

IN COLLEGE

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minute 1

LEFT SPEAKER

In college, I fantasized about quitting school, moving to Vermont, listening to early music in the morning and baking bread all day (I'd learn how), because my ex-girlfriend from high school had recently dropped out of college and this seemed to be her life.

In college, I chose a Japanese piano professor because I thought that he'd be incredibly strict with me, though in actuality he was gone touring a majority of the time and I worked mostly on my own.

CENTER/LIVE SPEAKER

In college, I went on trial for manipulating copy machines to make free copies for my homework assignments, which a lot of people did, and though we all eventually got caught and most people just paid what they owed, I refused to apologize and thus went before the student judicial board, and when they asked my defense, I remember saying that if a flaw in the machinery allowed for me to do something that I considered to be perfectly fair, that is, to make free copies for my homework, then I saw no problem with exploiting the flaw and I'd do it again, and so I was found guilty and forced to pay thirty-something dollars plus write an apology to a secretary who thought I'd been mean to her.

In college, I saw my first opera, *Così Fan Tutte*.

In college, I practiced scales, arpeggios and exercises (by Brahms and others, including some of my own invention) every day before I dared to touch my repertoire, with the regime typically lasting more than 2 hours.

In college, I took guitar lessons for a semester.

RIGHT SPEAKER

In college, I didn't have a cell phone, but called home from a payphone on the second floor of the Music Annex virtually every day, near tears because I missed home so badly.

In college, I spent a weekend, or a week, or something in a dorm that wasn't *actually* my dorm, and I truly have no idea why or what it was called.

In college, I heard a lot about a food court with a place called Taco Johns.

In college, I would fantasize about guys who were out of the closet *just* because they were out the closet, though I don't remember being attracted to a single one of them.

In college, I copied by hand many of the scores I played.

In college, I'd separate the voices of the music I was studying, play them separately and then combine them in every possible combination before playing them all together.

In college, I ate McDonald's almost every day because it was across the street from the music school.

In college, one day at McDonald's someone kept calling out for someone to pick up their order, repeating their number and the contents of the order again and again, until I finally stepped out of line, took the bag, and walked away.

minute 2

In college, I had a class in a very old building right next to the Kinsey Institute, but I don't remember what.

In college, I saw the Philip Glass Ensemble perform, waited by the stage door, and shouted not to Glass but to one of his ensemble members, Eleanor Sandresky, who I visited in New York as a sophomore and who is still a friend.

In college, I first heard the music of Palestrina and Aphex Twin and Laurie Anderson and Peter Maxwell Davies.

In college, I sang for two years in the choirs, an ensemble dumping ground for pianists, guitarists and composers, but I liked singing Durufle's *Requiem*, Britten's *Rejoice in the Lamb*, Sandström's *High Mass*, and Mahler's Second Symphony, which I think is one of the most emotionally overwhelming experiences I've ever had as a musician.

In college, I accompanied a violinist, a violist, and a singer, but don't remember what I did with the singer, who may or may not have been named Adam, and only remember doing two pieces by Hindemith with the violist, and *maybe* the Shostakovich Sonata—God, he was a pain—and playing the Saint-Saëns second violin concerto and Beethoven fourth violin sonata with a friend who just wrote me the other day and said she thought this talk sounded like an interesting idea, because she didn't really what happened at IU, either.

In college, before I had a truck, I would walk a mile or two to the movies on Saturday nights after practicing.

In college, the two best books about music that I read were *Sound and Light: La Monte Young and Marian Zazeela* and *Extended Play* by John Corbett.

In college, I composed an unperformed, five-movement experimental work called *Concerto* for strings, piano, turntable, and percussion, which I dedicated and sent to La Monte Young, who never responded.

In college, I remember weeping with tears at a performance of Ives's *Psalms 90*.

In college, I spent one summer on campus in an attempt to fulfill as many general education requirements as possible, as well as some music requirements, including advanced theory and accompanying, and I still consider this the busiest period of my life, ever.

In college, I took a composition elective but spent most of my time in it learning how to use Finale, which I've forgotten everything about.

In college, I took a cultural anthropology class where the teacher, a beautiful black woman with dreadlocks, told me she liked my writing, and I told her that, for me, writing was very hard, and she said: "Really?"

In college, a friend (of a friend) of mine in the music school was suspected of being in the closet—he was even sort of 'outed' by an alleged lover at one point—and I hoped it all was true because he was stunningly attractive and really nice, but he seemed to keep a distance from me whenever we were in the same place at the same time, though I might have imagined that, and anyway he's since come out and is getting married to someone else who is also stunningly attractive.

In college, someone committed suicide by leaping from a window in a building that I never had a class in.

In college, after 9/11, I wrote a long experimental piece for piano called *Variations* that used a numerical system for its composition, and never performed it for anybody.

