

ACCORDIO CLARIFICATIONS E-BOOK

Dr. William Schimmel



This is my formal resignation from The American Accordionists' Association. In June 2021 Dr. Joseph Ciccone and I spoke prior to the meeting. I explained some options to discuss regarding the Seminars and my position. We agreed that if they did not pan out I would resign from the Board. In addition I extended an invitation for participation and collaboration with the AAA members for my future events. Dr. Ciccone was in total agreement and even said that he would put my events on the AAA website.

In return for my efforts, the Board meeting was a vindictive and personal character assassination, facilitated by Don Gerundo. Unending verbal abuse by Eddie Monteiro as the board sat back. Kevin Friedrich was the only member who attempted to rescue my dignity. Eddie has been" busting my chops" for more than a year, talking over anything I had to say.

You brought up legal issues and used ad nauseam the term"transparent" like a cliché. Consult an Arts Lawyer - many work pro bono. Get professional advice. Prior to this meeting, the agenda I received outlined the topics to be addressed. The Seminars were not on the top of the list (They were 6th On the list) and neither was the vituperative execution of my role and my character:

Instead large print letters opened the meeting giving me 2 options. Whoever did this, side swiped me and wanted to throw me under the bus! It ruled out any further civilized discussion for a mutually beneficial and creative solution. This is classic Bullying. Don Gerundo used the moment to attack me, insinuating that I thought my contribution was more important than others.. REMEMBER at the end of the meeting I quoted from my own essay "Learning From Lawrence Welk" delivered in 1981 at the University of Kansas City—"Let us each go on doing his or her own work with the notion that it is important!" EVERYONE'S contribution is special. What Gerundo said was absurd and as Kevin pointed out, unethical.

I am thick skinned, or else I would not have flourished in the New York cultural scene for 70 plus years, but this —this broke all boundaries and accomplished nothing. It was crass - and it lacked "class". Act this way in the professional New York music scene and see what happens.

Eddie Monteiro called me in one instance "a narcissistic A-H" and "Schimmel is for Schimmel". So why devote 3/4 of a meeting to me? You're all stars, you have arrived. I am just a hard working stiff always proud to be the third banana and The Seminars specifically states that "The Accordion is the Star". I will continue to work for the advancement of the Accordion through other avenues. The Seminars will continue under my watch with other sponsors.

YOU CANNOT erase the good work that I directly and indirectly have been a part of for almost 70 years involvement with the AAA. Neither from my memory (since there are those of you who think so little of me) nor from the larger community.

I must refresh your memory - by also including my association with wonderful people who have also advanced the reputation and accomplishments of the accordion.

Studying with Dr. Jacob C. Neupauer and graduating from the Neupauer Conservatory.

Receiving my BM, MS and DMA degrees from the Juilliard School in Composition, working with Elliot Carter, Roger Sessions, Hugo Weisgall, Vincent Persichetti and Luciano Berio

Teaching at Juilliard

Becoming the Dean of Neupauer Conservatory

Included in the Lincoln Center archives

A #1 Hit recordings with my band The Tango Project, creating the famous Tango Scene in Scent of a Woman (Al Pacino) and numerous other films. A #1 Hit recording "The Theater of The Accordion" with Wynton Marsalis.

Judging along side Charles Magnante, Carmen Carrozza and other greats

Doing a workshop with Paul Creston and performing the first reading of his Fantasy.

Studying with Mr. Creston

Knowing Elsie Bennett - a Giant

Working with Linda Reed to promote The Seminars - A Giant

Appointed Artist in Residence under Faithe Deffner of The AAA

Receiving four commissions - "The Spring Street Ritual" chosen as the Test Piece for the 1979 Coupe Mondiale

Facilitating Will Holshouser's commission who for your information is my student and protege, And the First AAA commission to be performed on a world tour.

Presenting most of the AAA commissioned works at my Seminars

Assigning the topics for The Seminars to the various artists and musicians and looking forward to their efforts. Dr Robert. Mc Mahan has been a part of the Seminars for 27 years and has contributed much with his lectures and performances.

4 Awards including one from the CIA

Producing in New York City The Air New Zealand Accordion Orchestra which received a rave New York Times review, as well as Alexander Poulev's NY debut

Working with Linda Reed, one of the best presidents with no hidden agendas

Starting The Seminars and Curating them for 27 years with the support of my wife Micki, my collaborator for close to 42 years (music, dance and video works). Each Seminar begins with one of our collaborations.

Performing with the New York Philharmonic for close to 50 years, and The MET for 20 years, Jazz at Lincoln Center, Tom Waits, Broadway composing and conducting, contemporary ensembles etc. etc.

Having my "Portrait #1" chosen for performance and conducted by Leopold Stowkowski.

I still remember Micki giving me the nod to start the very first Master Class. I knew then that I chose something wonderful to do with my life and to benefit the Music World and The AAA.

The Seminars received an unbelievable array of Publicity from The New York Times, The New Yorker, Time Out New York and other major publications in the Art Scene. They still are.

Watching Lee Deiro (Pietro Deiro Jr.) and Elsie Bennett sitting in the front row enjoying the Seminars up until his death.

