

# CONFESSIONS OF A TWISTED GENIUS

*by dan coffey*

## MY DILEMMA

It's true, I am a genius. There aren't many like me. One is born every century or so, but even then, thanks to the common cruelty of fate, this genius languishes unrecognized, his or her talent undeveloped. I was luckier than many.

Though poor, my parents were no dummies, and knew a special child when they saw one. They scrimped and saved and bought me a piano, and by the time I was five I had memorized all of Beethoven's piano Sonatas. Handel and Bach's many keyboard works soon followed.

High school saw me immerse myself in Chopin, Liszt and Rachmaninoff. Then I began to compose. The problem was in finding anyone besides me who wanted to perform my compositions. There is little market for classical music, and almost no demand for new serious music.

It's hard enough for a mature person to handle rejection, but a precocious adolescent who is highly aware of his gifts cannot lightly bear rejection by a bovine public. I became bitter and confused. I vowed revenge.

Many young men in my position become experts in computer hacking, delighting themselves by creating malware that wreaks havoc on the financial world. I have no interest in computers or in petty vandalism. I want to be recognized as the genius I am, and the

only way that will come about is if I can gain the attention of the gate-keepers.

And who are these people who purport to judge who and what shall become famous? No one seems to know. I have asked the question of everyone I thought might be able to tell me, and no one has said anything more instructive or helpful than “keep your chin up, kid.”

Too old now to be a child prodigy, I am at an awkward stage that threatens to last for the rest of my life. As time passes, I only get better, my technical proficiency increases, my original ideas become more profound, but without an audience to appreciate them, I only become bitter. I have stopped going out during the day and sleep only a few hours during the night. The rest of the time, I'm working, practicing, composing, recording, but most importantly, developing subtle, clever plans for revenge.

Sure, I can put my stuff “out there.” Anyone can post music on public web sites. It accomplishes absolutely nothing and only adds to my misery. To be lost in a stew of beginning piano student recitals, lonely old people posting the music that was on the radio back when they were young, simply enrages me. When Chopin was young, he left Warsaw for Vienna and then Paris, and his reputation was made. Where can I go? What can I do? How can I stand out from the no-talent crowd?

Surely someone as clever as I can hatch a plan that will make them pay for rejecting me. Ignoring my genius has a cost and they will pay the price. At the moment when they realize to their horror what is being demanded of them, bewildered and horrified they will ask me “who are you and why are you doing this?” I will smile a sinister, wicked little smile and say “I am the genius you never recognized, you never nurtured, who has now turned his talents on making you suffer as I have suffered.”

Sure, it might have been more fun to have a hit record, but revenge will have its own sweetness.

I have to have a plan. Fortunately, I do.

## MY PLAN

Hitler had a plan, he wrote it in a book that was published and sold quite well. Nobody took him seriously until he actually began to carry out the plan. In my case, I will keep the plan a secret until the time is right to leap into action.

If you've ever watched a cat toy with its prey, you know how much fun it has pretending to let the pitiful creature escape and then catch it again. I, too, will play with my enemies, allowing them to gradually realize the full extent of my cleverness. Then they will know depths of demoralization they never before dared imagine.

But that will just be the beginning. As my plan unfolds, their perception of my cleverness will be overwhelmed by their long-delayed understanding of the sheer scope of my talent. It will no longer be my job to lash out at them, for they will be kicking themselves for underestimating me. They will rue the days they let me suffer in ignominy while mediocrity held the day. Who knows, they may even beg for mercy, but by then mercy will be in short supply.

Some readers may be thinking "why doesn't he just let bygones be bygones, forgive and forget, and move on?" These people have never suffered as I have. They have never tried strangling a hissing serpent, one that plays dead before it actually expires and then springs back to life when the pressure from my fingers is prematurely released, prompted by misplaced pity and vague notions of common decency. No, this serpent must be throttled until its last spark of life is absolutely extinguished.

They may be less bright than me, but there are more of them and their revenge for my revenge could prove tiresome. I have no more time to waste. I must be about my father's business. Remember, my gifts are a treasure of great promise, and the longer I wait to reveal them, the worse it is for all mankind, including me.

So it is that I have a solemn obligation, a debt I must repay, to unfurl my gossamer wings and fly. I must find my audience. True, it implies a certain arrogance to assume that such an audience exists when they are entirely unaware of my existence, but I have come to believe that arrogance is a decision. One decides to embrace arrogance in order to reveal the legitimate source of such overwhelming pride.

Each milieu produces a group of opinion makers, critics, writers, contest judges, panel members, and these are entrusted with deciding which lucky dog merits consideration, and which ones are rebuffed. None of these people think that they are close-minded, provincial, dull and common, even if they are exceedingly so. Unfortunately, the least gifted of these people keep their positions the longest. Because they never risk anything, they are never found out. They receive honor and respect, the thanks of a grateful nation, and when they retire they are given a party by whichever institution has endured their mediocrity for the longest time. These people are my target.

I cannot hope to change them. They must simply be eliminated and replaced by their more open-minded cousins. It's easy to know who they are. They are the ones in positions of influence and authority, the ones in charge of applying labels to the current scene. They are all equally guilty.