In college, I wished I went to school in a city where my college wasn't the sole source of the city's culture, like New York.

In college, I learned but never performed Bartok's Op. 14 Suite, Schumann's *Papillons*, Chopin's Op. 62 Nocturnes, Haydn's big C Major Sonata Hob. XI:50, Bach's Prelude and fugue in E-flat major book 2, Bartok's Op. 18 Etudes, and Mozart's D Major Sonata (I forget the K. number), Beethoven's Op. 7 Sonata... and I think that's it solo-wise.

minute 3

In college, I almost wept in the audience at the end of the Gilbert and Sullivan opera, *Yeoman of the Guard*, where over triumphant, happy music everyone onstage smiled and celebrated the reunion of the couple at the center of the opera while the jester, who was in love with the woman all along, frowned and cried discreetly in a corner.

In college, when I used *Finale* to compose, I tried to create these long, early Philip Glass and Steve Reich-like textures, and the results were terrible—and this is when I learned that Glass and Reich were geniuses, because it's actually really hard to build interesting and beautiful sound structures out of small rhythmic and melodic cells.

In college, I heard *Rite of Spring* live for the first time.

In college, I saw Digital Underground in concert, and they were terrible.

In college, I may have played for Janos Starker but I might just be imagining this.

In college, I learned who György Sebók was, and heard a great deal about him from his protégés, but I've still never heard his playing.

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In college, I went to Brevard Music Center the summer of my freshman year and hated it so intensely I left early without telling any of my friends there, just days after the person I went there to study with, Evelyn Brancart, then chair of the IU piano faculty, left herself (but not after we became friends, of sorts) and I was driven to the airport by one of the center's main benefactors, who said he was very disappointed in my decision, and who I sensed was gay.

In college, one evening in the fall of 2002 in the Music Practice Building, when I was cramming for a recital at an Abbey in Southern Indiana and for my first rehearsals with the ballet theatre for Hindemith's *Four Temperaments*, I had my first ever bloody bowel movement, and a few days later was diagnosed with colitis.

minute 4

In college, during my busiest summer, I lived in a house on Woodlawn Avenue, and loved coming home to a house.

In college, I was friendly with, but never a student of, Edmund Battersby, which is interesting because when I was a sophomore he spearheaded an effort to get me expelled for putting up recital advertisements with pictures from Madonna's SEX book on them.

In college, I got the distinct feeling that no one ever really left IU unless they put a lot of work into it.

In college, the IU School of Music was still just called the IU School of Music, and Jacobs, whoever that is, hadn't yet donated millions and millions of dollars and claimed its title.

In college, I never drank coffee.

In college, I had all of my recitals in the oldest hall, Recital Hall, except for my junior recital, which was in a very pretty new, smaller hall whose name I can't remember.

In college, I stopped talking to my roommate, who I was in love with, once he started dating a mutual female friend of ours, and we spent months in silence.

In college, we called the main library, a giant, windowless cube, the "big ugly."

In college, during my teacher's sabbatical, I played for Steven Spooner, who was at the time Karen Shaw's star pupil, and he didn't like the grace notes in my Bach, which I played as eighths.

In college, I received no professional advice or references before graduating.

In college, I tried beta-blockers when I retook my senior recital hearing after failing, and I don't remember feeling any different.

In college, before the colitis hit, I had been so uncomfortable about bathroom talk, that my female roommate once became incredibly annoyed when I said I needed to "not pee."

In college, I don't remember my family ever sending me money, but I don't remember how I ever had any.

In college, J. Peter Burkholder mentioned his "husband" during a music history lecture, and a palpable hush came over the room.

In college, IU had star conductors and pianists on the faculty, and they acted as such, but when I'd leave Bloomington, no one had ever heard of them.

In college, during my senior recital hearing, I fell apart during the opening movement of Bach's c minor Partita, and failed, though Edmund Battersby told me that it had actually gone fine, but they failed me because they "knew I could do better."

In college, I took a weight training course.

minute 5

In college, I had all the specials at Bear's Restaurant memorized, and I knew the cocktail, "The Hairy Bear," was lethal, which I drank during lunch the day I turned 21.

In college, I grew my hair the longest it's ever been.

In college, I started balding.

In college, I wrote a paper on the film *G.I. Jane*.

In college, my friends and I would go to Applebee's for Monday night \$10 steaks and "Mucho Mudslides."

In college, my primary piano professor scolded me for referring to his wife by her first name.

In college, I attended and sang in the Rolling Requiem on the one year anniversary of the September 11th attacks, where in every time zone, a live performance of Mozart's Requiem would begin at 8:46 a.m., the moment of the first plane crash, and I cried through the whole thing.

In college, my grandfather, who taught everyone in my family how to play the piano except for me, but who is probably the reason that anyone in my family, including me, plays, died, with his funeral taking place the morning of September 11th, 2001.