And most important, forming a community of artists interested in the Accordion - many of whom took it up, and became wonderful accordionists applying it to their artistic disciplines and visions - and taking it into the music and art worlds in new ways.

Most Accordion events In New York City and many other places throughout the U.S. have come and gone. We have provided consistent quality and diversity keeping our instrument in the vanguard of creativity and vitality.

Many of you have shown your disdain for any of my contributions, but most particularly by your disinterest and non attendance of The Seminars.

As a former Trappist I continue to seek God's blessings daily to continue, my work, to care for my family

And Now
I will have to ask guidance so I might one day attain your selfless, esteemed levels.

PORKY'S POINT

There is a place in North Philadelphia where I grew up called Porky's Point. Back then it featured steak and roast pork. It was a crumbling stand with card tables outside and my Father called it "The Paris Eatery of North Philly". I grew up in this blue collar neighborhood and left in the early 70's about the time I went to Juilliard. My parents moved to the suburbs to care for my Grandfather. The neighborhood was transitioning into what was to become one of the roughest in the world inundated with drugs and gun violence.

Scroll to 2015, I'm performing contemporary music at the Rensaaler Institute in Troy, New York. Micki, my wife, calls me on my cell. "They want you to play "American In Paris" - on Broadway- NOW! Having done numerous productions and survived political intrigues I was at that time reluctant to take it on. But this contractor as it happens was one of the good guys and convinced me.

The orchestrations were even more revised from the Paris run and permitted me to devise a good accordion part. Scott Leher currently one of the best sound designers on Broadway and an accordionist himself excellently understood how to mix the accordion sound into the fabric of the orchestra and also let me be heard.

It's now 2021, Porky's Point still survives midst the rubble that competes with the worst New York neighborhoods of the 70's. It remains an OASIS now serving (I hear) great Spanish cuisine. Anthony Bourdain would have would call it "a find"!

"Evolution in the realm of permanent transition" (a quote from moi)
My Father was right. I guess I went from "The Paris eatery of North Philly" to some other Paris. But do we ever leave THE HOOD?!

BROOKLYN COLLEGE

This is not a Wah Wah article

Actually, It's a clarification article.

From 1971 until 1976 I was a teacher at Brooklyn College

I was an Assistant Professor - full time

I started at aged 25 and finished at age 29

I was on the tenure track

I didn't get it.

And that's it

I was NEVER a student at Brooklyn College.

There are assumptions by many that I was.

And more:

I was a popular teacher.

Perhaps the most popular teacher in the school at that time.

There is a book on faculty evaluations by students.

It states it very clearly.

I don't really know why I was let go.

I was told it was budget.

Total bullshit.

Five new people were hired:

Istak Perlman

Preston Trombley

Charles Dodge

Richard Rodney Bennett

Joel Sachs

They were good people

More famous than me

Except Preston Trombley

I never understood that choice

Why was he more celebrated than me?

Brooklyn College had a great faculty

I was proud to be one of them

There was only one phony

I won't mention his name

He spoke with a Viennese accent

I have no idea how he got to where he got

How did I get the job?

I was young - 25

I recently had one of my compositions conducted by Leopold Stokowski

I had clout

I was Suzanne Bloch's assistant at The Juilliard School

It was in ear training!

She was the daughter of Ernest Bloch

I was in the process of getting my Doctorate from Juilliard

Which I did get on 1973

She recommended me

And encouraged me to go there

It paid well

and it was a good contrast

as I was getting my Doctorate

And

I figured that I would last one year

And still leave with a good piece of change

I knew how things were in Universities

It was Vincent Persichetti, my Doctoral Advisor, who said to me:

Learn, but don't let anyone teach you.

Possibly my biggest mistakes were:

I was willing to learn along with my students.

To go on an exciting journey of learning side by side.

And

Not to flaunt my accomplishments.

As a religious person, flaunting was off - limits

so

I gave teaching my life's blood

and I did learn a great deal

But perhaps

I projected "student" instead of 'lifelong learner"

I regret that, the projection, not the teaching or learning.

I left Academia in 1976

When I received my pink slip

It was a weird day

At 12 noon

Dr. Willard A Palmer was visiting the school and gave a lecture

On urtexts editions

It was pretentious and closed minded

My chairperson sat next me - (she wrote me the pink slip)

I said to her,

That's Bill Palmer

Of the Palmer - Hughes Accordion Course

She said, no it can't be.

This happened THE DAY AFTER I delivered a repertoire list
compiled by Elsie Bennett of The American Accordionists. Association.

One of the students at the College was an accordion virtuoso.

She asked if she could major in Accordion.

I was asked to present that list.

It looked like it was going to go through.

I would be her teacher.

Brooklyn College would have an Accordion Department.

Then

The Pink slip

There was an accordionist on the appointments committee.

His eyes were close together - like cyclops.

He went into musicology

after a difficult time as a concertina virtuoso.

I can't prove that he had anything to do with this.

But he was on the Appointments Committee.

along with the other Hatchet People.

Shortly after that

I received a call

From Herb Harris

A Broadway contractor

He invited me to play

In a new production of

The Three Penny Opera

As well as to be Associate Conductor

I took the job and said to myself:

Academia! Farewell!

