

## Toys and Games of Time and Space

### I.

Tomorrow I plan to tell my grandmother's great grandmother that today in St. Paul, Minnesota, U.S.A. I called my cousin in Poland while driving a car 60 miles per hour and listening to music written during the Italian Renaissance, but I might be getting ahead of myself. The U.S.A., Minnesota, let alone St. Paul, would be mysteries to her. Why wouldn't a descendant be living in Poland, in the rural outskirts of Lodz in a farming community called Wies Orenice? The simple answer to that would be World War II, but WWII would raise the issue of World War I, neither of which is a simple subject. This would introduce the United States, and maybe I'd tell her the names of other states in which I have lived. I'd consult experts in communications to explain the telephone in words we could both understand before we could approach the topic of the cell phone. We would come around to The Italian Renaissance and its music, how we know there was such a thing, and what it sounded like. I'd bring in media experts to address the history of recorded music from Thomas Edison to Amazon.com. I'd also need help with electricity. I'd try to explain how the CD player is housed in a vehicle that daily transports me at high speeds distances farther than she traveled in her lifetime. She would consult the village priest about all of this. Who else could she ask?

### II.

Tomorrow I plan to hear from my granddaughter's great granddaughter about what she can do every day. She may reveal that she can speak to her mother, grandmother, my great grandmother and me all at the same time in real time. She might say that because of advances in genetics she knows for a fact that her daughter will not die of cancer as I did. She could tell me that she is so interested in the Italian Renaissance that she visits it regularly and argues with priests. She may say that she likes St. Paul; that she often visits it in 1978 on her way to the Italian Renaissance. She could admit that thanks to brain chip technology she is a better violinist than I am and that she frequently appears as the soprano Isolde in the Wagner opera at the Met. Her biggest news could be that the cutting edge of testicular attachments will soon enable her to also sing the tenor role of Tristan in the same opera. I will answer her that I believe that there is no order of difficulty in miracles and that just this morning I was trying to explain this to my grandmother's great grandmother.