

FRIDAY MORNING (SOMEWHERE, MAYBE IN ALASKA): RHAPSODIC

Friday, you old dog, you. You came back once again, a little worse for wear but alive and kicking. Let's see what kind of jazzy treat we can cook up for you.

Ah, let's have some Third Stream (not to be confused with neoliberalists' Third Way). Music in this not-quite-jazz subgenre walks the line between classical music's formality and jazz's improvisational nature. This isn't chamber jazz – jazz performed on chamber instruments, discussed in a previous Friday Jazz post. Third Stream is composed work heavily influenced by jazz, played by an orchestra.

In the example shared today, George Gershwin's Rhapsody in Blue, this is a composition without improv, but with strong jazz and pre-jazz elements. You can hear the pre-jazz particularly well in the piano; by pre-jazz I mean ragtime, using rapid, "ragged" hand movements (note this sound as early as 1:35 in the music video). The example here is a performance of the original composition using a 24-piece jazz band. Do open the video and play at YouTube's site in order to expand and read the notes accompanying this piece. Compare this version to a performance based on the later arrangement of the same piece for a full orchestra (ex: Leonard Bernstein and New York Philharmonic, compare ragtime-like keyboarding at 2:09).

And then poke around and enjoy some other Gershwin. It's a nice way to start the weekend.

All about the (free) speech

Good gravy. This week has been a mess when it comes to free speech and the media. Hard to pick a starting point, there's so much content. Let's begin with the circus-like story and a bit of a tick-tock for n00bs unfamiliar with it.

- December 2007 – Gawker’s Valleywag outed technology venture capitalist Peter Thiel. Thiel is a co-founder of PayPal and Palantir, and a major investor in Facebook with a seat on its board of directors.
- October 2012 – Gawker published part of a sex tape showing Hulk Hogan engaged in sex with radio personality Bubba the Love Sponge’s wife about six years earlier. (Christ, I couldn’t make this shit up if I tried.)
- November 2015 – Hogan sued Gawker for defamation, loss of privacy, emotional pain.
- March 2016 – Court found for Hogan, awarding him \$115 million.
- May 24, 2016 – Hogan’s lawsuit financier revealed – it’s Peter Thiel.
- May 25, 2016 – Gawker tried to get award reduced; the media outlet has already been forced to sell a sizable portion of itself to fund the award to Hogan.
- Today – Denton published an open letter to Thiel with a mess of questions, some focused on the legitimacy of Gawker media. It’s a fair

question when Facebook is under fire for its presentation of news content to its users.

- Speaking of Facebook, the now-open warfare between Thiel and Denton casts a different light on the stories Gawker property Gizmodo published about Facebook. You'll recall the furor raised among conservatives after Gizmodo relied on a single conservative contract-employee as a source for its claim that Facebook filters out conservative media.
- Media outlets are very concerned about the future, especially if Trump is elected to the presidency (see also CNBC's opinion's mentioning a chilling effect, suggesting investormnt media very concerned). Billionaires shopping for cases to wipe out small-to-medium-sized media outlets could become more common where laws prevent the use of strategic lawsuits against public participation (SLAPP). Trump has admitted to using litigation to harass or punish media.

Bottom line: Reporting on someone's sexuality and outing them merely because they're a hypocrite isn't adequate reason to do so. Some rich people are going to be asses as they have been through history; media should report when wealth's actions affect the public's interests. But using one's billions to burn down the entire Fourth Estate isn't merely revenge against careless journalism. Attacks intended to weaken a media outlet are attacks on the First Amendment in general; this only exacerbates inequality, and it's fundamentally unAmerican.

And now speech having nothing to do with the above...

- Exxon shuts out The Guardian, denying access to annual meeting (The Guardian) – Well, here's another method the rich use to squelch free speech. Exxon's meeting included shareholder proposals related to climate change, but The Guardian was deemed too biased to cover this meeting. The board shot down climate change-related measures; at least these decisions were cut-and-dried enough for other media outlets permitted access by Exxon. Will shareholders move to replace enough directors to force Exxon's business model to plan for climate change? Or should the public demand legislation requiring fossil

fuel companies receiving any federal subsidies “publish an annual assessment of long term portfolio impacts of public climate change policies”?

- South Africa, Russia and China blocked The Committee to Protect Journalists’ consultative access to U.N. this week (Reuters) – This ‘press freedom watchdog group’ will not be allowed to participate in U.N. events. Can’t imagine why these countries would do such a thing, can you?
- Vietnamese government shuts off Facebook access during Obama’s visit (Reuters) – No organizing embarrassing protests for you, citizens. (Gee, Mr. Thiel, what do you think of this development?)
- So-called investigative journalist screws himself over because sloppy and stupid (The New Yorker) – Read this bit by Jane Mayer on James O’Keefe and how he pants’d himself while trying to ratfuck Open Society Foundation. How anybody trusts this guy with a sharpened pencil is beyond me. What a maroon.

Long Reads

Hey. You could use a couple for your road trip to your summer weekend hide-out destination. Try these:

- The Bank Robber (The New Yorker) – Great piece on an unreliable character, Herve Falciani, who ‘liberated’ client data from HSBC while working in IT at its Swiss facility. Wonder who’s buying the film rights?
- Welcome to Disturbia (Curbed) – Interesting look back at the origins of our suburbs and how they were then perceived as toxic. A look at bowling alone, long before Bowling Alone.

That’s a wrap on this week. See you Monday!