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BANGLEY

HERRING AND JAZZAIR

Most of us have been around long enough to remember that an evening at the movies included more than some previews and the feature film. There were also a cartoon and something called a "selected short subject." Tonight, I begin with a short subject.

For all these Thursdays now, as I have listened to your papers, you have been standing in front of two very interesting pictures called "Foress National Sports." There are actually four of these "Racing Plates." The other two are in the back of the room.

1. Saddling
2. The Run In
3. A False Start
4. Returning to Weigh

The almost invisible fine print at the bottom of each reads: "Engraved by J. Harris and W. Summers. London. Published May 13th 1856 by Messers Fores at their Sporting and Fine Print Repository and Frame Manufactory. 41 Picadilly, Corner of Sackville Str. Painted by J. F. Herring, Sen.

These comprise the entire group of hand-colored engravings under the title, "Racing Plates," but they are a subset of ten pictures in the National Sports series, each measuring 41 ¼ by 20 ¾. The other six titles are: *The Start for the Derby*, *Steeplechase Cracks*, *The Meet*, *The Find*, *The Run*, and *The Kill*. The artist, John Frederick Herring, Sr., produced many other horse paintings and over 500 plates, a popular and lucrative sideline, that hang in many a country home, trainer's lodge, inn and tack room all over England and America. These works continue to turn up on the auction block and bring dizzying bids in our time.

Because these two have been over your shoulders so many evenings, I have naturally noticed more things in them than in the ones at the back of the room. All four have at least two things in common: there are ten horses, and the rider I have named "The Dalmatian" is at the center of each. He is not to be confused with "Red Sleeves."

I have checked. All these riders are mounted on the same horse in each painting.

While in no way distracting me from your interesting presentations, some curiosities about these pictures have caught my attention.

- Jockeys, owners, trainers and Clerk of the Course turn out to be real people among real horses, each one clearly identifiable, with their names recorded for the curious in a key published separately. This gentleman was a prominent owner. Notice that while their legs are in parallel motion, the horse's leg is far more graceful.

In Herring's time there was a tremendous upsurge of interest in the breeding and improvement of animal stock. The royal and the rich paid handsomely for paintings of their prized creatures. Sporting Art was a highly competitive struggle. Herring had none of the advantages of heredity, money, education, or useful connections in society. What he had was a talent bordering on genius, extraordinary perseverance, and acute observation combined with incredible long-term memory. He rose to the top, painting horses for George IV, Queen Victoria, and Prince Albert.

- None of the painters of Herring's day had mastered the gallop. Most of them painted the hind legs anchored to the ground in what is called the "rocking-horse" position. Herring popularized the gallop with all four legs extended. Later, Edward Muybridge published some famous photographs which proved there was always one foot touching the ground, except briefly in the "collected position" under the horse. Even if a horse were ever suspended in air with four legs extended, it would seem exceptional to me that there would ever be a moment when *all ten* galloping horses would have their feet cleanly off the ground!
- Varying Sun angles.
- A master of heath and copse and sunlit clouds. Notice the tremendous feeling for distance in these landscapes. This hedgerow, upon closer examination, turns out to be a crowd of spectators, wonderfully subdued in contrast to the shining horses. Has anyone else noticed this recumbent face?

And now, the feature. Three years ago I presented a paper on orchestral emulation. I was writing a large musical drama based on the parable of the Prodigal Son. The inspired and inspiring text was written by our guest, Dean Foster, the unofficial poet laureate of Rockbridge County. I am pleased to announce tonight that this music is now in rehearsal. Carl Harris and the Jefferson Singers will perform it here in Lynchburg on Sunday, April 18, and in Lexington on Sunday, April 25.

If you missed my presentation, I was demonstrating some extraordinarily complex, high-tech equipment for making music that sounds convincingly like a full symphony orchestra. This is the gear that produced the accompaniment the live singers will use in April.

Because it is challenging to operate, and one must be self-taught, a site naturally evolved on the Internet to allow users to exchange ideas. Over the years I have found three other musicians (outside of Hollywood pros) who are attempting to do something similar to my interest of emulating classical orchestras: Ben Kalland, an IBM salesman in Helsinki, Finland; Tolga Tem, a young professor at Bilkent University in Ankara, Turkey; and Ilir Bajri, a professional musician in Pristina, Kosovo. All three have been guests in my home.