In college, I had an Indian gastroenterologist to treat my ulcerative colitis, but I don't remember his name, only that he administered my first sigmoidoscopy, a procedure done without anesthesia, where a camera is inserted so deep into one's rectum that it reaches the sigmoid colon, blowing air along its course so as to open up the passage and see the possible problems, and of course, as the nurse explained, when one's colon expands, one thinks they have to go to the bathroom, "but you don't really," she said, "just breathe and don't panic, and hold my hand."

In college, the last concert I played was a twenty-four-pianist version of Bach's *Well-Tempered Clavier*, and I played a minor.

In college, I considered joining the army.

In college, I stopped eating salt for a while, and started running, because I thought both would help drain my puffy cheeks from the prednisone I was taking for colitis.

In college, my face was so puffy for awhile from the steroids I took for my colitis, I'm unrecognizable in pictures.

In college, I went to Europe—France, specifically—but haven't been back since.

In college, the day my grandfather died—September 7th, 2001—an AOL headline asked if heaven was real, and I remember, crying and staring at it, thinking that there must not be any news.

minute 6

In college, I was employed by the IU Office of Attractions as one of their touring concert pianists, a kind of ambassador for the school, though I don't remember how I got the gig (maybe through my orchestral pianist position?) and I only remember one recital, at an Abbey in Southern Indiana where I played Mozart, Liszt, Beethoven, and Prokofiev, and people came at different times because of daylight saving time confusion—some parts of Indiana honor daylight saving, and others don't—and the Abbey sent back a positive but less-than-thrilled response about my leather pants and skintight snakeskin shirt, saying I should “better gauge my audiences.”

In college, I learned a different Beethoven piano sonata every year, and haven't learned any since.

In college, I first heard Schumann's *Dichterliebe* and Crumb's *Apparition*, and dreamed of doing both these works on a program with a singer, and then I met the conductor for *Four Temperaments* who told me that, right after our concert together, he would be doing exactly that program with a soprano.

In college, during a rehearsal for the *Nutcracker*, our conductor stabbed the baton through his palm and immediately began shrieking for a plastic surgeon because, as he said, “my hands are my instrument!”

In college, I proposed that the ballet school consider presenting Hindemith's *Four Temperaments*, composed for Balanchine, because it's one of my favorite pieces, and eventually I heard that it was actually being considered, at which point I doubled down on the ballet department, not the piano faculty, until I was the sole pianist considered for the role, and once decided, my teacher only found out I was playing the work when it came up in a faculty meeting.

In college, I was supposed to fly back to Indiana from Vermont on September 11th, the day of my grandfather's funeral, but was stuck at home for the week with the rest of my family, where I practiced Beethoven, Bach, Brahms, and Ginastera, and stared conceiving my experimental Variations piece.

In college, I started learning the Mozart B-flat Major piano concerto, K. 595.

In college, I used my sophomore summer at IU to finagle a role as an orchestral pianist for my ensemble requirement (as opposed to the customary choir), which I retained into the regular school year, even though the spot is generally reserved for graduate students, and anyway, there were three of us.

In college, I learned Liszt's complete *Consolations*, but only played them all as a set once, at an Abbey in Southern Indiana, and I haven't performed the complete set since, and really don't remember how that performance went.

In college, I played the famous “Sugar Plum Fairy” celesta solo in *The Nutcracker*, one of the most terrifying moments of my life as a performer, though astonishingly I never messed it up and ruined Christmas for a thousand children.

minute 7

In college, I worked at a sports bar as a server for one night, at one point spilling an entire tray of wine and beer from over my head onto a group of sorority girls, who, completely soaked, screamed as glass shattered around them.

In college, my teacher would leave his studio key in a folder in a file cabinet in the Music Annex lounge for people to practice in his studio at night, or when he was away on trips, so I virtually lived in his studio, and he once had to talk to me about overuse.

In college, I memorized but never performed the fourth movement of Brahms's Ballades, Op. 10.

In college, it seemed there were always at least three people I knew working on Beethoven's Op. 110.

In college, I ate Burger King on Fridays.

In college, my teacher picked three out of four of my senior recital pieces. Bach's C minor partita, Beethoven's "Waldstein," and Scriabin's Op. 28 Fantasy, and I chose Ives's *Three-Page Sonata*.

In college, I visited my high school Spanish teacher in Boulder Colorado, and he and his wife visited me on a cross country drive, too, and I'm sure we went to Red Lobster, which I reserved for special occasions.

In college, I didn't speak to my father for almost a year after he decided, despite what he'd once promised, not to help with tuition.

In college, I first started listening to reggae music, and one Christmas Eve I stormed out of my home in Vermont when, after a day of reggae music playing, my family asked if they could have a break.

In college, I apparently came across as so asexual that a friend once asked point blank if I'd ever jerked off.