I also became Dean of a small Conservatory in Philadelphia

It's where I initially studied and majored in Accordion and Composition

I went there on my days off

I still teach the course privately - The Order of the Shield

This was a conservatory - not Academia.

I can go on and on about my career afterwards

It's been a good one. But I don't want to distract from the subject.

This is not a resume. You can read it on my website.

I simply want to repeat:

I WAS NOT A STUDENT AT BROOKLYN COLLEGE

It's a good school, and I ironically recommended people to attend it.

One of my former students now teaches there and promised me

that he will get an Accordion Department going. It would make

me very happy to feel that I planted some sort of seed there.

I am proud of this person. And I hope it all happens for him.

Some of my former students (not all) deny any association with me.

I thank those who do acknowledge my contributions to their education.

But even there, I always found it a bit tentative and patronizing.

There, and I repeat, are exceptions. And I treasure them. I really do.

I promised myself, that when I reached my twilight years, that I wouldn't become

a bitter old man. It's unattractive, un classy and sad. And as I said, This is not a Way

Was article, but a clarification article. Sometimes one needs to clarify - at any age.

I sum up with a final statement:

I went to Juilliard all the way up to a Doctorate in 1973

I taught there from 1969 to 1971 as a teaching fellow

From 1973 to 1974 I was on the faculty at Juilliard

As far as my education goes

If it wasn't Juilliard,

Brooklyn College wouldn't be my choice.

My training at The Neupauer Conservatory in Philadelphia

later gave me advanced placement at Juilliard in almost everything.

Why?

At Brooklyn College

Real musicians were "Music Makers".

People who wrote Mediocre Papers as well as Theorists were called "True Musicians".

The chairperson called Juilliard a bunch of Imbeciles even though she went there and

hired a good deal of Juilliard people - many, I would say most, were fired later, with

her at the helm.

One of the Musicologists, the real deal, commuted from Switzerland. He later quit to run a

Conservatory in Canada. He confessed to me that when her returned to NY to teach

(He had an apartment in Brooklyn), He would enjoy riding his bicycle at night. One evening

someone approached him and threw a cherry bomb at him. He fell on his bike and as he got

up he could see someone running away that looked like the chairperson (who lived close by).

He also would arrive at the airport to find out that his plane reservations for back home had

been canceled.

So again

I WAS NOT A STUDENT AT BROOKLYN COLLEGE

I was an assistant professor from 1971 to 1976

I hope that's clear.

Not because I was let go

But

There is a lack of dignity.

That goes with the territory.

I will never be able to have the joy of

Of my former students' successes.

(There were many successful students under my watch).

It's been taken away

Is there a happy ending?

I think so

I owe it nothing

But still

Well -

(Brooklyn College, I say this with respect and gratitude)

Fuck You!

Dr. William Schimmel - Career Highlights

Has a Doctorate from Juilliard - 1973

Had his first orchestral piece conducted by Leopold Stokowski 1970

Taught at Juilliard from 1969 to 74

Taught at Brooklyn College - Tenure track - 1971 - 76

Dean of Neupauer Conservatory 1977 - 2020

Appeared in a major movie, Scent of a Woman, starring Al Pacino 1912

Had #1 hits on Classical Music Charts - Tango Project 1981

Had #1 hit on the Amazon charts - Theater of the Accordion - with Wynton Marsalis

Conducted on Broadway 76 and 77 - and 90

Played on Broadway - Carousel - 2020

Composed numerous Off Broadway Shows - 70s and 80's

Considered the World's Greatest Accordionist by National Public Radio - since 1979

Composed 4000 compositions in all genres - 1958 till present

Played with the New York Philharmonic for 45 years 2020

Played with the Met for over 20 years - 2020x

As well as The Minnesota Orchestra (20 years) - 2020

Worked with writers and directors as a Composer and Musical Director:
Richard Foreman, Timothy S. Mayer, George W.S. Trow, Peter Brook, Daniel Fish,
Carl Weber, Micki Goodman, Wyn Handman, D. Snodgrass, Allan Knee,

Plays with every contemporary Jazz and New Music Group in New York. 1967 to today

Worked with Tom Waits 1984

Performed Wozzeck with the Metropolitan Opera - 2020x

Recently composed a 7 hour composition, Tributaries - live streamed 2020x

Recently curated a 6 day event at Lincoln Center: Accordion Mixology 20i7

Curates a 3 Day Master Class and Concert Series moving into its 28th Year 202

One of the chief architects of the revival of the Tango in America 2020

As well as

The resurgence of the Accordion

And

The philosophy of Musical Reality - composition with pre - existing musics

Performed with most major symphony orchestras in America as well as

The Kirov, Israeli and Vienna Philharmonics

Regarded as Gotham's Happy Warrior of the Accordion

Regarded as The World's most important Accordionist by Accordion Star Magazine

Inducted into the World Accordion Hall of Game

Inducted into the American Accordion hall of Fame

Won the Downbeat Magazine Readers poll in the nineties

Awarded The Confederations International of Accordionists Merit Award for his
Contributions to the international Accordion scene