Ilir came into my life two years ago. His messages stood out from the run-of-the-mill. While others were engaging in useless chatter and complaints against manufacturers, Ilir wrote intelligent, helpful messages. He wrote under the name, "Jazzair." I read his comments with great interest. He told us how to make string sections more realistic and which samples he preferred. When he answered someone's question about the acoustical qualities of an Andean flute, I could stand it no longer. I sent him private email which said something to the effect that anyone who knew that much about the overtones of a South American folk instrument probably knew other things as well. He responded:

"Hi, Bernard. I'm writing you at altitude of 1250m. The place is called Mountain Sharr and it is beautiful. My parents have a house here and me and my wife came here together with them.

"I was thinking to send you, if you agree of course, my music from an [art] exhibition. What sequencing software do you use?"

"There is a jazz pianist from the USA coming next week in Prishtine and I'm in charge of organizing the concert, and already I have major problems. The Serbian authorities are trying to sabotage it by not giving us access to any appropriate place for the performance. On the other hand, Albanian authorities are sleeping as usual and not very interested in this. (and they don't like to see me very much also. [adding electronic laughter] he, he!) [***start music**] Carolyn Graye is her name and she is teaching at Washington University, Seattle. I'm very excited that I'm going to meet her. The concert is organized with the help of American Information center USIS and the POST-PESSIMISTS, an Albanian musical group. [**Handouts.**]

"Please say hello to Anna. By the way, Merita likes the name Anna very much and if we are going to have a baby-girl it is most likely that we will name her Anna. Bye for now."

His exhibition music arrived by email. [**Play music.**]

I responded thoroughly and honestly. Among other things, I told him, "This is not music for gentle landscapes. The paintings are certainly abstract, containing both anger and grief. As I listen I can imagine rats gnawing on art in a dirty gutter."

Anna said, "You're not going to tell him that!"

"Yes, of course that is what I should report."

He responded to my comments: "Thank you, thank you! I really do appreciate it. My father has a lot to say against my noisy music (but I think he is proud of me). I'm always interested in hearing other's opinion about my music.

"Now, I would like to ask you for a permission to quote you in the catalog. I really would like to do that, please?"

"What can I say, this is the best ever said about my music. I'm honored. Thank you very much.

“No more words left. Ilir.” (My commentary, translated into Albanian, is in your handout.)

I sent him a picture of me taken in my study. His reply:

“What a library! Many books! I like to see books. My father is addicted to reading and has a very big library. I grew up in the room where my father kept his books—I was lucky—I grew up reading.

“I am offered to write music for a movie. I read the script and I like it. It offers a lot of inspiration and places for music. It’s about an Albanian man who was forced to leave the homeland and escape to America—the movie has scenes in our mountains and New York City—perhaps a great opportunity for me to try my experiments on mixing Albanian folk music and jazz music.

“Other than this, I’m thinking a lot about our students’ protesting that starts from tomorrow and very concerned about what can happen. This part of the world has a very bloody history. I will write a separate letter about this because I don’t want to spoil this one. Maybe I will take too much of your time, but I feel a need to tell someone what is happening here these days.”

Then, on October 1, 1997, it started. “I just got back from the streets. I witnessed a severe police brutality. I saw people beaten by the police for no reason at all, the protests were peaceful and non-violent. People were just standing in the walksides [sic], no noise, no words—nothing—they just stand there silently to protest. It is enough. Eight years without schools, without university. It is enough. This is Europe, 1997, the age of Internet and new technology, and 2.5 million Albanians are [de]prived of their right to go to school and university.

“The town is full of police forces fully armed. It looks like a war zone. More than 1,000 people were killed since 1981, thousands were wounded, and every third Albanian has spent some time in jail. I fear the worst, but then freedom is never given. It’s always taken. We wait for the world to react! Any feedback is appreciated. A prayer will do too. Ilir.”

I assured him of my prayers.

“Thank you for your prayers. After a very violent day students decided to cancel the protests for a few days. Yesterday afternoon many people were injured badly. Police squadrons went through the town entering the pubs and stores, beating people without any reason. In the late hours last night I could hear the noise of army tanks.

“From all this mess me and Merita forgot that October 1st is our wedding anniversary [sic]. So we dressed up and went out to celebrate. We had a hard time finding an open place. All the pubs and restaurants were closed—more like a ghost town. We found a very good fish restaurant open, and it was full of foreign journalists and ambassadors. We had a pretty nice evening.”

Attempting to explain the economic situation in Kosovo, he wrote: “Merita and I live very well. I manage to earn for us a quite comfortable living, good food, clothes, Internet and stuff, but we live in a, now, quite poor country where standard incomes are no more than \$100 per month. Of course, I earn much more, but for western standards, well. . .

“What I want to say is that I have no savings, and in a way we live thinking about today and we are kind of used to it, unfortunately. For many years banks and monetary system is not functioning at all and many people lost their money—all of it. I never dared to save my money in a bank. What I did was investing in computers and other equipment we need. Me and Merita have our own computers and therefore we never fight who is going to sit first to it.

