

Therzdi 8 Aprul 1993
Brian McLaren Corvallis OR 97333

Greetings =====

Got a ride down to the xeroxing place so I didn't have to carry things on a crowded bus and wait for all the wrong busses to go by first.

Saw an article in a magazine about Virtual Reality and several people I know are interested--much more than I am of course--so I ran off copies.

Found some older writings--1957 for instance. 1948 even. Museum exhibit at LAICA (contemporary art place near Culver City) 1979 in which my instruments were shown and I played in an ensemble. Wealth Amplifiers article, reprinted in several little magazines, written about the time of the famous Watts Riot.

While I wrote "Wealth Amplifiers" to discuss such things as telegraphy, Numaudo, certain codes, I also addressed the value of piano tuning, and could today add, ammusical composition has no value if nobody hears it, but if there is in place today a million cassette players and many machines that can copy cassettes so they can be distributed far and wide, that composition greatly increases in value since more people can hear it, and only WHEN They want to, not forced to hear it by grasping business interests that broadcast it only when these soulless corporations want to. So for a number of other things that now function as Wealth Amplifiers.

The German news magazine Der Stern republished the LIFE article about instrument-builders and I was asked to translate what they said into English and Esperanto by the fellow who runs the Notation Modernization Association.

Also, in a later publication of his, letters of mine were reprinted and I enclose pages that contain one of them. Found this the other day.

It is possible that I could reconstruct some of my early musical activities from entries in datebooks which amount to a sort of skeleton diary that was started 52 years ago. I have most of those records still, even though they went through innumerable storms and wear and tear.

Then the leaflet of 1960 on the amount of information stored in a piano action. The amount of information that gets stored in a piano and is totally out of the performer's control. Today, 33 years later, much of this control is in theory handed back to performers on the new keyboards, but often they are not allowed to know how much is now theirs instead of being trade secrets of piano-makers, tuners, repairmen, etc.

Along with freedom of speech, the Right to Experiment in Music! And those who tried to stop me for SIXTY years.

04-06-93

Bozdi 6 May 1993

Brian 6 Claren, Corvallis OR 97333

7 Greeting fr a Down South ===

8 Bright glaring sun this mornin'. More xeroxing downtown
9 yest. and the weirdos who rid the busses are incredible! They
10 tried to start a fight in the front seats on my way downtown, and
11 so one of them got off the bus at just the right place:

12 The Entrance to the Zoo!

13 ting near the copy place for the bus to get back home--
14 strange female creature dressed in leather and wearing a casin on
15 her, shouting at me and the two other guys waiting for the bus.
16 I've had about such characters, but having one shout phone numbers
17 as she walked by . . . ouch.

18 More snafus when I got home--somebody who made an appointment
19 to see the instruments later, came at 6 p.m. here and so my dinner
20 got cold and was a big disappointment reheating it after they left.

21 Fifteenth anniversary of the 978 GUITAR PLAYER article. So
22 I am running off copies.

23 Several people thought I should reply to the S.D. Reader article
24 that glorified Central Europe in the mid-nineteenth century, but now,
25 two issues later, I don't see any letters published about it either
26 for inst, so I would only have advertised and promoted those
27 reactions if I had commented to the magazine. Actually, I was
28 sure that such a well-written article was published in a plebeian
29 paper that does not cater to high European culture--what among the
30 readers would have gone to study with that teacher? Conclusion: it
31 must have been written for one of those East Coast piano magazines,
32 so I put it into the San Diego Reader as a last resort.

33 The reason I made 5 copies of it and sent them out to different
34 people, is that it is an example of a skilled trial lawyer doing a
35 courtroom argument to get his client off, and ignoring carefully every
36 fact or item that might ruin his airtight case. Why wasn't Brizzolara
37 making tons of money as an attorney, rather than extolling a piano
38 teacher living in the dust? He couldn't earn that much working for
39 the San Diego Reader!

40 Ted Felnechuk sent me some New York Times and their clippings
41 which I xeroxed yesterday. Enclosed.

42 Yours

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Therzdi 29 April 1993 .
Brien McLaren 2462 SE Micah Place Corvallis OR 97333
Greetings ===

Received your Big Package today. Fortunately I wasn't at the store to pick up the Weekly Reader or at the mailbox to mail something. It wouldn't go through the slot and I had to open the front door and get it.

So the e finally is an article on what happened to Russian music during the Soviet Period. I might as well tell you what happened 60 years ago to about 40 years ago--i.e. when I was 16 my mother was studying under a Russian sculptor (had been since I was 12 or so) and the result was that I was able to learn some Russian. Then the conductor of the Portland Junior Symphony (110 performers usually!) was a Russian named Jacques Gershkovitch, and had had some instruction, directly or indirectly, from Rimsky-Korsakov while he was still in Russia. There were many Russian refugees in Portland and Seattle and San Francisco in the 1920's. So I thought that if I tackled the difficult Russian language, then Spanish and French and German would seem easier. Partly true--Russian and Latin grammar are conservative and retain Indo-European inflexional complexities that French and Spanish and English have in large measure discarded.

I wonder if this was to any avail--the long Cold War--but maybe now in my dotage or senescence it will come in handy to correspond in Russian with musical experts or groups?

The above is important for some odds and ends: I joined that Junior Symphony, playing the cello, partly because I had read the Rimsky-Korsakov book on orchestration that the Portland Library had (on English fortunately) and that dealt with timbre in of course the pre-electronic terms of the 19th-century tonal artillery and the loyal obedient troops under the Conductor's baton.

I went to concerts in my teens and read the analyses of orchestral works and resented the black-and-white colorlessness of the Piano.

I had some access to pipe organ and later (age 20-26) to the insides of pipe organs learning how to tune pipes.

The organization of pipe-organ timbres is opposed to the organization of orchestral timbres.

The Orchestra is STRINGS WOODWINDS BRASS PERCUSSION while some odds and ends do not belong among those four.

The Organ is DIAPASON FLUTES STRINGS REEDS while a pipe-organ's percussions are sort of illegitimate adopted brats.

This is why traditional musicians cannot understand how synthesized are organized into timbre classes or the possibility of such things as additive and subtractive synthesis and sampling and so on.

Up until the Revolution the Russians went in for orchestral timbre-cultivation and study of how to arrange and orchestrate.

Thus I studied a lot of things never taught in music schools or by conventional music teachers: the average musician gets sent to for intimidation and oppression and conformity and resignation.

I experimented all my life; they were forbidden to.

You sent me your article in process, so I thought I should rush to acknowledge receipt and to do some comments.