Merit Award from the American Accordionists' Association

Accordionist of the Year - The American Accordionists' Association

Merit Award - The Accordion Association of Massachusetts

Award for Composing the Spring Street Ritual as the test piece for the
World Competition - Confederations' International of Accordionists'

More 2020 stuffs

Performed the elaborate accordion part in the chamber arrangement of Mahler's 1s with the Orchestra of St. Luke's - live streamed

Performed and recorded the Accordion parts in the music of Schoenberg that were written for Harmonium. - with The Orchestra of St. Luke's

Made to New Videos with my wife, Dancer, Micki Goodman as well as one with my son, Michael Age 40 Drummer with Down syndrome



The Accordion Global Association Presents

THE 2022 ACCORDION SEMINARS

Dr. William Schimmel, curator

Three days of master classes and concerts

Dates to be announced



Accordion Global Association - AGA - Dr. William Schimmel, Director and Curator

Announces

The 2022 Accordion Seminars

Too much Information, Too little time - but we do it anyway!

Our 28th Smash Year

New York is a Global Microcosm and the Accordion is part of it, an integral part .

It contributes to it in a profound way.

Over the years, we at The Seminars have formed a community of artists dedicated

to the exploration of every aspect of the accordion that can join forces with the

rest of the music world on an equal basis.

THE ACCORDION GLOBAL ASSOCIATION is the ultimate step into that dimension.

There are those who want to prove that the accordion is “another instrument”

in the fold. And there are those who believe that it’s “a special instrument” making it

stand out among all of the instruments. We believe in both. It stands out and it blends

In. We have more shapes, sizes, colors and instruments that are accordions in the

basic sense and other instruments that are offshoots of the accordion and other

Instruments that are accordion like and instruments that call themselves accordions

that use another name. It seems to mutate. It goes on and on and on.

Yet it survives. It was composer, Luciano Berio, who stated that: “each Accordion has its

Own genetic makeup”

We explore everything and make ourselves ready for any professional situation. And we

do it as “Art”. We understand the “Gigging Economy” of today and we prepare ourselves

for it. We also continue what was known as “Performance Art”, now “Performance”, exploring

every theatrical aspect of the Accordion. We work with Dance, Video, new stuff, old stuff, new

takes on old stuff, installations and other aspects of the visual arts.

The Seminars just might be be for you, if you bring an open mind and an

open heart. Of course, they’re open to anyone interested.

You will leave with a year full of new information, angles, new takes on vintage information

he “Historical Sense” and some Academic presentations.

It’s not a World Music weekend (we love them, by all means go to them), it’s not a Talent

Show or a Competition . Every one brings important work to it. We emphasize that.

It’s not an intellectual weekend, but a “smart one”. You will understand everything we say.

We will use no esoteric shop talk or “inside information” lingo.

It’s an immersion of directions that are best taken in as a complete weekend experience.

See you at The 2022 Seminars - AGA - Accordion Global Association

Dr. William Schimmel - founder and curator



it seems that whenever there is a wave of popularity
a reaction occurs
the accordion prospers
in some areas
two accordion shops close
or will soon
the accordion gets cool
or whatever it is being called today
and yet it may not be happening
for everyone
everyone seems to be playing it
or wants to play it
yet some accordion teachers can't seem to find students
sometimes market mind
doesn't fit market demand yet this is reality you win one areayou lose another
the good news is
the desire for it
the intent
the passion
the question is
is it your dog?
your mule?
your bitch?
if it is - good
if it is just your puppy
I say woof woof
if it is just your pony
i say boogety, boogety
the accordion loves to be your dog
your bitch
always there
always faithful
the accordion loves to be your mule
the mule is my favorite animal
a mule is beautiful
a mule carried baby jesus
i'm proud to be a mule
and so is my accordion
puppies are cute
ponies are adorable
but
stay in this dimension
and it leads to bullshit
choose the other
and it becomes hard work and hard work pays off
i go for the dog, bitch or mule dimension
they spray the following vibe: at your service
i want to be better - and better
the puppy dimension
i want to be hip, cool and cute
i want to serve you bullshit
the pony dimension
boogety, boogety, boogety
the choice is yours
i know what mine is
and here it is
a mule, bitch or dog
needs a little bit of
pony or puppy
a bit of boogety, boogety
all hard work
can use a little bullshit
or a frivolous element
all order can use a bit of
chaos
every action can use a
bit of reaction
bullshit can be wonderful
fertilizer so work hard get better and better
and
boogety, boogety

J'suis l'accordoniste - who studied composition with Elliot Carter - by William Schimmel

I was a student of Elliot Carter at Juilliard. I spent three years, one hour per week with him.

I also studied with Roger Sessions, Vincent Persichetti, Hugo Weisgall and Luciano Berio. All

at Juilliard. My years were from 1966 to 1973. I did the whole gamut - up to the DMA in

Composition.

To introduce myself, I am an accordionist and, according to outside sources, a well known one.

I love storytelling and I have plenty of them. My accordion makes my stories kind of Homeric

though I'm not blind - at least not yet. My entertaining self can sometimes get in the way and

brushed off as flippant or frivolous, but it's not. I take the comedic dimension seriously and

with great intent. Does the accordion add to this? Perhaps, but who cares?