In college, I started to run out of money on my campus cash card, but instead of telling my mom, I began stealing my daily lunches at the student union, devising a whole elaborate routine that allowed me a giant meal from a chicken rotisserie stand, a drink, as well as a pan pizza and/or breadsticks from Pizza Hut, and I was never caught.

In college, I failed my senior recital hearing after already printing and taping posters for the recital all over school, so then I took them all down and spent about three days in my room alone, embarrassed and wanting to drop out, surrounded by them, emerging only to practice in the basement of a nearby dorm where no one could see me.

In college, I listened to country music on Sundays.

In college, I considered going to the health center for free therapy.

In college, my nearly daily outfit was a white t-shirt turned backwards so that the high collar would hide my chest hair.

minute 8

In college, I studied with Karen Shaw for one semester when my teacher went on sabbatical, and when the semester ended and I returned to him, she seemed surprised and more than a little bit offended, to the point that when I wrote to her years later—she eventually became the chair of the department—to propose returning to IU to perform John Cage's *Sonatas and Interludes*, which I was playing in universities nationwide, she replied by reminding me that, despite the gratitude I expressed in my email for our time together, she only remembered that I studied with her one semester.

In college, my closest friends were primarily trumpet players.

In college, during my busiest summer, I took lessons with Luba Dubinsky, but barely had any time to prepare for my lessons, which was *so* not like me, and the only repertoire I remember bringing her was a small, sort of obscure Bach suite in A minor, and the only advice I really remember her giving me was to not worry about reaching the back of the hall with my sound, especially during soft passages, because she thought that what occurred at and around the piano was of primary importance, and that my listeners' ears should come to me.

In college, Andre Watts, before he joined the faculty, visited IU to play both of Brahms's piano concerti in one night, and in the second concerto he suffered the worst memory slip I've seen from any performer in my lifetime, requiring the orchestra to stop as he consulted the score on the conductor's podium, delighting my classmates and sort of flooding me with relief.

In college, I had at least two-and-a-half crushes on straight, male friends of mine.

In college, I bought a rice maker.

In college, my teacher thought I played Prokofiev's *Sarcasms Op.17* too radically, while in my mind I'm sure I followed the score to a T.

In college, I never really played my modern repertoire in lessons, and incidentally, this is the only music I really play nowadays.

In college, I attended a masterclass by Edward Auer.

In college, my freshman roommate sold drugs out of our apartment and, I presume, did a lot of drugs too; enough that people started coming up to me asking me why "we" didn't share.

In college, when I played Hindemith's *Four Temperaments*, I attended weeks of ballet rehearsals, accompanying the dancers with a self-produced reduction of the score.

In college, I took a full year of Swahili for my foreign language requirement.

In college, I made serious plans to visit Africa, communicating with a program in Ghana (where they *don't* speak Swahili) and even getting my immunizations, but it turned out I couldn't afford it.

In college, my freshman year roommate would stay up all night, and was usually still awake when I left at six-something the next morning to practice, and one night, perhaps high, he half-laughingly half-seriously attacked me in my bed as I went to sleep, punching me and shouting, "*Why do you have to leave so early? Why do you practice so early?*"

minute 9

In college, I finally listened to La Monte Young's Well-Tuned Piano.

In college, during my freshman year I applied and was accepted into Frederic Chiu's Deeper Piano Studies in New Rochelle NY; and after the opening night concert, two men approached me as they left and said, pointing at me, "Now make sure you get famous."

In college, at Frederic Chiu's Deeper Piano Studies workshop we were to memorize and perform the same Scarlatti sonata by the end of the weekend without touching the piano, and I was the only participant out of the group (which included pianist Steve Beck, who I met that weekend and who played the sonata perfectly) who opted to play it alone, with no one watching, so everyone went outside and talked when I played.

In college, I saw directors Kevin Smith and Spike Lee speak at the student union, and at the latter talk I asked Lee a question that I guess took too long because people started clapping as I spoke to get me to stop.

In college, the last time I saw him, my teacher told me that I had the technique, but that my mind didn't believe it yet—that my "mind hadn't caught up to my body."

In college, I was in love with a singer who is still a dear friend, but whose girlfriend suspected at the time that I was in love with him and really didn't like us hanging out—and now she herself is getting married to a woman.

In college, my freshman year, I listened to Björk's *Homogenic* and *Dancer in the Dark* albums on my early morning walks to the music school.

In college, I laughed until I cried in an Arby's parking lot when, sitting in the driver seat of my truck and looking for my keys, I nearly smashed my head through what I thought was an open driver's side window.

In college I prepared my first piano for a lecture I gave on the music of John Cage, George Crumb, and La Monte Young.

In college, I always, always felt lazy.

In college, several times on the day before a recital, I would end up not practicing.

In college, I registered and voted as an Indiana resident, and remember the night that Al Gore lost.

