

as he ever verbalised what he did... In music there is an X factor, I guess.... My ensemble was talking about this? We never talked in that terminology in my ensemble...

IQ: I don't suppose it would be too popular at the university to start talking about magic at this late century.

Danlee: Well, among the scientists, no, but among the artists, yes. But anyway, in sound- it's like in the movies: background music to movies sometimes makes the shot, and you don't realize it, watching the movie, but if that music wasn't there, the shot would be very very flat. Just in sound itself there is that aspect in the human being that music can take you to a certain elevated state. You may consciously know it, or you may not know it, depending on your sensitivity. Harry did have that philosophy that music could transport you to an elevated state, but he never dwelt on it verbally.

IQ: He wasn't coming out of any kind of a position along the yogic lines where you open certain chakras with certain tones, or combinations of tones?

Danlee: No, I don't think so, no.

IQ: Do you know who Christopher Tree is?

Danlee: I have a vague recollection of the name.

IQ: He's a performance artist that also uses all percussion things. I haven't heard about him for twenty years. He was kind of an underground cult figure in the '60s, and he made all different sizes of gongs and things, and he would dance around among these instruments and play them. He was intentionally trying to open people up, you know, in that way. And evidently it worked, in some cases anyway. I would have thought that he and Harry would be connected. You know Jon Lazell, I suppose..

Danlee: Nope. I don't know him either.

IQ: He's a drum maker on Mountain Drive in Montecito. He built drums for a lot of people up there, and they would get up there and they would play these drums a couple of times a week, and they did it for years and years and years and years and years. Everybody that was into drumming would come there. They had almost a Hopi-like attitude toward it - they were keeping the planet turning by doing this drumming.

Danlee: That's a very ancient idea. The Medieval theorists thought along these lines, that music was part of the overall "music of the spheres". And who can say they're wrong?

IQ: The only way we could find out would be to make the Hopis stop doing the Corn Dance, and see if it stopped coming up out of the ground.

Tell me about Harry's view of integrating the arts, in terms of performance.

Danlee: Harry had some very conscious and definite ideas. He felt that we are in an age of specialization. You specialize in an instrument, you specialize, maybe, in an historical period, and he thought that the musical environment should embrace as many of the arts as possible. Specifically, he put his instruments on stage. And he built his instruments to be as beautiful as possible. Of course this is subjective - some people might think they look ugly; some people might think they look beautiful. We'll assume that most people think they look beautiful. Then, the instrumentalists playing on stage were not only required to play the instruments, but in terms of Harry's philosophy, the way they looked was almost as important to the presentation as the skill they had. They were sometimes required to move, sometimes to dance, and sometimes to act. That's what my ensemble does now. We have a program of Harry's music where we do dance, and we do move, and we do act, in his works. You've got to know Partch's pieces to know when he was stressing integrated theatre and when he was not. If you go back through his large works, Oedipus really isn't an integrated theatrical piece.

IQ: That's an early work?

Danlee: Yes.

Another key word that has to do with Partch's idea is "Corporeal", meaning "appealing to the physical senses". If you have a certain musical ingredients, that might have a dramatic story behind them, and if you have the musicians visually part of the story, you are going to, then, strengthen the overall cathartic effect of the piece on the viewer.

IQ: Had he had any intentions of drawing the audience into it in any way?

Danlee: No, he hadn't. He could have in one of his works, Revelation in the Courthouse Park.

But, getting back to Oedipus, Oedipus is not really an integrated theatre or corporeal work; it's really a straightforward setting of the Oedipus play, to music, and the instruments are on stage, but the instrumentalists aren't an integrated part of the theatrical story. After Oedipus he wrote a piece called Castor and Pollux, which my group dances. It's easy to do, because there are only two instruments playing at a time in certain sections, and in those sections, it's very easy for the musicians to get out and dance. Partch's next big work after that was called The Bewitched. The Bewitched is totally integrated, totally corporeal theatre, which incorporates straight-out dancers, but the musicians are equally important, if not more so. The work after The Bewitched was Revelation in the Courthouse Park, which has the dual character of Dion/Dionysus in it, and this work is semi-integrated and semi-corporeal. It could be made more corporeal than it was in the first performance in 1959. We performed it at the University of Illinois, and it was a college production. We're going to perform this again in Philadelphia next October, with professionals, and I hope it will be the definitive performance of that work.