“Me and Merita considered many times to leave the country and go somewhere else a few years to try to make a new living, but this last eight years it is almost impossible to travel without very complicated procedure of getting visa. I certainly do not want to go somewhere and ask for asylum as I know many do. It is humiliating for me to do that. I’m perfectly capable of earning my living anywhere in the world as I’m able to do here.”

His next message was bubbling with excitement. “We saw Virginia on NBC. Yes, we do have one American TV channel. We saw Shenandoah Valley and some cavern, I forgot the name but it was something like Luray Caverns. Virginia is really beautiful. It looks like we live in countries which are quite similar. Kosovo and Virginia seem to have same climate conditions and perhaps same altitude. A great part of the program was about historical events that happened there and the main accent was the civil war and the battles that have been fought on Shenandoah Valley. Interesting. I never knew that there is south and north Virginia. Anyway, I know now that you live in a beautiful country.

“I do a lot of working these days, mainly commercial stuff. I have to save some more money for the newcomer—our baby, and Merita is putting me on a lot of house working. She plans to redecorate our flat. Paint the walls, doors, windows and the floor. I’m a little bit lazy if working is other than music.

“You know, of course, Mother Theresa passed away recently, but I guess you didn’t know that she was Albanian. We have a great respect for her, one of the greatest Albanians who ever lived.”

[start music] If you think scoring music for movies is glamorous work, think again. When he saw the final cut of the film he didn’t like it. He thought the script was much better. The director asked him for a lot of music and was confusing about what he wanted. He needed Ilir to deliver finished recorded music in four or five days. He told me he thinks he only slept five hours during those five days. [3 cuts. *Dbl reeds, women, piano, reeds*]

At the turning of the new year to 1998, Ilir and Merita moved out of Pristina. It was becoming too dangerous there. They went to his parents’ hometown of Peje. He said it had a good hospital and it would make Merita feel better to be there. Of his unborn child he wrote: “He is going to be a VERY big baby.”

And then, on January 26, the most dramatic message I have ever received.

“Hello Bernard. I’m writing you this letter in the last moments before our baby is born. Merita has birth-pains more often each time. It is 2:00 in the morning. Maybe the baby is already here when you read this.

“I’m afraid this is the only good thing that I can write about. The situation in Kosovo is worse day by day, and the dogs of war are here. Finally, it happened what was to happen. Albanians in many parts of Kosovo decided to not stand any more police violence. A few days ago a police squadron was forced to leave their weapons and vehicles when their random firing at Albanian houses was answered with furious and well organized operation of *Army for Liberation of Kosovo* [which we now know as the KLA]—a radical organization which is controlling some parts of Kosovo. People respect them and many are joining them. Their existence is not very clear. Some say they don’t exist. The Serbian government is gathering strong police and army forces around Kosovo and many believe we’re going to see tanks very soon in our streets. Most of them fear the worst: ethnic cleansing, killings.

“Funny, but I’m not afraid. I still don’t believe that Serbia will attack, but even if that happens, I’m sure they will loose. It’s been enough. We lost all that we could loose—our schools, our jobs, our TV and radio, our pride and dignity, and many gave their lives too. It’s time to take those back. . .to take what belongs to us. Two days ago I went to Prishtine with a friend and we passed the usual police check point that we feared very much these last years. I saw many people beaten and mistreated there. It was completely destroyed. The windows were broken, the doors too. It was empty. I cannot describe the feeling of satisfaction in the beginning, and sadness afterwards, when realizing that it was destruction anyway. But seeing it abandoned and looking miserable, and remembering it to be a very dangerous place, made us feel quite satisfied.”

A long line was drawn across the message, then this:

“I’m very happy to tell you that our baby is born. Merita and the baby are in good condition now, however Merita had a very difficult delivery. They baby was too big (4.1 kg, 59 cm [1lb = .373 kg=12-13 lbs?]) and for more than three hours she couldn’t deliver the baby, a period of time when she had to stand a great deal of pain. After that time and constantly trying to make it happen naturally, the doctors came to me and explained that the operation is the only and best way for both of them. It was quite a hard time for me also. They were asking for my permission. I agreed, and then I saw Merita—I will never forget that sight—she was walking to the operation room, her hands holding her stomach and her face dark from pains, and she saw me, and I saw her lips move silently calling my name. I was very afraid.”

Here I must interject some facts he did not include in his letter. The hospital had no medical supplies. The doctors told him to go out into the night and get some antibiotics, blood plasma, and gauze bandages. They would begin the Caesarian section as soon as he returned with the supplies. It was about 5 a.m. He told me later that Albanians are notoriously late-sleepers. No shops in Peje would open before 9 a.m. He had to find a druggist’s home, wake him, and persuade him to go to his store and sell him the things he needed. The cost was about \$400. Fortunately, he was able to pay.

