

STRING THEORY

ert De Niro, and actress-singer Ronee Blakley; in another, she's with the inspired combination of Leonard Cohen and Devo. There were jaunts to London where, Gisela recalls, she first exposed Jagger to the Sex Pistols. Meanwhile, she says, Paul was having affairs all over the place, the most notable being with Patti Smith, who, in 1976, described their connection: "We're both walleyed." (She wrote a beautiful poem for Paul called "Indian Rubies.") The two became part of the scene at Max's Kansas City, in New York.

For her part, Gisela was having an affair of her own—with Dennis Hopper. She drove out to Taos, New Mexico, to visit him at his adobe fiefdom of drugs, tequila, guns, paranoia, and general mayhem. Hopper, Gisela says, was an angel one minute, the "Antichrist" the next. On one occasion, he called for his machine gun, vowing to shoot everyone in the house, including Gisela, to pieces. Having survived an armed abduction and the kidnapping of her husband, Gisela's response was basically: *I got this*. She fetched the machine gun. "I gave it to him," Gisela says. "And he started to cry." Situation defused. She remained close to Hopper throughout his life and took some stunning portraits of him.

As the 1970s wound down, Gisela appeared in an episode of the TV sitcom *Barney Miller* (talk about surreal), while Paul, who'd begun dating a woman from a Tuscan winemaking family, was getting deeper into drugs. "I'm watching my own destruction," Gisela says Paul told her, "and I can't stop it." She decided it would be best to escape to San Francisco and set up a normal (relatively speaking) household with the kids. She would eventually write plays, getting involved in the Magic Theater there, where Sam Shepard cut his teeth. Gisela and Paul had been cast in Wim Wenders's *The Shape of Things*, but they were clearly fracturing. In the spring of 1981, Paul took a prescribed medicinal cocktail—intended to get his drinking and drugging under control—and fell into a coma. The "accident," as the family calls it, left Paul in a permanent state of paralysis—wheelchair-bound and nearly blind, but with his brain function intact.

Despite the fact that Paul and Gisela separated in 1986 and divorced in 1993, family members attest that the two maintained a bond until Paul died, at age 54, in 2011, with Gisela at his side—as she would be with Jutta, at the end of her life. In his own strange way, Gisela says, Paul had managed to escape the cast-iron bubble of being a Getty. "It's like you have to destroy your body," Gisela says, "to be really able to step out."

In the sparse Munich apartment of a onetime partner—a mathematician—Gisela talks for nearly eight hours, day turning to night. She discusses the past, the present, and the future. She mentions the film she and her nephew Severin are working on, about her sister's illness and death; her fascination with Varanasi, the Indian city of the dead; her appreciation of the Internet as a "consciousness machine." There remains an energizing aura of adventure about her.

The British filmmaker Sophie Fiennes, who has just released an acclaimed documentary about the Studio 54-era icon Grace Jones, has been Gisela's friend for 20 years. She says, "When Gisela is deciding to do something crazy she'll say, 'Ja, I'm going to ride the tiger!'" Fiennes admires Gisela's willingness to keep riding that tiger—as she approaches 70. Even today, when faced with a challenge, Fiennes says, she often finds herself wondering, "What would Gisela say or do?"

I keep wondering what Jutta would say or do. The sister's absence is palpable—a presence in itself. Gisela insists her twin never feels far away, much like the spirit of '68, or Paul. "I do feel her now, all the time," she says, with a single candle flickering on the coffee table before her. "I feel something very good is always coming from her. She's encouraging me, making me braver. Even if it's just my imagination." □

At the ripe old age of three, Charlie Siem fell in love with a piece of music his mother played regularly on cassette tapes. It was the first movement of Beethoven's majestic Violin Concerto, and "this very simple melody," he says, "represented something almost unattainable in its beauty. It happened to be the violin that was playing the melody, so that's what I started doing." The son of a Norwegian businessman and a British mum, Siem (pronounced "SEE-em") made his concert debut at age 15, received a music degree from Cambridge, and is now, at 32, a classical virtuoso with a jam-packed schedule of 30 to 80 performances a year. Concerts this May take him to São Paulo and Rio, Istanbul, Izmir, and Bergen, Norway.

Because he's crossed over into collaborative work with musicians such as Bryan Adams, Jamie Cullum, and the Who, and also happens to be heartthrob-handsome—modeling gigs with Armani, Dior, and Dunhill have won him a following in the fashion world—Siem may strike some as an outside-the-box artist. Don't be fooled. This guy's a purist. His inspiration as a boy was Jascha Heifetz—"the god of the violin," Siem calls him—yet his own fiddling nods to the expressive styles of midcentury masters Nathan Milstein and Christian Ferras.

Charlie Siem at the Steinway & Sons piano factory, in Queens, New York.

Siem wears a jacket by **Salvatore Ferragamo**; sweater by **Hermès**; T-shirt by **Alexander Wang**; hair products by **R+Co**; grooming products by **C. Lake Organics**.

Siem plays a priceless, and very temperamental, 1735 Guarneri del Gesù. Asked what kind of animal the violin would be, he says, "Going onstage is similar to going into a cage with a tiger. There's always an element of danger. What you've done in the past doesn't necessarily work twice. It's always the unknown." But when Charlie gets that tiger under his chin, it purrs.

—LAURA JACOBS

