

IN MEMORIAM

CARL KRISTIAN WIENS (1964–2012)

In March 2012, those of us affiliated with *Gamut* were deeply saddened to learn of the passing of Carl Wiens, who had been our reviews editor since the first issue.

Carl's collegiate education and teaching spanned both Canada and the United States. A native of Vancouver, his initial degrees were earned at Canadian institutions: Douglas College (AA), University of British Columbia (BMus), and McGill University (MA), where his thesis examined songs by Charles Ives. He completed his Ph.D. in music theory in 1997, at the University of Michigan, with a dissertation on Stravinsky's *Agon*. After graduating, he taught at the University of Cincinnati's College-Conservatory of Music (1998–99) and at the University of Massachusetts Amherst's Department of Music and Dance (1999–2003). From fall 2003 onward he was at Nazareth College's Department of Music (Rochester, NY), where he attained the rank of Associate Professor and served as Program Director of Music History and Music Theory. There he taught a wide array of courses including the basic theory sequence, form and analysis, tonal and modal counterpoint, theory pedagogy, and composition lessons.

A pianist from the age of four, Carl not only taught composition but remained active as a composer. Last year he heard his works performed at The Tank, a non-profit arts presenter in Manhattan, as well as at Nazareth. Around this time, his local newspaper, the *Fairport-East Rochester Post*, ran a "spotlight" on him and his work.¹

¹ Bethany Young, "East Rochester Resident Lives a Life of Music," *Fairport-East Rochester Post* (3 March 2011), 1A and 10A. Above the title, the article is labeled "Spotlight[:] Local Composer."

Following Carl's death, the Nazareth Department of Music joined with the school's Center for Spirituality to host a tribute to him, and *Gamut* would similarly like to commemorate his life. To that end, I have asked some of those who knew Carl especially well to tender their thoughts and recollections: Andrew Mead was his teacher and the chair of his dissertation committee, Karl Braunschweig and Gregory Marion were fellow doctoral students at the University of Michigan, and David Sommerville taught alongside him at Nazareth. Their comments follow.

Along with them, I send my heartfelt condolences to his wife and children.

David Carson Berry
Editor

It is hard to believe that I knew Carl for something like twenty years. This is not to suggest that he didn't change and grow in that time, but Carl was Carl from our first phone call to our last conversation—always interested in a variety of issues, ranging from sports to literature, and always besotted with music. He was an original, an extraordinary blend of the physical and the cerebral, the rough-hewn and the intensely sensitive. He reminded me of the central character in Wallace Stegner's *The Big Rock Candy Mountain*, a novel we both admired, who as a child is depicted exterminating vermin on his family's hard-scrabble ranch while dreaming of Alfred Lord Tennyson's "The Splendor Falls on Castle Walls." That was Carl, wide open to the ravishments of Strauss's *Vier letzte Lieder* (the third, "Beim Schlafengehen" ["On Going to Sleep"] was played to devastating effect at his funeral) but able in an instant to tell a story of his hockey exploits that ended with the line, "I cut him down like a tree and skated to the penalty box."

Carl and I talked by phone two or three times a year, always for more than an hour, and always about music, family, books, and much more. He was ceaselessly interested in what was true and beautiful. I miss him more than I can tell.

Andrew Mead

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Carl inspired many of us with his deep passion for music and ideas. He had eclectic musical tastes, and was decidedly open to almost everything musical and intellectual. Like Stravinsky—one of his primary research areas—he was always eager to learn a wide range of musical styles and traditions, and to explore any ideas directly or indirectly related to music. He similarly approached theory as the exploration of possibilities, refusing to limit his perspective to any specific theory or set of compositional practices. For him, composing, listening, and analyzing were all different versions of playing with notes, of discovering possibilities. I am happy that he was able to devote significant time over the last two years to his own compositions, and to see parts of his large project come to fruition. Composition was an integral part of his engagement with theory, and was related to his concept of music as a universe of possibilities.

It was not surprising that he valued the literary aspects of music and a literary approach to analysis, viewing listening and reading as wonderfully interconnected with rich intertextual associations; and he continually returned for inspiration to the essays of Edward T. Cone (who also admired Stravinsky). His listening was attuned to how history has been embedded in music, and his analyses sought to help us hear this rich dimension. Carl also cared deeply about his students, not in the sense of developing a ready-made pedagogy ready for consumption but rather offering the opportunity to open up to young minds the seemingly infinite possibilities of music, and to theory as the entrance into that musical universe.

He was a close friend, and I will miss him terribly. With him, time did not pass in the usual manner but rather—like a middleground linear progression—was able to connect ongoing conversations and shared experiences over the span of months, amidst the diminutions of daily life. As I reflect on his life, tragically cut short, I continue to return to the realization of his deep conviction for sharing ideas and affirming others. May we always see in him a model of professional generosity, and of openness to musical and intellectual possibilities.

Karl Braunschweig



For those of us that had the good fortune to know Carl, the scope of our pain in the wake of his death speaks to the depth of our experiences with this truly unique and gifted individual.

I met Carl twenty years ago. Our bond began naturally enough in the halcyon days of our doctoral studies at Michigan, but led through many shared moments that are the provenance only of those of us privileged enough either to have—or to have had—close and meaningful friendships. Steadfast and loyal, Carl was equally quick with a helping hand as he was with a no-nonsense dose of reality—everything, however, in the right measure.

Carl's laugh was infectious; his mannerisms, "quirky." Equally at home in the writings of Bakhtin and Nin, the music of Brahms and the Beastie Boys—it is safe to say that Carl's taste was as eclectic as his knowledge-base was encyclopedic. I learned much from Carl. He was a deep thinker, with a thirst always to know more, and a proclivity for learning in an experiential manner from everything that crossed his bow: college football and twentieth-century ballet—each was a credible agon (if I am permitted the Stravinsky pun).

Many knew Carl as a caring educator, whose commitment to his students involved neither self-aggrandizement nor boastfulness. Others knew Carl through his various and genuine commitments to the profession. I knew Carl as a friend.

I miss my friend, sorely.

Gregory Marion

My good friend and close colleague Carl was always a pleasure to be around. As one of two theorists at Nazareth College, he and I spent a lot of time together discussing many subjects, as he was a man of many interests possessing an intense curiosity about not only music and music theory, but also philosophy and literary criticism, sports, politics, stand-up comedians, lowbrow comedic movies and television, his native Canada and adopted America, burritos, and beer—a warm-hearted and jovial mélange of the sublime and the ridiculous. His favorite theorists were definitely of the generation before his, and he had been growing increasingly suspicious of theory and analysis that somehow, despite its best attempts, seemed to focus on apparatus as opposed to “the music.”

He was respected within his department and college, beloved by his students, and utterly dedicated to doing what he felt was in their best interest. Of all, it is this last sentiment that has left a lasting impression on me. I am a better professor for having spent time, personal and professional, with Carl. I miss my friend, and may he rest in peace.

David Sommerville

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