“I saw Merita tonight, she is very well now. One of the first things she asked me was, believe it or not, ‘Have you send Email to Bernard?’ And yes, you and Anna were one of the first that I wanted to tell the happy news. Somehow, I know it will make you happy also. Now I understand your words about what it means to have a baby. ‘Hope and brightness.’ That’s what I see now. Ilir.”

I received no messages from Jazzair for about six weeks. Anna and I began to grow concerned for his safety. I sent little notes: “Yo! Ilir?” “You OK?”

In March, “Yes, thank you, I’m OK, so is Merita and little Lisian (that’s my boy’s name). They are both fine although I haven’t seen them for more than a week. They are at my parents’ house and I’m in Prishtine, working and earning money for baby-pampers. I feel much safer with them there because the situation is very bad these days.

“Police are everywhere, very dangerous, with no limitations on their authorisations. They beat and even kill and they don’t have to answer to anyone. My traveling from my hometown to Prishtine was very hard, four times I was dragged out of the bus, legitimised, searched and offended and once even threatened. A policeman actually said, “We will kill you all!” Things look very bad from here. God help us!

“Sorry if I’ve disturbed you, but you and a few internet friends are my only connection to the world and reason. I’m not staying in my flat. Last night a Serbian neighbor paraded in the corridors with a gun on his belt.

“I can hardly get on the net, so if we loose contact that means I’m not able anymore to connect. Don’t worry, during these past ten years I’ve gathered experience with Serbs and Serbian police so I know how to take care of myself. My only worry is my family. I contact them every day by phone, but I’m still unable to go there. The roads are blocked and many say that those caught travelling are arrested and some are executed.

“Our only hope is United States, UN and NATO. We are unable to protect ourselves. We wait for the world to react.”

A few days later: “I made it to come to my hometown Peje where Merita and Lisian are together with my family. I came here two days ago and the travelling was very difficult. The bus was stopped three times by police. Fully armed and very brutal policemen harassed all the passengers. Every time we were asked for IDs and asked foolish questions, searched and offended. A policeman that was questioning me had his machine gun constantly pointed to my face and his finger on the trigger. A very bad experience. A one hour journey lasted more than three hours. Funny, but I wasn’t afraid. Everyone on the bus was calm, and I must say, brave.

“The situation is very tense. Many villagers are hiding on the nearby hills and still surrounded by strong Serb paramilitary forces. Every new day brings reports of victims. A twelve year old boy, the only survivor of a family in Jashari, explains how was his family executed. The police entered their house and after killing all the males on the spot they ordered the rest, women and children to run. When they started running after a few meters police shot on their backs. Everyone was killed except this boy who was fortunately only wounded on both hands.

“We are both very concerned about Lisian’s future, and we surely hope that his will be much, much brighter and happy.”

Jazzair had known from the beginning that music was only a hobby for me, that I do not earn my living with it. Soon after Easter I sent him a photograph of Anna standing with me outside Quaker. I was in my pulpit collar and robe. He seemed astounded. “Are you a priest?” This prompted a little talk about religion.

“Today all Albanians were called to go to their local churches and show respect to victims of the past days. I just came back from the Catholic church in Peje. Thousands were there. It was great to see my people united.

“My nation is known for its great religious tolerance. There are Albanian Muslims, Catholics, and Orthodox and they all live and respect each other. Few days ago police fired at a Catholic church and accused “Albanian Islam Fundamentalists” for doing that. Nobody believed them. Today police and Serb officials saw thousands of Albanians of Muslim belief attending the Sunday Mass in a Catholic church. They were mad—or as you say in the states—“pissed off” he, he. (Sorry I couldn’t helped it.) You could see that on their faces. In recent years there are also Albanian Protestants. I know only of one church of that kind and it’s in Prishtine.

“Lisian is Great. Looking at his cute face makes me forget all this mess, at least for a moment. Merita is feeding him non-stop. he is already a very big baby. I never told you that I’m quite tall—more than 2 meters. It looks like Lisian is going to be the same way.”

I figured Ilir and his family could use a little cheering up. I decided to mail them a playful package containing a CD of some American cello music they would likely never hear, and a loaf of Merita bread. I requested his snailmail address and took the package to Fort Hill Station. The clerk searched his computer, scratched his head, and said he could not find anywhere to send it. I took it over to the main post office on Odd Fellows Road. They had

the same problem, but this time the clerk had an idea. Let's send it by way of Russia. Maybe they will know what to do with it." I told Ilir about the problem.

