

On Tour in a Strange City: A Diary

Georgina Born

On tour in Hamburg with Mike and Kate Westbrook and drummer Dave Barry, to play as soloists with the North German Radio (NDR) Big Band in Mike Westbrook's jazz arrangements of Rossini.

Carrying a cello is always conspicuous. Getting onto the terminal bus with cello and three bags, an effete and beautiful W.German businessman eyes me gallantly, weighing up whether to offer to carry it for me. Momentarily, I make to flirt; and then we both let it go. Zooming in closer, the man will have noticed untidy stickers on my cello case, trophies of past work: "Slits: Backstage Pass," "Final Solution" (punk ironies), "Rote Lieder: Festival des Politischen Liedes Berlin/DDR," "Für antiimperialistische SOLIDARITÄT," "Rock in Opposition." This aborted encounter reminds me by contrast of touring with the all-woman feminist music and performance group, FIG. Then, I approached the struggle to get airlines to meet my cello's needs sternly, aggressively. (Cellos are singled out as the only instruments to have a specified fare by British Airways: half-fare. Hence many check-in battles to get the cello on half-empty planes without paying more for it than a bohemian musician's fee). Now, 'enlightened', fashionably post-feminist and psychoanalysed, I negotiate reasonably and... flirt. Nothing gained the cello still bumps along in the hold.

Waiting in the crowd for more bags at Hamburg airport I spot a violin case, trace up, and see the shockingly aged face of Yehudi Menuhin. I nudge Kate excitedly and whisper. As we exit through customs, I find myself pulling the cello along on its skateboard wheel next to Menuhin, who smiles slyly—musicians' signs of mutual recognition—and asks "What are you playing?" I reply and, post-modern pioneer of his time that he was (duets with Stephane Grapelli, introducing Indian music), he is unphased. I ask "And when do you play?" and he cannot remember, deferring to a grey minder who reminds him. Parting, I state awkwardly "It is an honour to meet you," blowing the relaxed and egalitarian conceit that Menuhin has invited me to share.

The area where we stay must be Hamburg's Hampstead, but even more solid, prosperous: enormous 19th century villas interspersed with chic bordering a lake. The hotel seems nonetheless petit bourgeois, a traveller's stopover carved into mean rooms (I make a nuisance changing rooms till I find one to swing my cello in). Breakfast tables are laid mostly for one, each crammed with its own jams, honey, syrups, breads, and plastic 'nutreen' pot. Eventually I decode 'nutr' connoting nutrition, health, 'een' saccharine, sweetener. Schizophrenia embodied in these adornments of affluent tabletops: to stuff bread and syrup without guilt, at once reassured by the potential of 'nutreen' to 'nutr'-alize sin without pain (more than to provide nutrition, given the recently advertised dangers of chemical sweeteners). I observe middle-

class German couples eating brek together in varying degrees of dissociation; note how little charm survives across the tables of a hotel breakfast room: strictly utilitarian eating.

The band is male, white, mostly over 50 (four players are due to retire), and contains some marvellous players. It was a dance music outfit for years until recent inspired management put it to work with jazz composers like Mike and Anthony Braxton. The studio is deeply overmanned. Being a woman in the macho world of amplified sound: first rehearsal Monday morning, and Werner, studio soundman, besuited, authoritative will not find me an amp ("...for cello?"). Annoyed, and impatient to shortcut the endless literal power game played out with male technicians, I call ostentatiously to Mike "They say there's no amp...." Within minutes, two bass amps and various effects appear. "I didn't realize you had a pickup" leers Werner. Next tease: I'm finishing a sobbing Rossini cello solo. The trill fades over a final falling woodwind arpeggio... which the bass clarinet ends on a bum note, and all collapse: the cello, the bass trombone, a ninny.

