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Greeting---

Decided not to wait till tomorrow moring for this, since my reaction might dull after sleeping on it. Wish things were like ~~they~~ used to be--one could go to the postoffice at 8 PM even the branches, and mail something and speed it on its way. I used to mail a good many airmail letters back in 1939 or so that way.

Noon today the KPFFK composers' program was the second part of Julián Carrillo. Almost forgot about it. The Mass in Honor of Pope John XXIII all in quartertones sung by an unaccompanied mens chorus turned out to be one h of his best compositions. When I read about it the previous day in that book-copy of yours, I had misgivings--what kind of weirdo affair would this be? especially if performed badly? but I needn't have worried. Then another cello solo or Concertino with orchestra in quartertones and eighth-tones which was somewhat less exercise-like than the other cello solo but still.... One thing that would have irritated the Partchians and which I probably got on my cassette hooked up to the radio was a harmonic series that stopped at the 10th harmonic, when to be really quartertone stuff it should have included the 11th. Real frustrating--it occurs about 4 times.

these were superb performances. Now this makes me wonder: How did he compel or persuade the performers to do their very best? These things were recorded before his death. The poverty of his inspiration was revealed by the excellence of the performances, by the care taken by the soloists. (I am thinking here of the two cello solos and one of the special-piano affairs that I heard in the other radio broadcast.)

Usually a contemporary composer gets a brushoff, a lot of contempt and insult and invective, and perfunctory performances, if he ever gets that far: usually, it is 20 or 50 or even 70 years of postponements and rehearsals never held and concerts that never take place at all.

So what was Julián Carrillo's magic? Getting those performances, when far better composers can't get performances of their 12-tone conventional things? I am willing to bet you a chocolate-coated clove of garlic that if he had been born Joe Smith in Wichita Kansas or Wilmington Delaware, and had had exactly the same talent and personality and skills and had composed exactly the same things and somehow got those 15 pianos built, he would have remained in permanent obscurity for all those 70-plus years. So maybe it's the attitude of Mexicans toward their art?

If he had been born in France he would have been talked out of non-12 experiments and ended up a pale colorless academic or something. At the time he studied, things were worse even than they are today.

5 AM Tues

I sure don't like this way in which I suddenly conk out around 8 PM and have to rush to bed, sometimes without supper. All I could do last night was an omelet.

Then the result is that after the proper number of hours in bed it's too early to get up and so the compromise is 5 AM which is an ungodly hour here to be so lonely and stare at the im insupportable clutter.

The attempt to oversleep results in very bad dreams which would increase the loneliness still further. So that is no way to go either. Even the rationalization that 5 AM here is 8 AM in the Eastern Time Zone is no comfort.

Idealizing/Idolizing: Carrillo and that whole-tone. On the demo tape of the 15 pianos the word gon tone is stressed as though it were some kind of holy incantation:

onceaves de

By the time you get to dieciseisaves de TONO you get the message:

Good thing he was brought up in Catholic surroundings--otherwise this would have become a new Cult with elaborate Rituals.

The Quartertone Mass is full of whole-tone-clusters. Somehow when sung they do not have the harshness they would have on a piano.

The mood fits the Kyrie but not some other parts--obviously if all systems must be multiples of 6, then there cannot be the mood-contrast that exists between 17 and 19 or 19 and 22.

The Piano's Ghost again--the Romantic Ideal and possibly the Debussy style, since musical Impressionism was flourishing at the time Carrillo was making trips to Europe. All this was new at the time he was having his greatest insights and constructing systems.

Then some notion rather like our inch-rulers--strange that he should have this idea in a supposedly metric-system country. I am referring to $\frac{1}{8}$ $\frac{1}{4}$ $\frac{1}{8}$ $\frac{1}{16}$ $\frac{1}{32}$ inch on our rulers and of his quarter- eighth- and sixteenth-tones rather than the set of metamorphosed pianos with thirds, quarters, fifths, sixths, . . . fifteenths, sixteenths--he didn't use those systems after all the trouble and expense he went to! The great pity was to neglect 72 or twelfth-tones, the best multiple of 12.

Not sure how to translate "metamorphosed" in this usage--it implies "modified" or "rebuilt" or "redesigned" in our modern American engineerese. But evidently the pianos were built new to order in Germany, and so they weren't made over (which would be metamorphosis) from Old Tired-Out Wrecks. If I said "transmogrified" that would be too cruel--I can't go around making fun of somebody. That, or the quieter term "transformed" would mean that standard pianos were torn apart and built over to the new scheme.

I guess "redesigned" would be dignified and respectful enough. Surely it should be as acceptable as "refretted" guitars.

Got more scribbles from Chalmers yesterday afternoon.

Turns out he has read this book of Carrillo's and was very repelled by the "crusading" style and attitude in it.

He didn't use the term "overpleading his case" that I have been using. My reason for using the term is that my mother had that fault and lost a lot of friends because her arguments for something or about something were carried too far, beyond the successful selling-point which she would have enjoyed had she known where to stop. Carrillo did not know when to stop!