Danlee: He sometimes would size up a woman too quickly. Harry had a couple of personalities, and depending on which personality was dominant that day, he might size up a woman, and attack her, for no reason at all, other than he had some visual clue that she looked like a matriarch. He didn't like professional mothers - any woman that wanted to run her husband, and run the family, and run her kids.

IQ: Did he come out of a strong mother himself?

Danlee: Yes, a very strong mother, an **extremely** strong mother, and Harry intensely hated and intensely loved his mother, at the same time.

IQ: So naturally he went for Oedipus as his first work....

Danlee: All Harry's works were essentially attempts to work out some problem in himself of a psychological nature.

IQ: It's been said before that any good art is that, and that you have to be kind of a neurotic to want to be an artist in the first place.

Danlee: That's why I'm not a composer. I have no demons inside myself to exorcise.

IQ: Count your blessings. Harry had good relationships with some women, though. I was surprised to learn that he thought well of Anais Nin.

Danlee: Some of his greatest supporters were women. Anais, and Betty Freeman, Madeline Turtelot, a woman in San Diego named Helen Raitt. He had very warm friendships with all those ladies.

IQ: And he never blew up at them with that bitter acid and invective that he could pour out on his male acquaintances?

Danlee: No. He had some very endearing women friends, and they were very important in his life. He had more tangible material support from women than he did from men.

IQ: Did he ever get any foundation money?

Danlee: Yep, he did.

IQ: When he said he knew Anais Nin, I asked him if he knew Henry Miller. He said he did, but then he launched into a diatribe against Henry Miller. He couldn't stand the man, and that surprised me.

Danlee: I didn't know the man intimately, but I assume he was bisexual.

IQ: Henry???

Danlee: Yes.

IQ: I have no idea, but this would be news to me, if he were. I think he was a heterosexual. He certainly wrote extensively about men's and women's relationships.

Danlee: Henry might have been a primadonna. I don't know. I never talked to Harry about this at all.

IQ: Do you think Harry was a primadonna?

Danlee: No, he wasn't a primadonna. He had very high ideals on philosophy in general, and on his music in particular, and he did know that he was a very talented person, but he wasn't pedantic about it. If he was pressed to take an artistic stand, he would do so, but in a normal discourse with people, he wasn't a primadonna. He didn't come off that way.

IQ: I didn't think so either, but he certainly came off like... a twisted genius. Maybe twisted a bad word, but he seemed eccentric to the point of psychosis sometimes. It was just my impression. The way he moved, and talked, it seemed like he was on a collision course, potentially, with something. He always seemed to be ricocheting off of one thing, and on his way to another.

Danlee: He was ricocheting off of himself. You're probably more sensitive to that than I am. I was sort of blind to any psychological depth that Harry had.

IQ: Well your nose was right down there in the music.

Danlee: Yes. I was right with him all the time. I knew him from when I was nineteen years old. At that time, I didn't perceive it, psychologically.

IQ: Was that in Sausalito?

Danlee: That was in Urbana, Illinois, after Sausalito.

IQ: That was where Gerd knew him, I guess, in Sausalito.

Danlee: The Sausalito, Gate Five period was before '56. He left Sausalito in '56, and Gerd must have left in... '58. Gerd helped him build some of the instruments, and Gerd was the ensemble manager, for the Oedipus production in Sausalito.

But, when I first met Harry, I didn't see any psychological dichotomies in the guy. He was pretty much together at the University of Illinois. He did drink a little, but he was a very nice person to be around.

IQ: I don't know if I was implying that he had problems, in a clinical way, as much as that his creativity had him impervious to some of the considerations that affect normal people. He didn't give a damn about a lot of it, and that made him look like he was crazy, because he rejected or ignored so many social mores.

Danlee: Precisely. I like people like this, so I fit right in with 'em. I thought this was great, to be around a person like this. To be around a Bohemian, so to speak.

IQ: He certainly was one of those, alright, but you would never consider him to be a beatnik or a hippie. The Beats were way too nihilistic for Harry to have identified with, I think, and the hippies were too pie-in-the-sky.

Danlee: Probably. He was a very individualistic type of person.

IQ: And realistic. You'd have to be to be following a concept like "corporeality". To even articulate a concept like that, you'd have to be kind of down to earth.

Danlee: I don't think he lived in a world of fantasy. He lived in a world of reality, and he knew that his reality wasn't the norm of society.

IQ: Let's take a look into the future, for a minute, of Harry's tuning system, "just intonation", did he call it?