Egon, the bass trombone, is the band's union rep. Plays, talks and laughs loud: he's Big. We have 10am to 4pm down as rehearsal hours. Six hours becomes three: every hour on the dot Big Egon yawns, stretches restlessly, finally gets up and tells Dieter, the conductor, reasonably, that it's a break. They sort of negotiate the return time, half an hour later. All out to the NDR cafeteria. The shock of porn, enormous breasts and frozen smiles, staring out from the NDR shop stand outside the café, along with cigs, chocs, chewing gum—oral fixation stand. On FIG tours in Germany years ago, we had a stock of running 'sausage jokes,' protest against the meat-eating, beer-swilling, cig-smoking, heart-diseased, porn-stocking, phallicentric, heterosexist German culture complex. Kate and I find ourselves saying "not yet! we mustn't begin the sausage jokes yet!..." Big Egon sits next to Kate in the lineup and gets chummy. Day one he asks her "Do you have a boyfriend?..." She points primly to Mike, and says she's married to the Bandleader. Next day, while I'm soloing away, Egon elbows Kate and says "Nice Playing! What's her name? Is she married?..." Kate tells. "Nice girl," concludes Big Egon, and calls another coffee break.

The NDR café at lunchtime reveals a cross-section of women and men similar to BBC and other media canteens, the women different post-feminist types, this expressed clearly through style. More expressive than the men's clothes, as though men's politics of style have stood still—the illusion betrayed of a male sexual political shift. These men and their style could date from 15 years back; the women are unmistakably of *this moment*.. Predominant are the high-heeled, coiffed (blonded), tailor-suited, nail-painted, large hoop earringed. Contrasting with a few bohemian, extremedressers: bigger hoops, flat Doc Martens, hair wilder or more sharp, footless tights under *rucked* skirts, black 'n' red, both more androgynous and more womanly.

Two post-feminist syntheses: reaction back to a sharper femininity, in quotes; and post punk bohemia, retaining elements of radical feminist critique, much tamed. And me? Bejeaned, blonded and...yep, be-hooped.

Lead trumpeters are known to be fragile, often alcoholic. It's the strain and stress of the high notes that crack so easily and stick out louder and more prominent than anything else. Leonard here is small and broad, Sumo-esque. He was away ill yesterday, and leaves early today. The third trumpet, to break the ice, sticks his black comb on his upper lip, sweeps his grey hair to one side, and salutes us: "Heil!!" Spitting Image. Then he points wildly to Dave and laughs "You Stalin!" Rehearsing a trick passage, Dave chooses the work ethic theme to twig Egon Bass Trombone: "You'll stay and work hard till you get it right!" To which Egon, laid back, retorts "We don't even have to be here to collect *our* pay" reminding us that, guest stars or not, they are waged and organised musos while we are mere insecure traveller jazzers. Eternal struggle: bureaucrat versus short contract artistes.

After rehearsals, at dusk, as so many times on tour with time to kill in strange cities, I wander and peer into lit up homes, imagining their routines, passions, household structures: voyeuristic, always marginal, transient, sensing difference but unable to follow through with any depth of contact with the hosts. Mirroring the voyeurism and transience of their fascination as audience with me as performer. I pass a young woman on the street who looks very like me, but to whom I cannot speak. My physiognomy would be at home here—ash fair hair, sturdy frame—but for my slight Jewish cast, the reason why I'm not in fact German but first generation British. The 'arbitrariness' is tantalizing: but for 'accidents of history' this place would be intimate and not strange. I pass two young Turkish Gastarbeiter, also outsiders, and sense with surprised recognition, immediate and unambiguous empathy coming from them, a hint of merging. Shopkeepers are disinterested, mildly irritated, barely giving me time. I do not buy much, am not part of a permanent clientele, and don't look well-heeled. However well I dress (and I dress up knowing Germany demands it) I feel style-less next to the splendid glitter of the German middle-class. Round here people's clothes seem designed, squeaky new, expensive—the local clothes shops are like Browns, Armani. The bakers have 30 kinds of bread. There's a shop that sells nothing but Japanese miniature trees; prices start at £50. Who buys? This is a scale of conspicuous consumption I've only ever witnessed in Manhattan; and this is a suburb. But Hamburg is the kind of organism swelling up this conjuncture: built on mercantile capital, ancient and new. My dislocation, though, is not so much lack of wealth, but an equally terrifying social division: not looking 'right'.

