund included the shipping charges. When a company does this I say what have you got to lose by trying their product? Absolutely nothing. And my experience is that you'll gain additional knowledge, always something to strive for whether you're 8 or 80, or anything in between.

-JMC

Scoping Software

Advanced-sound audio: good, almost good, and not quite good.

Hey, DVD-A is here, and I hope it will be here to stay, even if some rough, recording-technique edges still need to be smoothed. In my last batch of DVD-A reviews, I noted that although the DVD-A and Doby Digital (DD) tracks appeared to sound very similar or even identical with all but one of the releases, I could not do a definitive A/B comparison between the technologies, because I only had one copy of each of the discs. However, this time I had some duplicates copies, and so I had a chance to not only fairly quickly compare the DVD-A and DD tracks, but also could compare either of those tracks to the DTS track.

I should also note that all but one of the surround-