

B. McLaren Corvallis OR 97333

Phrydy 20 August 1993

Greetings

The other day to the library downtown. Ran across a different book that had the older phone code, i.e. the odd-member-harmonic-series scheme 7 : 9: 11: 13: 15 : 17-----in this case 700 Hz 900 Hz etc.

I found for four books some months ago that had mention of it or said what the frequencies were, but not which corresponded to 1 and which to 2 etc. Now I have it. Enclosed. Extra signals from this code for other things like ring back the operator or the caller is on a pay phone, or the like.

My main interest, of course, is that this code is Non-Twelve and even Ultra Partchian.

That by happy accident somebody back in the twenties dreamt up this thing long before pushbutton phone code of the other kind was conceived. Coincidence of course, that this 7 : 9: 11: 13: 15: 17 affair was contemporary with Partch creating Otonalities etc.

Somebody dialled an ordinary number on a rotary dial and the pi pulses were stored at the exchange somehow for a moment, and then they cause pairs of the tones to be sounded (NOT back to the subscriber, but only to another phone exchange, since DC pulses could not be sent over most long-distance lines--only voice-band frequencies could).

As a result, ordinary people like me practically never heard these tones--if they ever did (I remember funny tinkles and whistles) it was unintentional crosstalk.

Nothing like the pushbutton tones which are generated in the telephone instruments and are heard in the receiver.

The special signals beyond the 10 digits could have different meanings in different exchanges or companies, of course.

* * * Put the radio on for the newday nooz and what do I hear but an ad for the San Diego Symphony, but the background music for this commercial is very raucous Heavy Metal Rock with lots of socko-whammy noises. Not one note that could be considered classical by any stretch of the Imagination.

Why did they pick an odd-harmonic series? Because on phone lines intermodulation and thus sum and difference tones are practically certain. So any differences of odd numbers are going to be EVEN. Thus not recognized at the other end as members of the tone-set. Sums also would be even of course.

Have you ever heard a piano played over a phone? The intermodulation can be frightful. When I was about 16 or 17, somebody wondered about amplifying a piano with a telephone mike laid inside it. So we tried it out. Horrid. Something like shaking a big piece of sheet metal.

Trash-clash-crash-flash-smash .

Yesterday got more short tapes for people with short attention-spans. Especially to send certain people copies of tape No. 440.

Chalmers stopped in the other day with a new tape which contains Yasser-type hexads in nineteen, of course.

Youfs

Phrydy 27 Awgust 1993

B. McLaren, Corvallis OR 97333

Went downtown yesterday in the heat--but cooled off before going. New ;letter from Chalmers enclosing the postcard form from Music Tech something or other in San Tee. I don't put too much stock in it because Jonathan and I have been completely ostracized and rejected and snubbed by CME and other UCSD affairs and no chance to appear there or dialog in all the 8 years I have lived here. All the more keenly painful, swile I still was in Glendale and coming down here frequently since 1978, Jonathan took me out to UCSD almost every time. But the congenial people were expelled from UCSD and they were replaced by cruel monsters.

The other afternoon I went over to Adams ave. to thaxt postoffice and the new xeroxing place there, ,but they had jacked up their price from 3¢ to 5¢ so it was out of the question. I did enough copies downtown yesterday to more than pay for the bus fare downtown and back. Of course that is because I get the senior fare.

More phone calls from various places, possible expansions of the network and two people wanting to make videos of my instruments. Not connected at all; two separate deals.

So that underlines or emphasizes my plans for some time now: that the re-writing the Monograph on Pianos to Up-Date it project be weighed against a number of alternatives: a Cassette Course with a tiny pamphlet or a c;uple of illustrations in the box; or a video about the Decline and Fall of the Pianofortic Empire. In a way my life-span of 76 years so far just about contains the downhill slope of the Piano--almost imperceptible at first, then hit hard by the Great Depression of the 1930's and WW II to a slight extent; then hit again when the PORTABLE electronic keyboards matured enough to offer serious competition while the Price Crossover was simultaneously occurring: we must count against pianos the increased cost of tuning them (\$3 when I started in 1940; \$30 today!--the cost of things like fixing keys and readjusting actions and restringing and ironing down and picking at hammerheads and refiknishing and so forth is now prohibitive)----this must be added to the constantly escalating piano cost.

The heavy action and the wide keys were not designed for young children and cause them a lot of grief. Don't forget those ergonomic factors.

True: I must admit that I was wrong about WHEN the piano decline would get serious; but I was quite right about how and WHAT would happen, long before it did. I have to be able in any new Piano Publication to emphasize this since nobody will do that for me.