In college, I once brought a friend—in fact, the first person I ever met at IU during orientation (and of course a trumpeter)—home for Thanksgiving, and we're still friends now in New York; he's married and expecting a baby with the girl—also still a dear friend—who I lived with in the house on Woodlawn Ave during my busiest summer, who got annoyed when I once said I had to "not pee," who my former-roommate dated that time I stopped talking to him.

In college, I lied about how many other schools I got into, and said the reason I chose IU was because of the abundance of practice rooms.

minute 10

In college, for a course on Charles Ives with J. Peter Burkholder, I gave a lecture on Ives's Studies for piano, arguing, I guess, that they served as a crucial laboratory for his other work.

In college, I purchased a small truck with inheritance money from my grandfather, and got a lot of parking tickets from leaving it in an unofficial lot behind the music library.

In college, I took a course in Feldenkrais method to count as my science credit—I was good at finding these credit loopholes—though the class was nothing more than a teacher leading a bunch of us through poses, nearly all of them lying down, in the early evening of our weekdays, and everyone, tired from practicing, would just fall asleep and she'd get terribly impatient with us.

In college, I took a course in Indian music, and though I can't remember what it counted for, because I never would've taken it 'just because,' I remember liking it but not having access to a lot of the music we listened to, learning ragas and talas despite a very poor teacher, and how virtually everyone failed the final, with me soaring above with a B- or something like that.

In college, I took about twenty pills a day for my colitis, none of which worked.

In college, I stole a hardcover biography of Schumann from Borders, taking the cover off, leaving it in the stacks, and walking out with the book.

In college I wrote two major term papers for my history classes; one on the question of tuning in Bach's Well-Tempered Clavier, and the other subject I can't really remember.

In college, I took a course in Motown to count for my humanities credit, and for some time I could identify the year, artist and label—there were mini-labels within Motown—to hundreds of Motown songs.

In college, I took a course in electronic music composition, though in the class we used a program, the name of which I can't remember, that no one uses, and my final piece was both too long and pretty bad, though I wish I could hear it again.

In college, I bought a compilation called *OHM—Early Gurus of Electronic Music*, one of the best albums I've ever purchased, and I got it for like twenty bucks, while on Amazon it's listed now at about \$200.

In college, between my junior and senior years, I had about 20 bowel movements per day, almost all of which consisting entirely of blood and guts, and I remember thinking, "It's weird that I'm used to this, and that something inside me is bleeding this much, all the time."

minute 11

In college, Jeremy Denk was on the panel of my upper divisional (a sophomore exam that essentially "divides" who should stay in the music school from who shouldn't) and he called my performance of Chopin's Op. 62 Nocturnes "somehow strange."

In college, I remember when Blair Tindall's memoir, *Mozart in the Jungle* came out.

In college, when in France I spent two separate nights in Paris, both times with a Hungarian pianist friend who lived in the city but who was attending the same summer program as me on its outskirts, and for one trip in we went to the Eiffel Tower, and another time he showed me all over the city on these tiny side roads, and then I spent the night at his family's house, but I don't remember his name or what music he played.

In college, I saw *Requiem for a Dream* and *Traffic* back-to-back at the movie theatre.

In college, I think the most impressive piano performance I saw was Winston Choi performing movements from the *Concord Sonata*.

In college, I prepared my upper divisional program with the assistance of a metronome, and could only play the music if I used the metronome to gradually work myself up to performance tempo, and even then, the music would quickly decay if I didn't perform it at that tempo as soon as I had attained it, and so I came away from my upper-divisionals feeling like I never truly learned the music, a sentiment I still feel, and after that I never touched a metronome.

In college, I was friends with Ryan McAdams, who was then a charismatic if fledgling pianist, but who has gone on to work as an acclaimed, professionally represented conductor based in New York City, though we've never met up since I moved here.

In college, I prepared Prokofiev's Sonata No. 5 and a Mozart Sonata in B-flat Major, K. 570 for my freshman entrance, but never played them for my teacher.

In college, when I went to France, I really have no idea how I navigated the trains, speaking no French, to get to Gardenville, like an hour out of the city, and I remember that when I actually showed up, Emile Naoumoff seemed surprised.

In college, I visited Ravel's home in France, but could only manage to play Ives on his piano because I only really played Ravel in high school, and for fun.

In college, at orientation, the department chair, who singlehandedly had me admitted to IU after a private audition following a mishap with my original application, which was lost (so I assumed he felt indebted since I drove out to Indiana from Vermont for the audition, and said "yes" out of guilt even though I played poorly)...well anyway, months later at orientation he asked me at some kind of sign-in table what my degree intention was, and I still remember his look of shock when I said "piano *performance*."