Danlee: His tuning system is based upon accoustical relationships that are in phase with each other, just as your inner ear is in tune with itself. Nature vibrates a certain way, in what we call "the harmonic series", or "overtones", or "partials"; three different terms for the same thing. Your inner ear is built this way; your electrical system reacts this way. Electricity operates on the harmonic series. You can demonstrate this in tuning, by having bodies vibrate at a certain number of cycles per second, a certain number of vibrations. You can build tuning systems on this harmonic series. The harmonic series, note to note to note to note to note, as you go up to each higher pitch, each note is not equally spaced. They gradually get smaller until it's infinitesimal.

IQ: Like a logarithmic curve?

Danlee: I guess so. I'm not a mathematician. But your first distance in the harmonic series is what we call "the octave". That's your largest integral distance. Then it becomes what we call a "perfect fifth", then a "fourth", and then a "major third" and a "minor third", and a "smaller minor third" and a "large major second", and a "smaller major second", and a "smaller major second", and then it starts getting into "smaller minor seconds". I'm using modern terminology. What you really should use is ratios, to talk about this, but most people don't know this. Well, this is how your ear is built, and how you are electrically and sonically put together as a human being. So, if you have a tuning system based upon this univesal principle, it would seem to be more copecetic to a human usage than an arbitrary system of tuning that wasn't based upon these natural universal principles.

IQ: For instance, the diatonic scale that everybody uses?

Danlee: Yeh, the twelve-tone equal-tempered diatonic scale that is the foundation of all western music.

IQ: Well, where did that come from?

Danlee: We have a lot of discussion here, because our culture is basically a Christian culture. That's where all of our art and our music, and much of our poetic thinking comes from, from ancient Christianity, which, by the way, was a very lucky religion, I think, to make it, knowing the circumstances of historical Christianity. Anyway, the early Christians were Jews. Christ was a Jew; all his apostles were Jews. They were practicing Judaism. They were trying to bring the teachings of Christ into the Jewish religion. After He died, they saw that their ideas would never be accepted by the orthodox Jews, and so, certain of Christs apostles went off converting all the Gentiles. What they did was to incorporate Jewish organization of the temple or synagogue services into the early Christian services, and all the early Christian music is, is Jewish music. That's all it is; seven-note scales. And so as music went down the Christian path, they started adding notes to the basic Jewish scales, and they finally came up with twelve notes. Then our culture became secular, and more abstract.

IQ: That was when? The 10th Century, or later?

Danlee: The 13th Century was when secularization started to flower. The Church reached its height at that time, and the secular world started to flower. The 13th Century was one when they didn't have too many wars in France, and when the noblemen started writing music and poetry.

IQ: That was also the century of The Black Death.

Danlee: Yes it was. But it was mostly the time when they started writing poetry and songs, and they had a century of peace.

As our culture became more secular, we became more abstract. Also, instrumental music started becoming very popular, as opposed to music set to poetry. The instrumental composers eventually developed highly complex abstract forms, predictable forms of thematic presentation, manipulation of the theme, and then coming back to your original simplistic idea, in one piece.

IQ: Statement, development, and recapitulation.

Danlee: Right. Out of all this came a desire for a standardization of tuning, so that they could modulate easily, among the various tonal relationships.

IQ: Of the different instruments?

Danlee: Of the different instruments, yeh. So, in the late Baroque Period this theoretical idea of equal temperament came to be accepted. It started to be implemented in the late Baroque and in the

Classic Period. By the mid-19th Century equal temperament was the accepted tuning terminology. That's what we have today, is twelve tones to the octave, equally tempered, but if your going to chase the roots, you'll trace it back to the early Jewish sources. Equal temperament in twelve tones is a good tuning, but it really isn't how the human being is put together. It's fairly distant from the human beings natural response, in the inner ear, and in the electrical system. So, Harry said, "Well, I would like to return to a tuning that is a little more honest, and a little more correct in its sonic relationships to each other." So he returned back to the universal, natural tuning system, which is called "just intonation". He did formulate a very unique method for thinking about and doing the tuning. It was his own approach. He came up with a tuning system that has 43 tones to the octave. The tones are non-equally spaced, and what you get are, essentially, a scale, which does have small gradations, if you want, or large, if you want, but it does have harmonies, or vertical relationships, that are like the harmonic series. They are in tune and in phase with themselves. And you could say, "That's very healthy."

IQ: But it's totally unplayable by traditional instruments.

Danlee: Unplayable by certain traditional instruments, like the piano, fixed pitch instruments like guitars, organs... It's playable by instruments that have bendable pitch potential.

IQ: Woodwinds?

Danlee: Woodwinds can...