Peter Mennin, composer, was the president of Juilliard at the time I attended. He also was an

Accordionist, the other part of The Mennini Brothers, an Accordion duo. That was hidden

knowledge at Juilliard. And for a while, so was my Accordion background. I was an Accordion

and Composition major at The Neupauer Conservatory in Philadelphia receiving a Professional

Diploma. I graduated in two years and then entered Juilliard in 1966.

I met Carter in 1966. I was assigned to him. He was 58, I was 20. You do the math. He was

sloppy in attire and had bad breath. He was a storybook composer. Cordial but not friendly.

Yet I liked him, sometimes in spite of myself. I had previously studied with Paul Creston and

after my first lesson with Carter I changed my style completely - literally one minute after.

I'm reminded of the day Sweden declared that all cars switch sides of the road.

He butchered most of my work until I had enough - and I confronted him with real rage.

He used an expression "Why the Hell.....?". I was going to report him for "cursing".

I didn't. The school would have defended him. He was Elliot Carter. I knew that.

I borrowed an old Creston statement: "I'm not here to create an impression on paper.

I'm here to create an impression with sound" I screamed it like an animal.

He started jumping around the room uttering: "You're right, I'm wrong" over and over.

Even with his "confession", I knew I was a doomed man. I spoke to my accordion mentor,

Dr. Jacob Neupauer. He looked at me worried. "Tell him that you like him". Dr. Neupauer

had a sage like quality and asked me the following question out of the blue: "Does he have a

domineering wife?" I said yes, her name is Helen. She waters him like a plant in the morning.

I thanked Carter for his honesty and told him that I liked him for it. "Thank You, Thank You",

He said. Before I entered Juilliard, Paul Creston praised Carter as a "very capable composer"

but warned me that he could be mean. To this day I do not know why he had to act that way.

A mean person usually gloats in a person's lack of success or their struggle. Why Carter?

I understood "tough" and "demanding" and I expected and wanted it. But "mean"!?

As a young man who grew up in North Philadelphia in the 50's with street gangs and

"Hit Lists" (I was on one), it didn't seem all that different than where I came from.

I knew "Bullying ". I was 'Bullied' growing up.

It seemed here that I was taunted by a "Blue Blooded Bully".

During the 1960's Bullying was not unusual at Juilliard. Mme. Rene Longy screamed and

humiliated students. Berio could send out confusing messages. He could assign a ton of work

and fail the student for "turning it out like water, but not like wine" and recommend a large

prize for someone who did no work. "At least he's thinking."

What constituted this? I wanted a good, solid education and I wanted to work hard and I did,

But I and most of my student colleagues had to wade through this stuff. I was not alone.

It felt like I was but later realized that everyone suffered from “imposter syndrome”.

Mme. Longy would later become a friend of mine and even took me out to restaurants. I think she was also lonely. She even taught my mentor, Hugo Weisgall at Curtis - and Carter -

And back to Carter.

For him, a piece of mine in question was my Woodwind Trio - He disliked it. It held his interest.

I studied his woodwind pieces, especially the Eight Etudes and a Fantasy. I will be perfectly honest In to say that I emulated it. But Carter could harmonize a D major chord or the note G and it would and has been regarded as profound. I could not pull that off. I had much to learn.

Sometimes an angle or point of view can change anything. His title was terrific. Mine wasn't.

If it ever gets performed again on a Retrospective Concert, I will use a different title: Four Studies and a Rhapsody. (A former student came to me distressed. He was studying composition and he was told that his collection of Piano Preludes were under developed pieces of crap. I looked at them and said yes, they really are. “What should I do”, the student cried out?. I said: either develop them - or call them Bagatelles. He chose the latter and won some very large prizes just for changing the title). I'm still learning to take my own advise.

Ok, Carter didn't like the Trio. He didn't attend the first performance either - at Juilliard.

So next, I brought in an accordion piece to the lesson.

It saved my ass. In 1994, elements of that piece showed up (quite literally) in the Berio Sequenza.XIII (BTW - my first union gig was with Luciano and Cathy Berberian in a collection: Kurt Weill Songs. The album was released 30 years later on RCA Records. I was in the original Juilliard Ensemble as an accordionist. Dennis Russell Davies was one of my classmates and co - founder along with Berio of this new Juilliard Ensemble- around 67/68).

When I play Berio's Sequenza, today, I feel that I wrote and played it along time ago. in 1967, the Juilliard Composition Jury consisted of Berio, Carter, Persichetti and Hall Overton, who commented about the Jazz influence on another one of my pieces.

Variations for Accordion that I composed back in 1967 was better than they wanted it to be.

At that day on the composition jury, It became the spark for the Berio Sequenza. I can prove it.

I have been told by music critics that I “OWNED ” the Sequenza when I perform it

Quite ironic, don't you think?

Now you know about me - back to the main character.

Carter dropped me as a student, but spoke well of me. He had too. I was industrious and hard working. I then went to Sessions, Weisgall and Persichetti. They were wonderful to work with and I achieved great success including a premiere of one of my orchestral works by Leopold Stokowski. It was Weisgall, one of the most brilliant and wise men I ever met, suggested and encouraged me to go back to Carter to rekindle our relationship. So 4 years later I went back to him in the Doctoral program. He was gentle, neatly dressed and seemingly at peace.