Music as property. Two days in, Mike's fretting as to whether NDR will give us a copy of the recordings, since they and the actual scores and parts are all owned by NDR as part of the deal and have to be physically left there. Mike may well not get another chance to do this Rossini arrangement, and so desperately wants a recording. By late in the week, Dieter and the recording engineers (the music world's natural anarchists) indicate that tape copies may not be a problem.

Sizing each other up. Dieter asks me over a drink "You play in an orchestra?" (Cello = orchestra, right?). I answer "No, always the fringes of jazz and rock, and

bass guitar," delig Later, Dieter and I players, people th geneologies, search fied: Dieter has w friends, is himself a NDR. Thursday, a as-Conductor, and his slightest remark music: understated sex and power: it's thory has. To cle a gaggle of women sex 'n' power effec together, swapping vered teachers, sav psychic and libidin

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The Inn Militari

John Crum

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Historical Backgr

The Innu² territory of boreal forest fr

bass guitar," delighted to muddle his classification. Later, Dieter and Dave sit comparing lists of favourite players, people they have worked with, sketching geneologies, searching links. And we have misclassified: Dieter has worked with many European muso friends, is himself a composer of many parts, not tied to NDR. Thursday, and I'm 'falling in love' with Dieter-as-Conductor, and begin foolishly to read romance into his slightest remark. It's his way with the band and the music: understated, exact, humorous. The old formula, sex and power: it's amazing what effect creative authority has. To clear my head I recall when, as one of a gaggle of women 'mature' students all canny to the sex 'n' power effect, we much enjoyed ribald sessions together, swapping erotic dreams about our most revered teachers, savouring the crass predictability of our psychic and libidinal economies.

Hamburg TV has but three channels: no chaotic post-deregulation choice here yet. Late Night, one channel has nothing but videos of angsty modern operas, cut straight from one to the next, VJ like—is this modernist MTV? Unfortunate pan round the audience in big modern Staatsoper, half empty. Another prime time I hit upon a chat show, with 'ordinary people' talking hobbies interspersed by 'live' music spots. The mix: first up, a Bolivian folk music and dance troupe, uncomfortable, stiff. Second, a Leipzig chambergroup with movements from a Telemann concerto, clapped in between each movement (sure sign of low-brow appropriation). Third, a spectacular Euro-pop group—audience clap-along—called Middle Of The Road. They do only outtakes of songs—verse, chorus, rapid fade, transition to the next—like snack meals, sad, reminders of a (lost) 'real thing'. These weird mélanges (postmodern programming?), zapping without the zap, seem somehow to pre-empt the coming of cable/satellite TV.

Today, walking homeward, I find myself humming the set. Four days in the tunes and arrangements have lodged inside, a commitment that builds slowly, attachment to exquisite moments, the sublime co-ordination of all these musical lines and players. The thrill of sitting among 25 musicians, brass and saxes blasting out their simple consonant, then intrinsically diverging, rich and resonant lines, is unique, privileging. An orchestra does not feel like this, in which each player makes a unique contribution to the whole, but also individual technique and musicality combining in improvisations that construct the whole. Against the orchestra's bureaucratic rationality, the big band is a more complex division of labour, an expressive, organic totality. When it comes together, it's like *difference uniting*; the orchestra, by contrast, a hierarchical and repressive consensus. Mike designs his musical space with room for players to explore the range of their (different and multiple) musical personalities: for me, cellistic lines with voices and piano, rhythmic chord changes in with the section, and—especially—my own kind of improvisation. But difference isn't easy. The concerts arrive and, rather than pleasure, the multiple insecurity of my position threatens—as a woman, soloist, on a non-jazz instrument, playing my disruptive, 'avant garde' improvisations. Mike uses me to soar over, cut across, take apart, comment upon what's happening below, other musical shapes and moods. It's a tough role, psychic cards stacked up against. Early in the week the band stared and frowned; by the concerts we are listening and responding to each other keenly. They go well.

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The Innut and the Struggle Against Militarization in Nitassinan

John Crump

Last year, a peace organization in the Netherlands lost a court challenge to have a Dutch government agreement with Canada declared illegal. The agreement permits the Netherlands to train its air force pilots in low-level flying tactics over the vast Québec-Labrador peninsula. The peace group argued that the low-level flying,¹ which is carried out at tree-top heights at speeds of 800 kilometres per hour, is threatening the way of life of the Innut, or Montagnais-Naskapi Indians, of the region.