If I have to repeat this six times before anybody will believe it, I will have to: the Members of the 13 Generation or Generation X or those being written about in the book that you sent me an extract of, and some articles, and statements by MEMBERS of that generation, show that they have NO MENTAL IMAGE, VISUAL OR. AUDITORY, of what SWIP is about. How many chances do they have to see the inside of a piano or to hear a piano being tuned? Even Chalmers is too old to realize that most of those who might now read a publication of mine would not have the faintest clue to what I was writing about. Their knowledge of Piano is through tiny tinny transistor radios and car cassette players and piano imitations on the NEW keyboards. I would be most seriously misunderstood now, so much has happened since 1967.

Any time I tune a piano it's like time-travel H.

The smell of pianos is gone; the feel of pianos is gone; the miljeu ain't there no more no more nohow!

Saturday 28 August 1993

B. McLaren, Corvallis OR 97333

....not sure what may happen today--whether somebody will see the instruments or not. Ran off cassette copies this week and sent a good many out. If I don't, there may not be any evidence anywhere that I did anything nere I was going through, at odd moments, some of the earliest tapes made before movding here. And there were quite a number of trips I made down here before getting kicked out of glendale.

I discover that I have three hours of EFNIR--I used a portable battery cassette thing in May 1980 to record many events most of which were at UCSD since I was taken out to the festival. My instruments were down here with me. Quite different from the way we have been snubbed and insulted by the later occupants of the UCSD places such as CME.

I have cassettes of other trips here, and there was a chance to try out instruments in a sort of non-12 ensemble that Jonathan had back then. Prent Rodgers, who deserted San Diego for the dry monotonous monastic life of IBM San Jose in the early 1980s, had built some instruments and played them on a couple of these tapes.

I had forgotten all about that, and of course the present conditions are so unlike that that one would not remember.

I wonder at the moment what became of Cris Forster, the builder of some impressive-looking oddball instruments in the Partch tradition, and he had such a mean nasty disposition that nobody could stand him!

The Partch Religion again, darn it. This idea that one must heroically renounce worldly ambitions and selflessly (?) devote oneself to various ***shall we call them blind alleys where the Partchian ideas lead people. Forster could have been a concert pianist or some kind of theatrical performer, but was so antagonistic and mean that I guess he didn't get the necessary moral support and encouragement.

Jonathan was annoyed and had every right to be.

Chalmers sent me this card and info about the "San Diego Music Technology Association" with a return address in Santee. He attended a meeting on the UCSD campus the other day. And, horrors! ran into Rob Bell who apparently was holding a sort of post-mortem about the lamented Board Meetings etc.

I think it can be reduced to one word: Alcoholism. Bell's Anger released by drinking too much booze. That might explain all the impossibly expensive plans at the Board meetings where they were spending money they could not possibly collect in the first place.

I.e. Bell hated me for living within my means.

At the market the other day I idly scanned the price-tags on their bottles of booze. Look at all the blank cassettes and postage and xeroxes I have been able to buy and use because I didn't blow it on vodka.

One burden off my mind, selling the 34-tone guitar to Larry Hanson which will permit him to send the fancy other 34-tone guitar to Jon Catler in New York and maybe Catler's skills playing 31-tone guitars will transfer to the more difficult 34. I mean by that that I have met Catler some years ago and have his 31-tone recording, and also 31 seemed to be the limit of playing guitar at a realistic tempo--I am afraid that 34 steps over the limit. It is quite obvious how to tune a guitar in 31, but there are too many possible ways of tuning the guitar in 34, and for that matter, three or more ways to tune a guitar in 22, for much the same reasons. I use, for 22, the first tuning that Ervin tried, even though several people have adopted the second tuning Ervin tried.

Notation for 22 and 34? I simply have no time for that!

I wouldn't have sold the 34 guitar if I stopped to argue notation with Hanson. Fortunately, when he came here I was able to put the Mirage in 34 and play sustained chords, which of course the 34 guitars cannot do.

And I don't want to confuse Tom Reed in Missouri by writing him too much about 34.

Yours

(50 years ago when I was real poor and had to make my own music paper.)

Shunday 29 Awgust 1993
B. McLaren Corvallis O R 97333
Greetings %%%%

Going over the tape index and I found a cassette that k is not in the index and why ain't it? Must have gotten lost j in the shuffle somewhere.

Most other things are properly indexed.

Also: found a tape where I na-performed the 19-tone organ things in EXCURSION and the spontaneity is gone, and the Scalatron has such an awful timbre. I will now have to take the Elasti Tuning Organ's original and copy some o it and put this Scalatron thing next to it to show the loss.

Then I don't have to argue why the Scalatron didn't get marketed properly and disappeared. The Korg does it somewhat better, but w n still not quite the original intent.