But, we had another fight. My work became more eclectic - even Ivesian. He knew Ives. His family did. We know that. He said: “I don't think it works in Ives either” trolling again.

So I slowly and calmly stated: “This could be the worst music ever written, but it's mine”.

Carter looked at me and calmly stated: “I respect that”. And everything was fine after that.

As a matter of fact my grade for composition went up to A plus. Some of my more threatened colleagues leave out the A plus part in their conversations about me. They seem to revel in the “worst music” phrase. But who cares anyway?

He would eat his lunch in the faculty office. I walked in one day as he was eating a sandwich and had a ziplock bag of those orange slice candies on the desk. Want one, he said? I felt honored. As I left the room, I ran into Vincent Persichetti who asked me: “Why doesn’t Carter eat with us in the faculty lounge. I jokingly stated: “He doesn’t live on food”. Persichetti laughed and said: “Plenty of meal in his music” - and then followed it up with: “When Carter writes a new piece, it takes us ten years to figure it out”.

Shortly after, Carter played a tape of the performance of his Concerto for Orchestra in the Weekly Composers’ Forum. I found myself walking around during it. I couldn’t sit still.

I looked across the room and I saw Persichetti doing the same. I pass him. He says to me:

“I’m really having trouble hearing this”. Jacob Druckman pretty much said the same.

Even die hard Carter fans admitted it. Over the years, he style mellowed, like many composers well into their years. There are Carter experts who will explain that better than me.

But the Holiday Overture, Pocahontas and Minotaur were favorites of mine at the beginning.

I had conservative tastes and my post “Crestonian” style seemed to compliment it.

When I got to Carter, he expressed no faith in those past styles, his or anybody’s.

When I changed my style over night, I knew I was writing “bad Carter”. I was twenty.

“Bad Carter” could be “not so bad Schimmel”. As I said, I was twenty.

Back to my first year with him in 1966, It was my job to get the key from the elevator operator and wait for Carter. I could hear the elevator rising and the door opening. And there he was.

He would then get off the elevator and say: “Did you get the key”. I would hold it up and we would go to room 513. I would unlock the door, Carter would go in and I would return the key to the elevator operator. Then I would go back to the room and we would have the lesson.

This went on for six months. I got tired of it. So I changed it a bit. I got the key, unlocked the door and sat in the room. I could hear the sound of the elevator rising and his feet shuffling to the room. He opens the door: “Did you get the key”? - (the absent minded composer cliché). In the late 80’s I was preparing for a solo concert at Merkin Hall. I contacted Carter about the

possibility of performing an arrangement of one of his later works. He suggested the

Riconicenza for solo violin. He wrote me a very nice note and signed itELLIOT.

I received another note from Helen Carter saying that he is delighted that I am performing it.

And they will attend.

I started the program with Rossini and went into some of my work and from the corner of my eye I could see two people leaving the room. Was it the Carters? I acknowledged him after

I performed his work, but he wasn’t there. I understand that he walked out of Juilliard one day and never went back. He didn’t like what the students were writing. Also, he didn’t need the

Gig. It also seemed that there was a gap in his knowledge of certain literature. He went to Nadia Boulanger and mastered counterpoint. He did the Neo - Classic thing and then jumped about 40 years. He hated Paris of the 1920’s, loved the stuff that came before it and wanted to

go back to it - “the dissonant stuff without a steady marching beat”. I had wonderful conversations with him at the lessons, many of them turned into Philosophy. I received a Harvard education in Philosophy from ELLIOT. It seemed in fashion then that to know certain pieces in the literature could be a bad thing. Carter didn’t see La Boheme until past 100 years.

He said, “no big deal”. It is a big deal. Berio brushed off the Grieg Holberg Suite and Weisgall steered students away from Prokofiev. As a Teaching Fellow at Juilliard, I prided myself in being able to play and teach most of the Mozart Sonatas. One teacher said - No - Haydn!

Another teacher said - Mozart Sonatas - too polished - Haydn!. Another member of the faculty cited Ravel as the world’s greatest second rate composer. It was easy to brush off what you

didn’t know. I often wondered about ELLIOT. He seemed to jump from the Baroque Period to Schoenberg than ahead past the neo - classicists into Ives and ending up somewhere around

Petrassi (He loved Petrassi, the late stuff). I’ll never know how much he knew about the rest of the stuff. Could he give a talk on Schubert? Weisgall could.

I received a letter from Boosey and Hawkes threatening me to not play a transcription of Carter's Riconiscenza (which he dedicated to Petrassi) . I told him that He gave me permission

They finally said: Oh, Ok! - and that was it. (After a screaming argument).

The last thing that Carter said to me was: "I don't know what your doing, but you're very Musical - you'll do Ok out there".

I relish the compliment - and of course the loaded subtexts still haunts me.

I loved the fact that I could puzzle him, but musicality was sometimes a way to dismiss the composer for lack of technique or substance or possible historical significance.

And back then, God forbid if you played an instrument well. God forbid!