"Well, I guess I could have been more careful and maybe add a few lines on my address, but I am also confused on how exactly is not this country called after the breaking of Yugoslavia. I saw that people use FYR, which stands for Former Yugoslavian Republic, or even FRY for Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. Maybe writing just Serbia is enough, as it is quite popular nowadays. Or maybe it was a bad day in your post office.

"Anyway, I don't mind that people and institutions don't know where Yugoslavia is. In fact, it doesn't exist. What exists now are ruins of a bad communistic dream, poor small countries with poor economy and criminals as heads of states and poor people that don't even have a proper address, he, he, he.

"I'm sorry for your trouble. But I sincerely had quite a laugh with postmans's idea to send it to Russia. It is so far away from here. Maybe Italy or Austria or even Greece as our neighboring countries would have been a more elegant solution. He, he, he. But anyway, I'm glad that he didn't know where Yugoslavia is. The idea that I may be living on an unexisting country is very amusing. He, he, he. Like a fairytale. Heh.

"I hope it makes you laugh also, because I can't stop. And I hope the package will arrive safely as I'm anxious to hear that CD. I will certainly let you know if and when it arrives."

I told him there is a song in a Broadway musical that goes: "We'll fly away to Never-Never Land." Within minutes he replied, "Hah, I like this title very much. I'm glad I made you laugh. I'm still laughing and so are my friends. I told them your post office adventures and they too, though it may sound strange, were glad that US post office doesn't really know about Yugoslavia. Glad, perhaps, because the Serbian media claims everyday that present Yugoslavia is recognized and respected in the world. It is an important country, etc. They certainly sound comical, and especially now after this. he, he, he."

His mood quickly turned somber the next week. "Hundreds of Albanians went last night on the streets of the center of town, walking and meeting other people and trying to have a good, normal evening. I also, with my friends, went out for a few drinks at one of the many Albanian pubs. The streets were full of people—young, old, children and whole families.

"There was a group of policemen in civilian clothes, drunk, with hand guns on their belt, national flags on top of their cars and singing nationalistic songs and threatening people. Shouting, "This is Serbia! Albanians out! Death to Albanians! You will never have your schools back!"

"This group of policemen is well known in this town. They are famous for their wildness and their crimes. Some are actually criminals released from prison and employed by the Serbians as policemen. Obviously, they were trying to scare people off from the center. Amazingly everybody was ignoring them as if they were not there. That made them very mad so they started shooting in the air with their handguns and again threatened people. No reaction. People just continued walking and ignored them completely.

"After half an hour they entered their cars and started driving through center with great speed and drove their cars towards people who were walking there. Again, people just stepped out of their way a few times and kept walking. Luckily, no one was injured."

By the end of spring last year, his outlook began to darken. "It is insane. Nobody can explain the things that are happening in the Balkans. Neither can I. I fear that war is almost inevitable. Foreign diplomacies are suggesting an autonomy for us while almost all Albanians are for independence. Living under Serbian regime is unbearable. The gun has been pointed to me and my people so often that in a strange, sick way I'm getting used to it. It is sad. However, I keep following your advice and think about music. I'm even writing some." *[Play music]*

Then nothing. Absolute silence for weeks. A message sent to seven recipients by his brother, Gazmend, terrified me when I began to read it. "Dear friends. Just to inform you that Ilir is unable to receive or send any email, because of lack of phone lines in Peje. Situation in Peje is reported pretty bad. There is no electricity, water, and there is a big lack of food and medicine. The only way out of Peje is through Montenegro, but also not safe one."

By mid summer I finally saw the familiar name on my computer screen again. "Jazzair!" He was alive and kicking. "My brother told me that he had contacted you and my other friends regarding what's happening here. He is a good boy and I'm very proud of him. I hope he will soon decide what he is about to study and work. I see in him a sadness, unhappiness and a feeling of insecurity. His generation was very unfortunately to feel on their skin the terrorizing of the Serbian regime.

“Lisian keeps smiling. Everybody loves him and he likes everybody. There isn’t a single face that he will not smile to. We take him for a walk almost every day. It is quite scary because the police are everywhere. We had to talk to a lot of people, to calm them down. Many are panicking and thinking about leaving. That’s not good. That is what the Serbs want us to do.

“Merita is very sad today. Her grandfather died this morning. He was a very good, wise man. They were very attached and Merita is having a hard time. She wants to go see him for the last time, but his family lives in another town which is quite far from here, especially now since you have to travel through crisis zone in which fights are happening. I think I have convinced her not to go, and I will certainly not let her go.”