In college, the ballet program I performed on included not only *Four Temperaments* but also Hummel's trumpet concerto, and because none of the advertisements mentioned the trumpet soloist nor me, I feared that no one from the music school would come, and of course it bothered me that people in the music school didn't know I was soloing, so on the morning of the first performance, I printed and taped all over the school a bunch of basic, text only 8x11 posters plugging the performance and wishing he, the trumpet soloist, and I luck, wording the message as if it came from some third party, and I never told anyone about what I'd done.

minute 12

In college, I dreamed of being a country music radio announcer, and applied to be on the college radio station while I also considered changing my major.

In college, I saw a shirtless and sexy Anthony de Mare on the cover of an all-American modern music CD and years later, when we finally met, he told me, "That cover was *so* not my idea."

In college, I often listened to Neil Young's Decade compilation in the music library as I worked.

In college, I panicked over the idea that when I graduated, all of my emails would be destroyed, so I made a book of all the correspondences between my former roommate and myself, presenting it as a gift to him after I left IU, calling it *Emales*.

In college, I really loved one local Italian restaurant but I don't remember its name.

In college, if I practiced in the Music Annex, I would fold a piece of paper into a perfect square and put it into the little window looking into my practice room so people couldn't see me, but then, friends soon came to recognize the square.

In college, my studio had masterclasses on Friday nights, and I looked forward to them.

In college, I don't remember being drunk once, but I know it happened.

In college, a cop pulled one of my closest friends and I over a few blocks from a strip club he liked called Night Moves where we went a couple times, and with the officer at my friend's window, I held a pile of freshly drunk beer bottles in place under the passenger seat with my feet.

In college, I would often go to the John Cage area of the piano literature section in the music library and leaf through his scores, though his *Sonatas and Interludes* were in the sonatas section, and I often looked through them, too.

In college, I went to Indianapolis to see Tori Amos in concert with the trumpeter friend I met at orientation, who is still a friend.

In college, I would sometimes order a whole Mother Bear's pizza to consume myself.

minute 13

In college, I attended only one sporting event, a giant relay race for runners that is a huge thing at IU, but I don't remember its name.

In college, I listened to music by a group called Funkstörung when I felt depressed.

In college, I had my first colonoscopy, the day after I performed in the Midwest premier of John Adams's *El Niño*—I was on a Fleet regime just before the performance, and then continued it just afterward, staying up all night to complete it for the procedure—and the same day as my trial before the student judicial board for stealing photocopies, and I remember they said I “didn't *look* tired.”

In college I took a comparative literature class where I read everything except *Henry IV*, and I only really skimmed *Hamlet*, and this is the class where I first discovered Richard Brautigan's *Trout Fishing in America* and work by T'ang Dynaty poet Li Po, and later wrote song cycles on the words of both artists.

In college, I had regular phone sex with a guy from the Internet who I thought sounded like a creep, but who eventually had the landline number to the house on Woodlawn.

In college, the basketball coach Bobby Knight was fired for... well, I don't actually remember, but riots broke out across the campus for days.

In college, I lived in two dorms, one apartment, and a shared house on Woodlawn Avenue where I had the front bedroom, which I still inaccurately picture as a sunroom.

In college, I sat in front of David Lang at a concert of his music.

In college, at my trial for manipulating the copy machines to spit out free copies for my homework assignments, a guidance counselor of some kind said “we love you” to me in a private discussion, as the jury deliberated, and then said, “but we're disappointed in your choices,” and it was the first time I ever felt like a delinquent, because I just rolled my eyes.

In college, I went to Bloomington's sole gay bar, Bullwinkles, only when the straight singer friend I loved, suggested it, and he would invariably go home with a girl.

In college, I napped three times.

In college, there was not yet a Chipotle in Bloomington.

minute 14

In college, every year the Armenian General Benevolent Union awarded me a thousand (or more, I can't remember) dollars in scholarship, even though I'm only half-Armenian and my name doesn't betray a trace of my Armenian heritage.

In college, I watched the second seasons of *The Sopranos* and *Sex in the City*, both of which I'd never really seen, both on VHS, and always during lunchtime.

In college, I planned on getting management once I graduated, but I didn't know for what.

In college, I think I was awarded about a thousand dollars a year in scholarship from IU, which I thought was too low considering all of the performing I was doing both as a soloist and with the orchestras and for the office of attractions, which virtually no other undergraduate was doing, along with the number of credits I'd accumulated and my high GPA, but IU insisted on keeping it at a thousand dollars for all 3 ½ of my years there.

In college, I tried to date a girl.

In college, my family moved out of the house I grew up in, in a neighborhood, and to a log cabin in the country, and to this day, when I dream, I'm still in that first house.

In college, my ex-girlfriend from high school came to IU after dropping out of Fordham, but not to be near me—she wanted to attend the early music institute, and her best friend also went to IU.

In college, when I told my primary teacher that I planned on graduating a semester early, he said, "But do you really think you've learned everything you need to learn?" and I answered, "Here? Yes."

