



## Glenn Gould: A Life Off Tempo

**Sandrine Revel**

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Glenn Gould was a fascinating figure—mysterious and eccentric, yet undeniably gifted, and connected to the music he played in a way unlike most musicians. Sandrine Revel's challenge, in her book *Glenn Gould: A Life Off Tempo*, is to communicate what isn't easily expressed—music itself, of course, but also the deep-seated psychological quirks that made Gould so exciting to watch perform, yet that troubled him so deeply.

Revel manages to pull it off by using several series of small close-ups focused on Gould's face. For example, she conveys the ecstasy the pianist felt when performing his favorite classical works. While Revel's illustrations are excellent in a traditional sense, the storytelling, perhaps in a nod to Gould's offbeat mind, requires close attention. Revel often jumps to and from various time periods and narrators, with flashbacks to Gould's childhood suddenly giving way to adult musings, amid symbolism that's sometimes easily discerned (when Gould's treasured piano breaks, Revel shows him falling and breaking into pieces on stage) and sometimes harder to decipher (an opening dream sequence of Gould playing an invisible piano while wearing a dog mask).

As a welcome bonus, the book includes a playlist of the Gould performances Revel listened to while working on the book, as well as a select discography. *Glenn Gould: A Life Off Tempo* adds a new dimension for those already familiar with the man, and for newcomers, a perfect introduction.

PETER DABBENE (March/April 2017)

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