At this point, his messages turned into a kind of foxhole journalism, sent to every person he knew in the outside world. It was literally like taking a peek out the window, writing about it on his computer, and waiting for the phone lines to come alive long enough to send the email. “As I write this, three small trucks full of Serb special forces stopped near the place I’m now. They are fully armed and many of them wear masks and some have painted faces. They call themselves “Frankies.” They are pointing their guns at people on the sidewalks and shouting something, can’t hear what.”

Then, a welcomed personal note: “Hello Bernard. I laughed my heart out when a postman came and brought the package. It was full of post office signs and papers from Russia and other states. He, he, he. Thank you again. Merita bread still looks amazingly fresh. Maybe I’ll try a piece.

“Maybe you already know this. The US and NATO gave ultimatum to Milosevic until Monday to withdraw his forces and immediately start negotiations, if not then the force will be used. It happened faster and tougher than I could ever expect. Indeed, the world is changing and especially the US is driving other states in that direction.

“One thing I’ve learned very well—the value of things. How important is the sun and the rain, the children playing on the street, a good lemonade, health, love and naturally, Lisian. A warm hello to Anna from a place that will very soon see and feel freedom.”

You and I know how that turned out. Here is how he saw it. “I’m very sad to tell you that nothing is going for the better around here. Conflicts are far from stopping. Young Albanians are getting more and more radical. Every day some one is getting killed. My brother is very depressed. He recognized among the killed his friend from high school. He told me they were in the same classroom. The fighting is very near our home now. We are concerned about Lisian and his future. Detonations, explosions and machine gun noises are an everyday event. We are almost getting used to it. Some projectiles landed on the town. One of them landed on my roof, believe it or not. Terrible noise, but a very little damage is done.”

Wednesday, July 22, 1998: “Hello Bernard. Today was the hardest day of my life. I’m very depressed. I feel helpless, worthless, small. Killings continue and there is not a single sign that it will stop.

“I was thinking about Lisian and Merita the whole day today and even now cannot sleep. I’m afraid. Afraid of not being able to protect them if the worst happens. This frightens me very much. During these last ten years I was often threatened, policeman pointed a gun on my face. I took part in demonstrations where people were killed, tortured, beaten, searched, offended—but never was I afraid.

“I don’t know what to do.

“Never had this feeling before. I always thought that I can stop the evil, that I can make things change for the better, make people realize that bad is bad, make people believe in good, but these are animals that do not have mercy even on children. Something is very wrong with this world.

“I’ll try to sleep. Maybe tomorrow things will look brighter. I can’t wait for the day when I, Merita, Lisian, my parents, you, all of us, will turn back and look at these days as an unpleasant memory, a nightmare that is almost forgotten.”

I sent him the best pastoral message I could put together—assuring him that he was God’s child and of great value. The next morning he thanked me for my “kind and encouraging words. I’m feeling much better now. I slept through it.

“Other bad news. Our mountain house has been burnt to the ground. Serbs robbed it and afterwards they have burn it. I will miss those peaceful moments on the mountain. I may have disturbed you too much these days. I apologize for that.”

Iilir explained to me that the Serbian militia is poorly paid. They are given a “hunting license” to steal anything they can from the Albanians which they keep as their wages.

Toward the end of November, I received the most wonderful news from Iilir. “I received an official invitation from the Stanley Foundation to visit the United States starting 3 December. This has all been organized by Vanessa Redgrave. We often talk on the phone. I’m invited to attend the conference entitled *Stand Together for Human Rights*, a Midwest Celebration of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in Chicago and a similar event at the United Nations in New York City organized by UNICEF and Ms. Redgrave. Furthermore, Ms. Redgrave wants me to perform on piano on her program in NY. Hmmm, she is much more confident on me than I. I have to decide what I shall play. I hope I’ll make the right decision.

“Anyway, I’m hoping that I’ll be able to come and visit you and Anna for a few days. I’m excited.”

And he did. He spent five days in our home. Iilir Bajri put a human face on a distant struggle we may never fully understand. Recent news offers alternating hope and despair. The peace plan seems to satisfy neither side. Refusing to settle will turn out to be even more painful. The Serbs speak with bravado but do not want a NATO delivered bombing that may lead to the independence of Kosovo. The Albanians would not want to be abandoned to the brutal control of the Serbs. International ground troops seem to be a necessity whatever way things go.

It is also clear that there will be no solution without the involvement of President Milosevic, war criminal or not. We cannot expect united opposition groups to overthrow this hated dictator any more than that is likely to happen in Iraq. Iilir made a wonderful comparison of the two leaders. “Saddam is crazy and stupid. Milosevic is crazy, but he is not stupid.” Two years ago 200,000 Serbs turned out daily to demonstrate against Milosevic. Many of them supported a democratically-minded leader, Dreskovic. Milosevic, finding leverage in the Dayton Accord on Bosnia, outmaneuvered his antagonist. Today that former opponent is Deputy Prime Minister in Milosevic’s government.