In college, I often slept in the same bed as a straight male friend of mine, and nothing sexual ever happened.

In college, I started communicating with a friend from high school who was in the Army stationed in Texas, and we hadn't spoken since high school when, though I considered him one of my closest friends at the time, he helped spread a rumor our senior year that I was trying to, as the rumor went, "suck his dick," which never happened.

In college, I still had an AOL account.

In college, I opted not to stick around for the winter graduation ceremony, and IU mailed my degree to Vermont a few months later.

In college, I had the necessary amount of credits to graduate by the time I was halfway through my senior year, and I'd completed all required music undergraduate classes.

minute 15

In college, my freshman roommate was expelled, I'm guessing, after the winter holiday break, and no one ever took his place, so I had this giant room on the top floor of a high-rise dorm building, overlooking Bloomington, all to myself, with double-the-furniture and double-the-bed, since I took apart the bunks and shaped them into a queen size, crib-looking thing, and this whole development actually cured my homesickness.

In college, I would attend free midnight movies at the student union.

In college, I memorized but never performed Copland's Piano Concerto.

In college, during one of Evelyn Brancart's masterclasses a student of hers asked if she should work on Chopin's thirds etude to work on her thirds, and Evelyn snapped back, "No! You get your thirds, then you play the etude."

In college, I attended a lecture by musicologist Nadine Hubbs about queer identity in modern American music, and for years I couldn't find her nor remember her name, until last year when I finally tracked her down, wrote her a fan letter, and a few months ago she invited me to perform at University of Michigan.

In college, I attended a lecture by Philip Glass where he asked why it would benefit him if someone else played his piano music, since in that case he wouldn't be getting paid.

In college, my gastroenterologist thought I should get my colon removed unless this one particular doctor in New York City suggested otherwise, a doctor I eventually saw and who would later admit me as an emergency patient at Mt Sinai.

In college, the music school put a flatscreen TV in the Annex lounge to display the recital schedule and advertise upcoming performances, but on the night the Iraq war began, it showed a silent CNN broadcast of events as they unfolded, and I remember one girl, holding a cello, glancing up at the screen and chuckling before walking away.

In college, I was a student in the music school at the same time as composer John Glover, who I didn't know at all then, but who I see about every day now in New York.

In college, for some time I was the only non-Asian person in my studio.

In college, I never once hooked up.

In college, I listened to Messiaen's *Catalogue d'oiseaux* a lot, and my favorite was "Le Lorient," which I had hoped to play.

In college, I studied with Shigeo Neriki, Luba Dubinsky, Evelyn Brancart, Emile Naumoff, and Karen Shaw, and took lessons with Reiko Neriki and Stephen Spooner.

minute 16

In college, I saw Menahem Pressler perform only once, with the Beaux Arts Trio, and it was the first time I'd ever heard the Ravel Trio, and I don't think I've heard it since, and this was the first time I'd seen him play since catching a solo recital at the Vergennes Opera House in Vermont, where he played the complete Chopin Preludes.

In college, I played no French music, and not one Romantic-era sonata.

In college, they still talked about how Joshua Bell went to IU.

In college, for my modern music theory class, when instructed to compose a 12-tone piece, I constructed a row out of notes a perfect-fifth apart (with octave displacements) and the instructor threatened to not give me credit because the piece, which was a song for violin, piano, and soprano, the text coming from a Cocoa Puffs box, didn't sound "atonal enough."

In college, people always asked, both in and out of Bloomington, who I studied with, always fishing, I think, about whether or not I studied with Pressler, and when I'd tell them my primary teacher's name, or anyone else's, they wouldn't know who I was talking about.

In college, I gradually played my way through both books of Bach's Well-Tempered Clavier, French and English Suites, Toccatas, as well as the complete Beethoven Sonatas, Mozart Sonatas and Fantasies, Haydn Sonatas, the complete Scriabin sonatas, preludes, and etudes, and some Schubert, but not a lot.

In college, I think Jonathan Biss went to IU at the same time as me, which I knew mostly because his parents were on the faculty and I accompanied a violinist who studied with his mom, and I think I saw flyers for his recitals from time to time.

In college, I lied to a friend about hooking up with a girl in the bathroom of a local bar.

In college, the Herald Times classical music critic, Peter Jacobi gave me my first ever quote, calling me a "pianist in command...deserving of the cheers he received" for my *Four Temperaments* performance, when I really felt pretty shitty about my playing, and at the time my head looked like a pumpkin from all the medications I was on.

In college, I wore leather pants in every solo recital.

In college, I had a crush on a, for all intents, rather homely, straight composer, and I kept asking him to get Taco Bell with me, for some reason, under the auspices of talking about his music, and one day we actually did.

In college, I ate cottage cheese for the first time, at a Steak and Shake.