In the 60's and 70's a true composer's instrument was his "desk". It was Milton Babbitt who stated: "Musicians are typists". It's different today - We know that.

The Composer Performer today is a norm. Like it was back in the old days of Bach.

I will close by making one more statement: Carter lived long enough to do whatever he pleased. He could "doodle" like Picasso yet with the same seriousness of attempt as his early gnarly works. And also be able to write good, ingenious, so so and bad Carter (get it?)

and not give a shit about it. Just write, write, write. We should all be so lucky.

By the way, to this day, I never investigated who left my Merkin Hall Concert in 1988.

And finally - He did like some of my compositions and said so with scholarship recommendations and compliments to other noteworthy people about me. I really appreciate that. I even think that He became some sort of ironic fan. And he met my parents at one of my graduation recitals and said: "You should be proud of your son - all that Music". And then in the next lesson we were back to the same old same old: " Your music Has a lot of problems". I said, "give me a break, my concert was two days ago". He apologized and said that it was stupid of him. I then realized what Weisgail was trying to say to me:

"Bill, Elliot is actually a really nice guy. You should go back and rekindle that relationship".

And I did, but I didn't attend his 65th birthday concert. This angered Weisgall - and I do regret

It to this day. Maybe there was a sort of revenge factor in this.

I also think that Elliot wanted to be seen as a "regular guy". His friend, Aaron Copland, could go on talk shows, talk about the New York Yankees with a Brooklyn accent. There is no way In hell that Carter could be a "regular" guy. This could have started us off on the wrong foot.

I am and was always seen as a "regular guy". Does the Accordion contribute to this?

Perhaps, but who cares? I've talked to a number of former street gang people who clearly stated to me: "A Bully wants something you have, but can't have it". Who knows?

I state, once again, that I spend three years (one hour per week)

in the same room with Elliot Carter. How many can say that? I'm a lucky man.

Back then, and still today, when my name comes up in composer circles, the response usually

Is: “What an Accordionist!” An honor, but not needed. I’ve known that many years even

before I met Carter. And today I have a compositional process based on performance.

It was Otto Luening, who remarked, “ Bill, You are doing what Liszt and Busoni were doing, but

in a new Contemporary way” From then on, I decided to call my ‘Fantasies’, “Realities” and

my entire Musical Philosophy today and for the rest of my life is defined by the term, “Musical

Reality”. Much of it is based on pre-existing musics, but it unites composer, performer and

listener in a serious triangle of authorship and the declaring and relinquishing of it. A book

of great influence was “The Musical Experience of Composer, Performance and Listener” by

Roger Sessions, also one of my mentors, and mentor to a staggering list of prominent figures.

Bach performed, Beethoven performed, Schumann performed (both Clara and Robert),

Chopin performed, Liszt performed, Busoni performed, La Monte Young performs, Philip Glass

performs. Of course I can go on and on and on - all composers/performers ...and Schimmel.

Making things really clear to Babbitt about the typist analogy: Musicians are not “typists”.

They never were, an Irony I still ponder as I confront the keys and buttons of my accordion.

If, in fact, Je suis l’Compositeur no longer defines me entirely - I am not and never was a typist.

And to end, Most of my connections as a composer/accordionist came about

through Juilliard. It wasn’t unusual for some of the students to say: “There goes Perlman;

There goes Zuckerman; There goes Slatkin; - - - There’s the guy who plays the Accordion”

(on his way to a Composition lesson with..... ELLIOT) - down the hall. (After he gets the key).

(RICH FATHER TO RICH SON)

DEAR LITTLE RICH BOY

THAT’S MY SON

I’VE SOMETHING TO SAY TO YOU

DANCE LITTLE RICH BOY

SING LITTLE RICH BOY

THE WORLD IS WAITING FOR YOU

THE WORLD IS WAITING FOR SOMEONE AS

BEAUTIFUL AS YOU

DADDY HAS A LOT OF CONNECTIONS

THAT WILL CERTAINLY INFLUENCE YOU

DANCE LITTLE RICH BOY

SING LITTLE RICH BOY

YOU MAY BE TALENTED TOO

DADDY BROUGHT YOU SOME FRESH NEW TROGIES

TO WEAR ON TINY THINGAMATOO

F.... LITTLE RICH BOY

B... LITTLE RICH BOY

IT’S TRULY THE MAN THING TO DO

WE OWN A BLOCK ON WALL ST

AND NOW IT BELONGS TO YOU

(THE AUTHOR SPEAKS:)

DANCE LITTLE RICH BOY

SING LITTLE RICH BOY

PULL TICKER TAPE LITTLE RICH BOY

LITTLE RICH BACK OF SCUM

F... YOU LITTLE RICH BOY

LARGE BAG OF ROYAL SHIT

F...YOU LITTLE RICH BOY

HUGE BAG OF SCUM AND BIGGER BAG OF COMMON SHIT

(BACK TO RICH FATHER WHO SPEAKS TO RICH SON:)

THE WORLD IS WAITING FOR SOMEONE AS BEAUTIFUL A HUNK OF MAN AS YOU

DR. WILLIAM SCHIMMEL

Purchase Dr. Schimmel and Peter Jarvis new album, Dragonfly - Naxos
Available on Amazon and wherever Digital albums are sold

GET IT STRAIGHT

AND KNOW

WHAT WE

HAVE

DONE

FOR
R YOU
FO

GET IT STRAIGHT
GET IT RIGHT

WE SAVED YOU WHEN YIU HUNGERED

WE SAVED YOU WHEN YOUR THERSED

WE SAVED YOU IN AN ORANGE WAY

FROM ST. CLEMENT’S HERSE

GET IT STRAIGHT

AND.....