Only three days of negotiations remain. An international force of 5,000 troops is ready for instant deployment. While he has repeatedly said he will not accept a foreign peacekeeping force, Milosevic will probably accept the introduction of NATO troops, saying that they are there to protect the Serbian minority in Kosovo against what he calls the “terrorism” of the KLA. He may agree to some version of the NATO formula for a cease-fire, a three year period of expanded autonomy for Kosovo, and ultimately, some ambiguous state, as yet to be defined—leaving it unclear whether Kosovo is to be a part of the Yugoslav Federation, or a province of Serbia.

The weakness of this present dealing is that it is like the Bosnia Deal, like the many agreements with Saddam Hussein, it gets us only what Neville Chamberlain once called, “Peace for our time,” without changing the cast of characters or the dynamics that lead to the conflict. And for the United States, already involved militarily in Bosnia and Macedonia, another open-ended commitment will be expected. It will be a commitment of air power and possibly of ground troops. And if you don’t hear much talk about an “exit strategy,” it’s because there’s little likelihood that Bosnia and Kosovo will be able to sustain their own peace for many years to come. The United States will probably do what it can to de-Americanize the conflict and make it as much as possible a European problem. But in the end, the United States will be there, trying to stem the bloodshed.

Meantime, Russia is asking for billions to defuse their nuclear Y2K tinderbox, and North Korea is seeking \$300 million dollars as the price of admission to their underground plutonium facility. If we pay them enough, they might even be persuaded not to build those long-range missiles.

Iilir, you are not alone in your confusion.