IQ: Brass?

Danlee: Brass can, but they might have to use a little unorthodox fingering. And, of course, any unfretted string instrument can play it.

IQ: How does the electronic era of musical instruments fit into this? It seems that synthesizers ought to be able to do it.

Danlee: It should do it very well, but it seems to me that there is a compromise of the corporeal in synthesizers. You lose a bit of the human visual component that Harry liked. It would be interesting for him to be living now, and to confront the electronic embracing of music.

IQ: Well.. he certainly must have known about people like Karlheinz Stockhausen.

Danlee: It wasn't that common, as it is now. In those days the electronic instruments were fairly crude, and it wasn't a big threat.

IQ: The theramin was the first one along those lines, right?

Danlee: Yes, and it was completely adjustable as to pitch. Today the synthesizer is a big threat, or a big influence in music, and its ability to reproduce acoustic sound. There are two things compromised: one, the human visual component is compromised, and two, synthesized music is so perfect. In acoustic music, music that's made by people playing on instruments, there are always imperfections, which to me is the interesting part of the music. Imperfections of amplitude, imperfections, maybe, of tuning, a little bit, imperfections of technique... and this is what makes music really interesting. When I hear synthesized music, it lacks this dynamic quality, this potential of risk that acoustic music has, of human failure.

IQ: It's the crunch between feeling and technique.

Danlee: I don't feel that synthesized music has feeling, as acoustic music does have. It's SO perfect. Crescendos are so mechanically done. I'm not so interested in it emotionally, although technically, I am.

IQ: Music is such a gigantic area to start contemplating. You view Pablo Casals at one, let's not create a spectrum, but there's like a star with points on it, people diverging from a center. You might have Pablo Casals out there playing the Bach Cello Suites on one point, and then you might have Stevie Wonder on another point doing his thing, and you might have the Boston Pops doing some hokey cornball music very well on another area, and they're all doing different kinds of music, but they're all doing it within the tradition that you're talking about - on the old diatonic scale. The whole body of music, from the 13th Century to the present having been built on this diatonic scale, what I was getting around to in looking into the future is: where does Harry's just intonation go from here, in order to get people to hear it? It really is a mouse attacking a dinosaur.

Danlee: I don't know if anybody can answer that, where Harry's ideas and music will go. I really don't know. I will say this: maybe Harry's influence has already been felt. Harry did see that music in the western world had become too cerebral, too puritan, too reserved, too abstract...too germanic. Germanic abstractionism.

IQ: Bach, Beethoven, and Brahms.

Danlee: ..and Schumann and Schubert. He saw a need for a physicality in music. He saw a market with people being attracted to this. Now, Harry's ideas came waaay before Elvis Presley...

IQ: ..Whom he liked, right?

Danlee: He adored Elvis Presley, because Elvis Presley was corporeal. He was sex personified, in a controlled way, on the stage.

IQ: From the hips up, on the Ed Sullivan Show.



Harry Partch playing the Gourd Tree.

Danlee: From the hips up. Of course Harry said that western people only functioned from the neck up, and from the neck down, they suppressed. Especially in music. Western musicians were only interested in music from the neck up. So if you look at pop music, and the rock explosion, you can see the use of visuals, and corporeality. One group that I saw that was an exquisite experience artistically, was a group called the Tubes that I saw in 1976. They took some of Harry's ideas and really made a sophisticated evening of music. It was just uncanny, what they did.

IQ: Were they graduates of the ensemble?

Danlee: No, and I don't know if they even knew about Harry Partch, in any basic way, or any intricate way. Harry foresaw all this, I'm sure. Another guy who used corporeality was Alice Cooper. He always had dramatic situations. I wish I could have a video of The Tubes. They're still going, but they abandoned their ideas. It was just too expensive.

IQ: No commercial potential?

Danlee: No commercial potential.

IQ: Art suffers again at the hands of economics.

Danlee: You're getting into a good definition of art and entertainment. Harry didn't have any extensive philosophy about that. He was mostly into the art..

IQ: He could care less; he was just doin' it.

Danlee: He could care less; he was just doing his thing for himself. I look at musical endeavors as having some artistic properties, or having some entertainment properties...

IQ: And never the twain shall meet?