GIVE ME THAT

ICE KREEM KOLDNESS

AND ALL OF YOUR BOLDNESS

GIVE ME THAT ICE KREEM COLDNESS

AND NONE OF YOUR BOLDNESS

IT TASTES SO GOOD

LIKE AN ICE KREEM SHOULD

SO

GIVE ME SOME OF THAT KAREMEL TREET

ICE KREEM COLDNESS CAN’T BE BEAT

BUT MOST OF ALL

GET IT STRAIGHT

I WAS THERE AT THE BEGINNING

FOR YU

AND ALWAYS WILL BEE

AKKERDIONS PLAYING

IN YOUR HEARD

AKKERDIONS PLAYING

IN YOUR HED

AKKERDEONS PLAYING

THROUGH YOU

LOOK FOR ME THERE TUUUUUU

AND.....

GIVE ME THAT KAREMEL TREAT

ICE KREEM COLDNESS

CAN’T BE BEET!

DR. WILLIAM SCHIMMEL

Life is High School

Not College

Part 1

In my High School

There was a lot of punishment

Certain people were always singled out

And after that

There was nothing that they could do about it

One priest had drumsticks

One pulled your sideburns up as far as

they could and slap you in the face as

your head was coming down

One hateful priest had a wooden spoon

We laughed at him - he was a lightweight

One priest had a paddle named Stingray

One had a paddle stating: Board of Education

It was not unusual for one of the Disciplinarian

priests to grab you by the face - yank you down

The hall - and throw you against the wal

Part 2

One priest sawed a baseball bat in half

One priest bought a rowboat oar

And drilled holes in it

For a quicker and more painful end

It was not unusual for a priest

To throw someone on the ground

In the football field

At band practice

In front of the girls' drill team

The slapping could go on for 15 minutes

It was embarrassing to cry in front of the girls

And that was the point

Diminishment was important to the

bestowers of the punishment

Part 3

One fellow was beaten every day

And

He also had to kneel with a blackboard

Eraser shoved down his throat

And made to read to the class

Another priest was passing

And saw through the open door

He came in and said

The eraser isn't far enough down his throat

One priest held his head and the other

Shoved the eraser down into his throat

The classroom priest then started to

Bang his head against the wall until

He dropped

He was brought up to be punished the next Day

He said - No, Father

He had to report to the priest after School

The priest punched him in the mouth

And knocked his front teeth out

They expelled the kid

The priest continued

Part 4

A black student

Lost his wallet

It was found

By the disciplinary team

The wallet contained

2 rubbers and a photo of a naked woman

He was immediately expelled

We could see him from the window

Leaving the school with his father

Crying into a hanky

I asked him later

Did they give you your rubbers back -

And the picture of the girl

He told me that they didn't

He should have sued them

They were his property

Mortal sin or not

They were his rubbers

It was his photo

You were not allowed to sue the clergy

The threat was excommunication

And

That's another story - you know what I'm talking about

Part 5

There was a lay teacher Who looked like cyclops

He was a former navy seal In tip top shape

He had a series of punishments

1

He had a college ring on his finger He would make a student

Put his nose on the ring

2

He would lower his hand slowly And then

Punch the student up to standing position

They usually fell over - backwards

With an already bloody or broken nose or both

3

He would then

make them lie straight down on their stomach

With their head touching the corner of the room.

One student said, “no sir”

The asshole teacher then

Made him pull his tie up and lock it into

The top of the door

The door was then closed

The student was on his toes

If he moved he could have hanged himself

Would the teacher come to his aid?

I'll never know

6

One student, who was bullied by the other

students, did hang himself in the bathroom.

He was one of the uncool kids. No one cared.

After all, he was uncool. They actually made him

eat his lunch in the bathroom. His parents wailed.

7

I was bullied. Not unusual back in 1964. It was a

Good idea to befriend the Ukranian kids.

I was on the Ted Mack Amateur Hour on Easter

Sunday - Everyone was watching. It was nationwide.

I knew I was a dead man. My ears were boxed and

I could not hear for a week. The teachers defended

The guy who did the boxing. Standing out was a

bad thing. More Punishment - More Punishment -

More punishment.

8

I took up smoking - smoking was cool back in '64

The Bullying stopped

But my smoking didn't

For 15 more years

9

I was gigging with the Pittsburgh Symphony

In '79

I woke up with the feeling

That I no longer needed to smoke

I was performing with a major Symphony Orchestra

No one was bullying me

The smoking stopped cold turkey

10

And that's it

No bullying

No smoking

No High School vibes

No dreams that I'm still back there

Finishing an exam I never finished

None of the above

11

Yes

Life is High School

Try to pass over it you can