

Friday 5 March 1993

Brian McLaren, Someplace

Greetings =====

I am presuming from your having given me so many of those labels that you may not have settled yet--and also I have been through a long lifetime that featured many forced moves and not getting settled at new locations -- all the way from the 1920's to the 80's in fact.

The good news is that I met a promoter type who says he is writing an article about the Megalga instruments--being a steel guitar player he knew exactly how to play the instruments here--he found out about me through the March 1981 OMNI article and trying to contact the people mentioned in it and they referred him to me. I should know by end of April whether the article will appear.

I thought the OMNI article was dead, but even after 12 years it must survive in some libraries in Los Angeles.

Other good news is that I finished the X Btn 12 and sent out some 20 copies and already am getting responses. The three tables for 48, 50, and 53 respectively bring the pages to 27. I have left blank columns so that later on the one-page tables can be enlarged and put on two pages each and various names for the notes of those systems inserted, and just a few of those copies run off later on. It is so unfortunate that there is no agreement among the principal promoters of the 53 system on nomenclature. Harry Hanson's system is something like Hauptmann's, some others use Ellis's comma-indication scheme (which I would have put in if I did not fear the wrath of so many microtonalists these days) and still others have their pet nomenclatures.

I have a copy of the nomenclature that Hanson used when he was promoting 53 some years ago. I probably still have a rather testy letter from Harry Conviser about 1984 where he gave some xeroxes from the earliest edition of Ellis's translation where instead of sub- and superscript numerals, commas were denoted by a combination of small and capital letters and lines above and below. Typographical nightmare and even worse on typewriters.

Probably better to let that thing slumber in a box and be forever forgotten. Quite as bad for P R as was Yasser's CVDWEPXGYAZB twelve out of nineteen!

Cassette No. 419 is 19-tone throughout. Too late to list in X B 12. Occasion of making it: (1) meeting a new fellow who is just crazy about 19 and wanted more tapes in 19; (2) phone call from Johnny Reinhard who promised to do something about my 31-year-old affair Excursion Into the Enharmonic (he has a copy of the score) which contains 22, 19, and 17, but he wants to arrange a performance the end of this year of one or more of its 19-tone pieces.

Brink writes from his new industrial-loft place in L A about irrational numbers and stuff. Phi, pi, but not e, at least not yet.

It will take all of March to straighten out the yard after the heavy rains and having to pile things tight under tarps to try to keep them from damage.

Therzdi 25 Martch 1993

Brian McLaren Corvallis OR 97333

Greetings from Down South =====

In case you are wondering this Selectric I has an extra ribbon place to used when the other two are wearing thin.

Light drizzle this morning and last night but not much and it's jsut cloudy now, as I prepare to go to the market since it's afternoon.

No afternoon collection for 8 blocks in any direction.

Received you big package about 1 PM so must acknowledge in a hurry. I have a few BacBones to hold some of those articles together and can use paper fasteners for the rest so they will not get mixed.

Went xeroxing yesterday and was interrupted FOUR times and then the machine ran out of paper and the third machine was out of order. I arrived downtown too late, and so it was rush hour in three senses: Crowded bus there because of high school letting out; crowded at the xerox place because of too many people at once; crowded coming back because it was 5 PM rush hour. I must go again tomorrow. Just got too tired to do much yesterday at the xerox place.

One thing I did get done: Wendy Carlos after reading X Btn # 12 sent me two versions of a masthead for it in different fonts, and some more XENHARMONIC BULLETIN No 12 lines in still other fonts to fill a page, and three copies of it. So I pasted-up the two mast-heads and went down and ran off 5 of each for a starter--see enclosure.

Revised first page with her heading on it.

Out of the blue! Totally unexpected.

I sent off a copy of one of them for Chalmers to replace page One of course. Then I made up my new slogan THE NINETEENTH CENTURY HAS NO FUTURE and some other things to make a page and copied two of that.

And the pamphlet for Beginners called THE TONALITY SITUATION that goes back some years.

And two xeroxes of the Guitar Player Artice of FEB. 1978 because somebody wanted one.