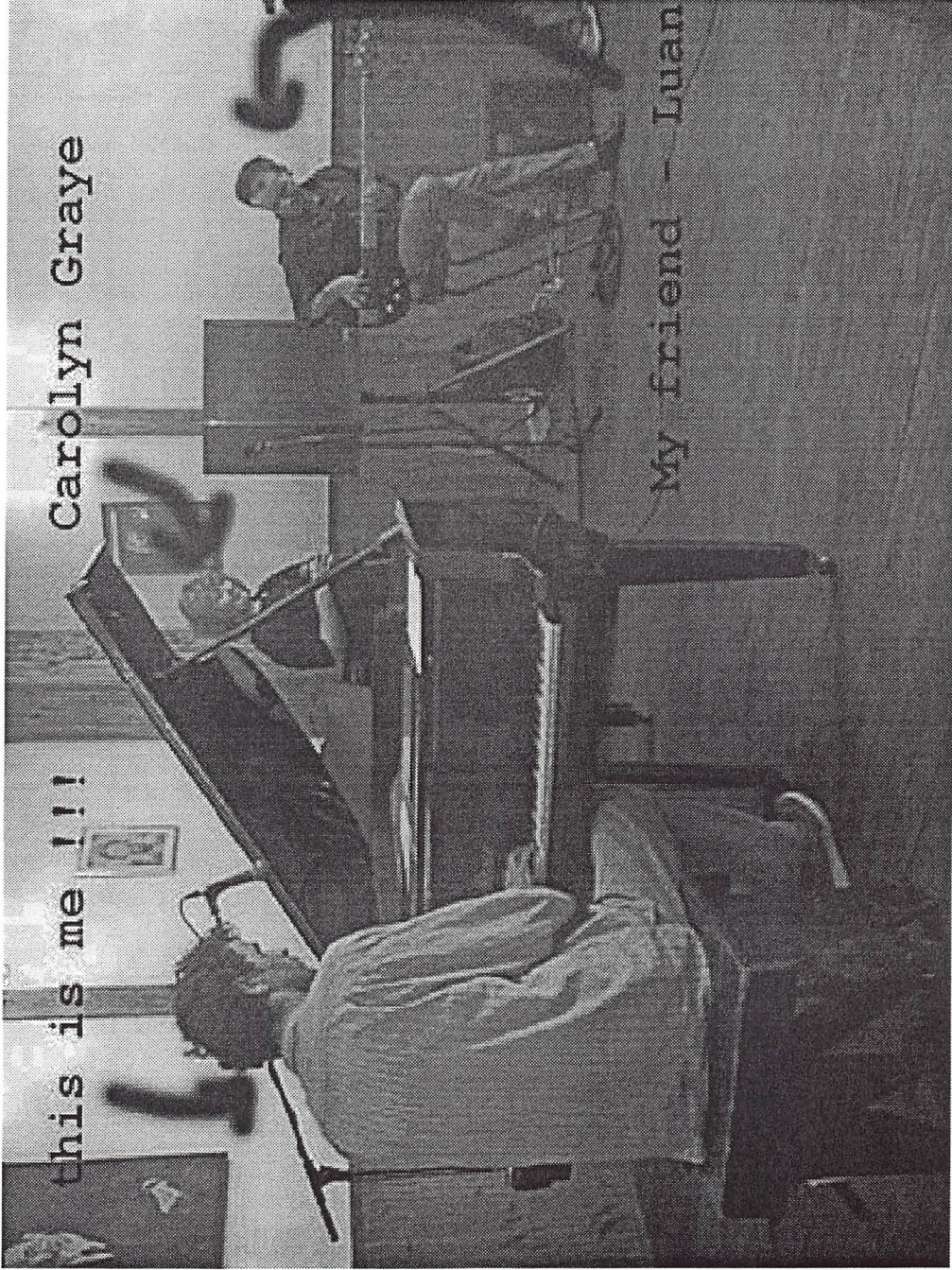
Bernard Bangley
SPHEX Club 2/18/99



this is me !!!

Carolyn Graye

My friend - Luan





B E R N A R D
B A N G L E Y



MBI VEPRËN E ILIR BAJRIT TË KOMPONUAR POSAÇËRISHT PËR EKSPOZITËN "PËRTEJ"

MM □ REVISTË MIKSTE TEORIKE DHE LETRARE □ MCMXCVII □ 6-7

KOMPOZITOR, VIRGINIA, USA

...Lira që lozte Orfeu që makinë. Orkestri është fabrikë për prodhimin e zërit. Pianoja është shpikje tmerruese e levave dhe telave. Pajisja elektronike, thjesht, është një mjet për prodhimin e materialeve të reja që shkathtësisht mund të kombinohen.

Zhurma ka qenë ankimi më i qëndrueshëm gjatë historisë së muzikës.

Berlioz dhe Wagneri, të dytë qenë të ndëshkuar nga bashkëkohanikët e tyre për zhurmë. Po kështu që edhe Mozart, dhe Hajdri para tij. Bile edhe Lully dhe Handeli qenë të quajtur zhurmëkotë.

Ja, pra, shtrohet pyetja: Mos dështon kjo "zhurmë" në këto forma të kuptueshme dhe a kanë farë domethënieje? Me "Përtej", një a dy dëgjime nuk mjaftojnë. Kam shpresë se ajo luhet vazhdimisht gjatë ekspozitës. Është ngjashëm sikur të dëgjuarit e një gjuhe të huaj.

Së pari, sall barbarbarbar (këtë që e thoshin Barbarët), pastaj befás shndërrohet në domethënie dhe në melodi pasi që ishte zhurmë e padëshirueshme me muaj apo me vite. "Sacré du Printemps" e pat shpënë auditorin e saj të parë në dalldi. Sot e dëgjojmë atë nga kasetat siç e ngasim kaiken teposhtë lumit.

Prandaj, lermë t'i jap përgjigje vetes në pyetjet e mia...

1. Kaos. Përtypje e qëndrueshme, gërryerje kafshësh, e njerëzores së çudëruar, e kritikëve, idiotëve, dhe të budallenjve. Por, më pastaj dy tema, nëse të pikëlluara, premtuese,—njëra thjesht e mposhtur, tjetra ngjitëse nëpër një modalitet ndjekës, e në fund e tërhequr poshtë nga graviteti i tokës. Përsëritja e trefishtë e këtyre temave i ujdís ato në kujtesë. Më duket se ato bëjnë gara ndërmjet të ligës e të mirës, dritës

e territ, ngritjes e rënies. Fundi (guxoj ta quaj kodë?) është madhështor!

2. Menjëherë ma ke tërhequr vëmendjen. Më pëlqen vepra marimba. Zgjedhje e përkryer e instrumentit. Tema e tretë tashmë është e paraqitur. Zërat e shtrembëruar i japin një tërësi me pjesën e parë. Ça programime të shkëlqyeshme për K2000 në këto instrumente. Në fund shohim një gjirizesh derisa përtypin artin që ka rënë në ulluk.

3. Këtu është një njësi në përsëritje idesh tashmë të vendosura dhe në kthimin e analogur të pastër. Por çfarë të qëlluarash të stuhishme bëni me el perc! "Reminiscenca" i sjell prapë tashmë temat e mëparshme, të paharrueshme. Njësi. Të tri pjesët e bëjnë një tërësi. Edhe një përfundim madhështor. T'jua fillojmë të gjithave së ishmi.