These pieces that were broadcast over KPFK almost all go beyond the point where Enough is Enough. Especially the first of the cello solos. What was needed was to have had more basic themes, more distinctive melodies that could have taken part in the so-called Development. As they stand, these pieces could be used, by taking excerpts from the right places, in a Tape To Train Listeners What to Listen For. So far as the subdivisions of the 1/6-octave "tone" are concerned.

Evidently the idea of prime-number systems incompatible with the symmetry of 6 and 12 never occurred to Carrillo, or he chose to ignore them, or some idolized music-teacher of his prohibited any dreams in that direction?

Now let me go on to another of Carrillo's short articles where he uses the metamorphosis idea in this way: From the Classics such as a Haydn String Quartet or somebody's Symphony or Sonata, he can put it through metamorphosis by substituting quarter- or sixth- or eighth-tones for all the semitones in it (assuming of course that it is written strictly in 12-equal) and thus get hundreds of new compositions out of one Haydn string quartet so that in effect we have cloned Haydn to 1000 new Haydns and all the brand-new Classics! This is almost but not quite identical with Joseph Schillinger's remark in his books about applying the expansion and contraction processes (mapping-onto in mathematical jargon) to Bach's famous 48.

So Carrillo pats himself on the back and gives himself a Medal for Genius for having thought of this fruitful idea. Read the article for yourself when you get the book back. I hope you realize what a disaster and calamity it would be, if we translated this and published it in toto, or if we let someone else translate and publish it. It would elicit howls of scorn and ridicule and hurt us as well as Carrillo's legacy.

Indeed, Schillinger's rather casual en passant mention of this same notion, triggered the nasty acoustician John Backus (who ran the Physics Dept. of USC for years and wrote that terrible book on musical acoustics that forbids anyone to compose or build instruments for non-12) to write an article in Journal of Music Theory, an early issue, denouncing Schillinger as a charlatan, quack, impostor, and complete fake. In this case, Backus overpleaded his case. It was really cruel; I am no admirer of Schillinger who I think was a terrible prig and stuck-up egomaniac, but Give the Devil His Due! We must be Fair! If we demand justice from others we must be just ourselves.

I think if Schillinger had lived to be as old as I am now, and had not died before his real prime-of-life,

he might have become more reasonable in the later years and later books which unfortunately he didn't get to write.

I should know about this! Back in 1949 there was a mean cruel teacher of ballet and opera coach etc.--she did not want any music since Haydn and Mozart ever to be played or heard. That was FINAL. She told dozens of people that I had torn an old piano apart to make the ugly amplifying clavichord. This, of course, was a terrible calumny--I made it out of new materials. She claimed I was a faker and malingerer pretending to be ill to get out of working.

Twenty years later I got my revenge--when she was penniless and ill her attitude was different--but it was too late of course.

Now in the case of Carrillo's book, we would be too cruel if that article about quartertonizing and eighthtonitizing the Haydn Quartets and the Symphonies were to be translated into English and published--the resulting scorn and ridicule and invective from the Musical Establishment would ruin our future as well as demolishing Carrillo's reputation.

Fortunately the computer people will discover this transmogri-fying process on their own--they already have--and do it to the Classics and any ridicule will be directed at them instead of us.

People may have to specialize, to limit their fields in order to cultivate some small area intensively. But then they usually turn around, as Carrillo did in that book, and as Partch's followers have done, and denounce everybody else's similar specializing in some other part of the field, which they take as rivalry and opposition rather than COMPLEMENTARITY.

There has to be tolerance in the ordinary sense: Admit that there is more than one way to get out of twelvism--and that if one method (such as quartertones) works, that does NOT invalidate nor lessen the value of the others. I do not have to construct arguments against 22 as Mandelbaum did in his Doctorate Thesis, in order to make 19 seem better. I do not have to burn up my 1935 compositions in order to make my latest tape seem better. I don't have to stop tuning pianos to 12 in order to promote just intonation. Each new tuning customer is a possible candidate for recruiting a non-12 musician or at least listener. Provided that I don't overplead my case! It isn't a hard choice of either Beatles or Beethoven.

----- I am getting worried about that Educational Politics affair, because it might take over all your time and you might stop putting on your concerts and practicing in non-12. It could happen so insidiously and gradually that you wouldn't notice the process. I'm more worried since Clyde Corson came here and got into T M and was trying to get me to go the route of Tom Stone. And how Walter Unterberg has been using the I'm a busy man and can't help you until after you're dead routine on me. And a dozen other such things in past years. Maybe you could consider some allied field which would throw you into contact with more kinds of people and keep the door open for unexpected opportunities that would still be Education-Related: such as the audiovisual aids industry or the cassette-courses industry or whatever. The way you will not be allowed to use the computer for non-12 until I am too old to collaborate at CME is a stern warning of the dangers involved.

Yours