I could have xeroxed the article in the 18 March San Diego Reader if I had not gotten tired and if I had not been interrupted four times.

Brink McBryde sent me a tape with clangs and rushing sounds on it and odd intervals.'

* * *You say that you got a nasty letter from Ezra Sims. I'm not too surprised because I got a scolding letter from him way abou back about when I was moved into Glendale, telling me I had no right to use any term but MICROTONES, even for LESS than twelve, even for 5 or 7 equal! After that I never wrote him again.

Earlier in your letter, about no identification--I have had trouble with that for decades so now you may have some idea what it is like for no papers or documents to be accepted and nobody seems to understand my predicament. It wasn't always so--very little such trouble up to about 1960 and then it started to get worse as people at banks and other places got stricter and stricter.

One good reason why I have worked hard at building a Network of people and hopefully this will make things slightly easier.

You mention Sidney Omarr: I met him in 1962 or so: is he still around? Introduced s by some fellow in the General Semantic Group. Then lost contact. The fellow who introduced me, NOrmal - Winski, spent about 24 years scolding me repeatedly with the same tiresome ma message, viz. that I was Ahead Of My Time. Finally he disappeared.

My niece is learning to use a Macintosh at the University of New Mexico in Albuquerque and sent me the first drafts of her newsletter.

My cater-corner neighbor Doran is looking at computers and plans to get an ouffit when he moves to suburbs of L A in about 4 months. He is a visual artist--modernisting painting but was enthused about xenharmonics as soon as he heard mine about four months ago.

So will have MIDI someday.

Friday 26 March 1993

Brian McLaren, Corvallis OR 97333

Greetings ***

In the evening before going to bed I read the Michael Kowalski article piecemeal as I stapled or secured with paper-clips the several articles in your big packet, so they won't get mixed and so that pages won't fall off them and get lost in the unconscionable maddening clutter here at present. They predicted the reinstorm which did come last night and that meant covering everything again and bringing in more clutter till I'm blocked from doing anything here till the weather improves.

Not sure whether I told you that I cut out and pasted up the Trimble article way back in 1981, and filed it away and later xeroxed it for some people, and then wrote my comment which I also xeroxed at the time. (During my 9-year exile in Uptight narrowminded Glendale). I that article of Trimble's and this Kowalski thing, one has to pay attention to what is OMITTED! What was not said, what was AVOIDED in order to construct the argument, as with a lawyer in court who has prepared an Airtight Case.

Or as this San Diego READER article that I am cutting and pasting today so I can go downtown and xerox it--a careful interview of a mid-nineteenth-century-worshipping piano-teacher who threw out everything before Bach and after Brahms. And threw out everything outside Germany and Austria and maybe Italy during that time-frame.

Yesterday's (next) issue of the Reader has NO letter about the article of the 18th. No wonder; it appeared in the wrong paper. It should have been sent to a conservative New York Magazine dealing with pianos and 19th century music. Maybe it has been; maybe it will be. Maybe it was sent and rejected by the magazine, so put in the Reader out of quiet desperation.

Kowalski ignores the collapse of the 12-tone harmonic and melodic resources--that this generation of composers has Wounded Pride because nothing can now be done with 12-tone tuning that hasn't already been done BETTER 150 years ago.

You are entitled to boast now, because you have used timbres where Dawson & Brizzolara in the Reader article had to carefully ignore that the piano has ONLY ONE TIMBRE, therefore they could not mention that the successors to the piano now have timbre resources even in the cheapest models of electronic keyboards and other equipment. That took some hard work, to put that article together and say nothing about the piano's black-&-white as opposed to the new instruments' wide range of Color.

Last night while cooking dinner, a radio commercial about a big piano sale (some store going out of business) and the commercial was recorded with a little piano music in the background. The joker was that the effect was ruined by the voice-improving technique at the broadcasting station (equalizers & limiters etc.) to make the announcer sound better speaking, but it curdled the piano chords till they were almost noise. Nobody is going to buy a piano that sounds like THAT! Clipping + LM distortion, I believe.