That a Dutch peace organization found itself opposed to its government's military policies is not surprising; what was unusual was that its opposition focused on the aboriginal rights of a group of indigenous people in Canada. Somehow the struggle of the region's 10,000 Innut for control of the homeland they call Nitassinan, or "Our Land", had found its way into the Dutch anti-military consciousness.

Historical Background

The Innu² territory of Nitassinan covers vast stretches of boreal forest from the coast of the Gulf of St.

Lawrence north to the tundra below the Bay of Ungava. The Innut are bordered in the west by the Québec Cree and in the east by the Inuit of Labrador. Today the Innut live in 12 communities scattered along the North Shore of the St. Lawrence and in Labrador.

Innu society is based upon a hunting subsistence economy in which the caribou plays a central economic and spiritual role. Life has traditionally involved seasonal migrations in highly mobile single- or multi-family groups from summer camps at the mouths of rivers on the coast to the interior for the rest of the year. Formerly, these treks were made by canoe or on foot. Supplies were either carried or hauled on sleds. Now the Innut use small aircraft to move in and out of the bush.

The Innut or their ancestors have inhabited Nitassinan for approximately 8,000 years. They are probably the Skraelings referred to in the Norse sagas which chronicle the Viking voyages to North America around 1000 A.D. The Innut were also one of the first indigenous peoples to come into contact with the Europeans who "rediscovered" the continent at the end of

the 15th century.

Historically, the southern Innut were called Montagnais. The people who lived farther north and hunted on the barren grounds were called Naskapi. Both were early participants in the French fur trade, and thus early objects of European intentions, which included the twin desires to "settle" and "civilize" these newly-discovered people. The Montagnais-Naskapi of Labrador, living in a land beyond the periphery of the early European colonies, managed to continue their lives with less interference. The furs they provided were coveted, but by and large their land itself was seen as worthless. Jacques Cartier is supposed to have described the Labrador coast as "the land God gave to Cain." Until this century, that perception worked to the advantage of the Innut.

As in most other areas of the Canadian North, the period since the end of World War II has seen rapid and uncontrolled change in Labrador. There have been two invasions in the North: one industrial, the other military.

In Labrador, industrial interests first focused on wood, then turned to minerals and the hydro-electric potential of the region's many rivers. In 1942 the airbase at Goose Bay was built as part of a staging route to ferry war materiel to Europe. A long-range radar installation was built near the base in 1951, and during the Cold War Goose Bay was run by the Americans as part of the NORAD air defence system. In 1971, the Canadian military assumed control of the base and the Americans left a couple of years later. Goose Bay's importance as a strategic base was reduced by the rapid development of ballistic missile technology. This change in technology and the perceived need by NATO to fly at low levels over enemy lines in the time of war has re-established the importance of Goose Bay in the eyes of the military.

Canada has signed bilateral agreements with the air forces of West Germany, Britain, and the Netherlands which permit the use of "empty" Labrador for low-level flight training based at the Goose Bay airbase. (The United States Air Force also uses Goose Bay but does not carry out low-level training exercises.) Training takes place in two vast flying zones totalling 100,000 square kilometres, one in the north of Labrador, and the other to the south near the Gulf coast of Québec.

The Canadian government is carrying out a sophisticated lobbying campaign to convince NATO to establish a Tactical Fighter and Weapons Training Centre in Labrador. The centre would train pilots from all NATO air forces in low-level flying, greatly increase the number of military flights out of Goose Bay, and—the federal and Newfoundland governments argue—provide needed economic development in the region. NATO is considering two sites: Goose Bay and Konya, Turkey. Canadian defence representatives have toured NATO capitals to see alliance decision-makers, using persuasive words and a slick audio-visual presentation to sell Labrador as the training centre site. The training centre would cost NATO about \$800 million. The federal and provincial governments argue the money would benefit the Canadian economy. A major NATO training centre in Labrador would also allow the Canadian government to argue that it takes its alliance commitments seriously.

The Innut maintain that the military activity is threatening their way of life. They say the jets are spoiling the environment and driving away the animals