

THE POLITICAL CONCERTO.

Woke in the night to hear Radio 3 playing Tchaikovsky's Violin Concerto. It brought me back to studying for A-Levels and State Scholarship. I played a lot of Bix, Mel Torme, Bing Crosby (the autobiographical album which helped me understand more about the 20s and 30s), Duke Ellington (Nutcracker Suite) and Oistrach, father and son, the Violin Concerto. Oh and some Basie (solo piano stuff).

I wanted to write essays like that Concerto. How could I make my essays fast and slow, loud and quiet, themed, different theme and returned theme? And how do you end? For a while I thought deploying every punctuation mark possible was the answer. That was until Denis Martin my history teacher said, "Jones, reading an essay by you is like reading Morse Code."

Reading lots of GB Shaw helped, particularly the Prefaces to his plays. Spelling, punctuation and grammar? He seemed to face up to those rules with a lot of self confidence.

Meanwhile, Maurice Sykes, my teacher of English, suggested reading Middlemarch. He told me the first eleven chapters were wonderful, "best ever". Imagine how I felt turning over the page to start the twelfth. I am so glad I read it.

Thanking my teachers shall remain an unfulfilled duty. When my headteacher retired I was unexpectedly shoved onto a stage to very inadequately attempt that. The shock was that in reply he mentioned my school reports.

There are times these days when I cannot stomach reading about what politicians are doing to education. Every student has to be measured in order, it would seem, to allocate them a place in what continues to be a class-ridden society. Trouble is, if you want to climb up the broken rungs of a capitalist ladder these days forget Tchaikovsky, simply choose to have rich parents.

Every day I wake up trying to make sense of things. I could devote my days to commenting on the cock ups of our politicians. That would leave me very little time for anything else. And how different is today's cock up to yesterday's? Just change a few names.

I taught wonderful people and just wish I had done more to thank them for what they taught me.

The Concerto is not finished. It never will be. One thing we must bear in mind is that the baton is in the wrong hands, politicians all over the World who serve the interests of the greedy should not be our conductors.

We are the orchestra, each playing a different instrument maybe, but if we took it in turns to wield the baton I bet we could produce a more harmonious sound than those that currently have in their hands the political baton.

Cliff Jones 9/11/22

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