Danlee: Sometimes they meet; sometimes they don't. Art, to me, either makes a statement about the human condition, or it elevates the intellectual capacities that Man has. Entertainment does neither. Entertainment merely stimulates their physical senses; it is physicality for physicality's sake. Entertainment is very important. You can't be a person who's analysing the human condition all the time. At least I can't. My emotional predisposition is, I like to go into the artistic world, and have an intense experience there, but then, to have relief from it, I like to go into the entertainment world, where I don't have to do a bit of thinking, where I don't have to do a bit of feeling, and am just stimulated on a physical level. That's what entertainment is. And Partch married both. High art does this: it makes you think, and realize that you're a human being, with a brain and emotions and feelings, and at the same time it makes you realize your capacity for physical stimulation. And Harry Partch marries them all. Your sculpture does this.

IQ: Well, it attempts to. When you were talking about just intonation and the dimishing gradations between notes on a scale, I was thinking about it in terms of some of the things I do sculpturally. You can see in sculpture what you can hear in music, and that is, setting up these curves, from one area of a form to another, you've got to have that logarithmic correctness to it, because your eye sees it immediately if you deviate from it and break the sense of where the thing is going. There's a right line, and there are myriad wrong lines, and you've got to hit the right one, or else it looks phony to you when you see it.

Danlee: You've intellectualised this, and I haven't.

IQ: I'd be lying to you if I said I haven't thought about this before, but I can't think about it while I'm doing it. It's gotta be automatic, or else you wind up with, again, a Germanic-looking object. I'm coming out of being Germanic to begin with. I had a teutonic, stiff, structured upbringing, and I've been blowing down the walls in all directions ever since. So, anything that's struc-

turalized in my work now is leftovers. The improvements have been like knocking holes in the walls for the fresh air to blow in. The skeleton of all that crap is still standing there, and I wonder, at my stage of life, if I'll ever get over it.

If I could digress a little more, on the matter of style, which I was discussing with someone the other day. So many young artists go out, and they want, be they writers, musicians, painters, it doesn't matter what kind - they want to develop their own style. They're lookin' for a Style, with a capital S, and they follow all these bandwagons that are goin' down the pike, in the culture of the day, and they think, 'I can emulate this style', or, 'I can put these two things together in a new way, and I'll have that style', and I would advise all of them to **forget it**. Because, if they can act naturally in accord with their own vision, they are going to have a style, whether they like it, or not. Just like fingerprints, you know? The style's gonna be there; they cannot escape from it. They don't have to go lookin' for it. It's going to follow them like their own shadow.

Danlee: That's right. Like Harry was. That reminds me of Tennessee Williams. He grew up in a very puritanical family, and he said that all of his creative endeavor was aimed at outraging that upbringing that he had.

IQ: A retortionary! He has seemed like a radical, and now it turns out he was a retortionary.

Danlee: He is a retortionary, as Harry was, I suppose. I didn't really consider Harry to be a radical.

IQ: According to your exposition, he was more conservative than the whole of western music.

Danlee: Now you ask where Harry is going in the future. His theory is tantalisingly interesting to me, and it should seem so to other composers and musical theorists. And it's very easy to incorporate in synthesized music. Where Harry is going with this in a hundred or two hundred years, I don't know. It's hard to project.

IQ: That's why it's important to document this stuff. In two hundred years they're going to have to have something to look at. The instruments aren't going to make it two hundred years. Somebody is going to have to be putting energy into them all the time because they're like living things, and I can see them biodegrading before my very eyes. A corner's knocked off of that one, you were talking about the metal fatigue on the brass gongs, and the cords wear out, and if you are going to use them, I assume that you have to maintain them all the time.

Danlee: You do. Some are easier to maintain than others.

IQ: It seems that what is going to happen will be that you'll have other composers coming out of just intonation as an approach, and building their own instruments.

Danlee: Some are doing this, and Harry would have encouraged it. The only thing that he wanted was "significant music", and not "crackpot music". And there are some eloquent theorists who understand this stuff very well, but they don't have the creative intelligence.

IQ: Who would Harry consider to be a crackpot musician?

Danlee: Oh, I'd rather not say.

IQ: You can't pick someone who's dead, or so?

Danlee: No, these people aren't dead yet.

IQ: They're all his contemporaries, huh?

Danlee: No, I'd rather not get into this, until my older years; pre-senile period.

IQ: Danlee reveals all - 2010.



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oh pleasures of cocktails
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ginbiping sat personartist focus
(narrow glen where three roads meet
and Oedipus slew his fatherking); singer and song
raging for order word and unheard
himself in prime green flannel extending
eloquently lubricated hi-pitched monologue

overreaching toward revelation; critical of
whatever compromises achieved equalization
whether moral, conceptual, musical, sexual
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mythification replacing traumatic Americanization
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