In college, I began work on a massive piece for strings, choruses, guitar, and piano, based on Psalm 119 and a theme from Mendelssohn's Elijah, and I called it the Psalm Cantata.

In college, the concerto competition pieces included Rach 3, Prokofiev 2, and the Barber Piano Concerto, which I loved, and which was performed after I already left.

minute 17

In college, my sophomore year I skipped going home for Thanksgiving so I could stay in Indiana and practice for my first solo recital there, and on the holiday itself I made, and burned, a Pepperidge farm chicken pot pie.

In college, people would always meet each other at Panera Bread, which I'd never heard of before, and which was central to nothing.

In college, when taking J. Peter Burkholder's class on Ives, he appeared with a splint on his finger one day and explained that he'd gotten it caught in that kind of orange plastic fencing you often see on construction sites, and to this day I tuck my fingers away whenever I pass that kind of fencing.

In college, I couldn't understand why 99% of the pianists, including myself, were there.

In college, I discovered Beethoven's Op. 132 string quartet, which is still my favorite piece of music.

In college, I had a purple iMac and that I rarely used, and a purple printer too.

In college, I took a course called piano technology that met at 8 a.m., which because of Indiana's weird relationship with daylight saving, often meant the sun was still rising as the class started, and almost every day I sat in the back with a banana and yogurt and fell asleep for a couple minutes, and though we had to tune an octave to pass the class, I have no recollection of doing it, or how to do it now, and my only distinct memory is of the day the teacher showed us how to dismember a piano for moving, teaching us to dislodge the legs with a mallet as the piano rests on its side, and how so many people had to try many times to find the sweet spot for the mallet to hit, and I came up and lobbed its leg off in one fell swoop.

In college, my sister gave me a framed picture of Michelangelo's David with a superimposed image of a doctor swabbing at his genitalia, titled "The Circumcision of David," and when some guy once saw it hanging in my apartment, I guess he started spreading a rumor that I had "pictures of guys blowing each other hanging all over the place."

In college, a friend once lovingly looked at his hands and asked me if I, too, thought they were beautiful.

In college, I bought two Madonna albums the day they came out: *Music* and *American Life*.

In college, my last exam was Piano Lit 2.

In college, I took a required pedagogy course from the idiosyncratic, disorganized and chainsmoking head of the preparatory division, and though I actually had a student (students?) I don't remember their name (names?) or face (faces?), but do remember myriad packets of photocopied material, a textbook called the *Well-Tempered Piano Teacher*, and that for whole notes, in lieu of counting to 4, the instructor would tell us to say the words "HOLD THAT WHOLE NOTE."

minute 18

In college, a good friend of mine nearly destroyed her wrist from over-practicing.

In college, people used AIM to communicate, but I only remember using it to talk to my old friend stationed on an Army base in Texas.

In college, I bought Emmylou Harris's *Wrecking Ball*, which is my favorite album, like ever.

In college, I almost cried once standing in line at McDonald's watching a silent TV playing *Man on the Moon*, starring Jim Carey.

In college, TRL was still on MTV.

In college, I played in orchestras under at least two major conductors whose names I don't remember.

In college, after I apologized to my former-roommate for not talking to him for many months, we shared at least half-a-year of friendship before saying goodbye, which happened after my last exam and just before I drove away from IU, and this all happened at dusk, but probably late afternoon because of Indiana's weird daylight saving time thing, and it happened in the college bookstore parking lot across from the music school with my truck's driver side door open and him standing there with a line of cars honking behind him, wanting my spot so they could return their books at the end of the semester and buy new ones for the next one, the one I wouldn't be there for, and it was raining, and he was crying, but I wasn't—not until I started actually driving away from Bloomington, and then I couldn't stop, and on and on I cried for hours as I drove, state after state, and part of me wished he could have seen me cry because I worried that he thought I might not miss him as much as I would, and did already, and on and on I cried until I stopped at a rest area in Buffalo, New York to call him but before making it inside I had a violent colitis episode in the parking lot, evacuating blood right there on the snow-covered pavement by my truck, collapsing in a defeated heap by my waste, and so when I finally got to the payphone to tell him how I had cried, I actually wasn't crying anymore, but almost laughing in disbelief, and yet I still dialed his number, not knowing what I'd say or if I'd laugh or cry when he answered, but he didn't answer and I just got his answering machine, and so I hung up and drove home.

In college, I learned that peanut butter doesn't have to be refrigerated.

In college, I illegally downloaded some, but not a lot, of music, but I would often pull up CDs from the library archives, bring them to the computer music lab and rip them onto blank discs.

In college, I never bought anything that had an IU logo on it.

In college, I was recognized for something called the Founders Day Honors, or some Presidents Award...I don't know, I can't remember.

In college, I cried during a live concert performance of Stravinsky's *Apollo*.