Of course I keep trying the timbres on the Korg and on the Mirage in the op hope I will find a worthy successor to the Elastic Tu ing Organ for that piece. The scalatron difficulty was partly due to having to play two keyboards at once--the layout Mandelbaum used for the two pianos in 19 of course, w hereas the Elastic Tuning organ had the same 5 octave mapped-onto keyboard as the Mirage or the Korg has.

I played the Scalatron version much too slow--it dragged. Fear of wrong notes only multiplies them.

However this suggests that I can rescue some of my earlier recordings by speeding them up to a more lively tempo. I have been really surprised by what happens with some of the things I copy on the double-speed duplicator--they really should have gone TWICE AS FAST !

This undoubtedly has to do with the fact that for more than half my life, my metabolism was very low. Only in the last few years--not more than the last ten--has it speeded up to normal.

The other day Bradley Sheklian of Glendale sent his brother here to see the instruments and to get info for his underground recording magazine and so the other night he showed up and got very enthusiastic about the Megalyra even though it was dark when he got here and he could only make it out in moonlight which of course dulls the colors. The big black speaker box which has been in the garage of the Glasier's large house is now here and it made all the difference! Only wear-and-tear from its imprisonment was that its top surface was abraded, and yesterday afternoon I painted that so it's now as good as the paint on the rest of the box.

He is connected with some kind of noisicians and got enthused over the Keyboard Electric Drum and the Mexican Rain stick.

I had a copy of ALL SYSTEMS GO! for him, and explained how you had all the necessary equipment to timbralize it.

7:40 A M Monday: turned on the news to find out who got murdered last night, but no luck on that: instead a New Age guy promoting PSYCHIC PUSH-POWER i.e. how to force somebody else by telepathic force, to be Successful.

Maybe Larry Hanson needs some of that in order to convert 31-ists-to 34? He was here the other day to get my 34-tone guitar as I already related.

Bradley Sheklian is pushing for LESS than 12, i.e. 8-tone. I was able to play some 8 on the Mirage of course, every other note of 16. His brother was more interested in my ensemble of BUZZERS.

Toozdi 31 Awgust 1993
E. McLaren Corvallis OR 97333
Greetings from Down South =====

The Duplicator is busy doing things an octave higher.

Mark Rankin and Siem Terpstra were here yesterday for a little while I was showing them the difference between 31 and 34 on the Mirage with the disk that Buzz had sent me some time ago. Of course this was in an effort to explain Larry Hanson's sudden Conversion to 34.

They seemed in remarkably better mood than when they came to see me about 4½ years ago.

So something in their favor may have happened

Chalmers stopped in before they came and then I assume they went to Bill Wesley's place last night to thrash out theories etc.

This gave me ideas for Cassette No. C444. Labelling its copies is going to be a problem because the 4 key on the Selectric will not spring back after striking it. So to type "444" on that machine to do the labels means pulling the 4 key up THREE times for each side of the cassette! The Selectric is old of course, very cheap at a local thrift shop when the bigger Selectric quit. Eventually this will quit. One of its balls self-destructed a couple of years ago. Looking at the flimsy plastic daisy wheels on this thing, I fear the same--they will wear out. Meanwhile I can save money on this machine by removing the expensive cartridge ribbon and typing "blind" through the carbon paper, as I explained before. They don't make things like they used to no more no more.

The Olympia Portable that Elizabeth brought me--her father had had it--will undoubtedly outlive me and whoever gets it then.

Back to describing C 444: Side A is a 22-tone affair on the Mirage with one or two passages in 12 on the Jx3P to compare 12 against 22. Side B was done this morning. Set the Mirage to 31 again and put on a piano sample which I had not tried with 31 before. Buzz had supplied 31 at four different octave levels and this is the third octave. So high enough to avoid that terrible all-the-strings-let-down sound when high samples in 12 are played at one or two octaves to low. If 31-tone pianos existed, this is an unreasonable facsimile.

I guarantee, with 53 years' experience, that NO TUNER WOULD EVER HAVE THE PATIENCE TO TUNE A THIRTY ONE TONE PIANO IF SUCH EXISTED. But of course everyone is going to wonder, what if?

I put this on a 30 minute cassette.

While I am at it: I have a suggestion: If somebody wants to make a 31-tone tape they should try the old piece--I guess almost as old as I am but not quite, called MOOD INDIGO. It would work with those sub-minor sevenths.

Organist in Portland back in 1928 or so used to play it.

I got the Warren Burt / Claude Baliff tape that you re-did, and tried it out of course, now it has something on it.

And then I can get around to writing Warren Burt one of these days.

The place here is terribly cluttered and so I get worried about scrambling my papers and mixing them up when filing them away. I am trying to be extra careful about labelling the cassettes and putting things down immediately into the Index.

Time now to rinse off the breakfast dishes.