

Sunday 11 January 1981

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---had to get up at 4:30 AM to cover all the stuff with the tarps and plastic sheeting. While the radio was declaring there was only a 40% chance of rain and that in the afternoon. Can't they look out the window? Just a drizzle, nothing big, at least this morning. Clyde Corson did not come because of an asthma attack and put it off till this afternoon. So I can't depend on him.

If my own allergy is pollen, this should be enough rain to settle it--probably a drizzle for all day and most of the night.

Some addresses to write to about experimental schools and asking them to promote Numaudo have been given me. But these proposed letters coming from a private individual with no official backing would probably be ignored. Me, Myself, & I Inc.? The Professional Procrastinators who gave me the go-ahead on constructing Numaudo 22 years ago are STILL procrastinating--i.e. those of them who have not died meanwhile.

It's this dreadful Educational Politics thing again! Unless the promoter for Numaudo/Numalitters had a string of degrees, nothing would happen. If it were revealed that I never went to college, it makes no difference how many years of study I have actually put in, nor who my moral-supporters had been.

Last time I sent you a list of people who made the greatest contributions to non-12 music theory, and pointed out that they did so from outside music, since they could be impartial about scales, and had not been programmed by music educators so as to block them from seeing or hearing the possibilities outside what pianos can do. If I had been through the conventional college preparatory courses and university curriculum, I would also be blinded and deafened to the possibility of Numaudo/Numalittera. I did not get indoctrinated with the usual intense visual bias, and did not make the staggering investment in mathematical notation that the average engineer or scientist has made by the time they are in College Senior Years.

Close in point: Susanne Langer, author of Philosophy in a New Key, and Feeling and Form, had every necessary idea to have invented Numaudo. But her training was such as to block it to keep her from putting the ingredient ingredients together or to have cooked them if somehow they had been gotten together by accident. Of course it is partly the period in which she went to college. There was no tremendous telephone business network then as there is today, and there wasn't any means of publication and communication that could have promoted the system, and there were no computers and specially-trained people who might need Numaudo, either.

Bertrand Russell might have done it--he undoubtedly had all the ingredients also and sufficient speech and audible-communication involvement to have done it, but again his prime time was 1915 or so (Principia Mathematica etc.) and there would have been no commercial applications then nor moral support.



I only found out about the extent of Bertrand Russell's audible interest some 5 years ago in a footnote in some philosophy book.

The earliest germ-idea I can trace for me, was about 1937 or 1938, when I had a dream about a chorus singing the multiplication table. It had to wait till April 1958 before the other elements came together. That is, the idea that this was a needed system.

Other elements that I had heard or read were Victor Borge's Talking Punctuation skit which was done on the radio a number of times from about 1936 onward. And the mathematico-logical aspect of the do re mi system. That is, the idea that mi stands in a certain relation to do. This is not a number, but more like a logic symbol. You will be terribly confused about this now, since you have been introduced to the fixed-do system where in the Latin countries, do is a fixed standard pitch, equivalent to the C in the Germanic countries. The Latin countries use numbers where we use syllables, so here we have a complete reversion of systems, such that their numbers 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 (not too different from the numbers Scott Makeig uses) stand for relations, not absolute pitches. Note very carefully: Carrillo's number standard for absolute pitches in each octave, the octaves being denoted by where he places these numbers relative to the one-line "staff".

I know this is confusing, but it is important, lest we confuse other people. I better be extra careful when I write the addendum to my Notation article.

I wonder how many Italian voice teachers who imported themselves into the USA have had how many bitter quarrels with their students over the Italian FIXED Do and the American-German-British-Dutch MOVABLE Do?

With the result that teacher and student remained enemies.

So an aid to education became a confusing learning-preventer. Apparently, in the 55 years since I was taught the Vard System in the Catholic elementary school, Cathedral School in Portland Oregon, (Movable-do and we sang do re mi &c. but the notation on the song-charts was 1 2 3 &c. with a dot below for the notes below do and a dot above the numeral for the notes above ti), this confusion has killed off all selfeggio in the schools and if you tried to discuss do re mi fa with any teachers or teachers of teachers, you would get into serious Educational Politics Trouble!

Part of the opposition may be due to 12-tone serialism--they want to eradicate all traces of the diatonic scale and then in the next century, introduce a set of twelve fixed syllables. Several such sets of syllables exist, by the way. There is as yet no standard agreed-on set of twelve syllables--which is of course wonderful for us. Maybe we can prevent it?

(In the 1930's, when I went around trying to sing atonal themes and tone-rows in the books from the library, my mother nearly went mad.)

Ervin invented syllables for fixed-do 31- and 17-tone, but currently is against the idea. Won't even discuss it anymore. I'd like to have such syllables now--recently got enthusiastic.



Glen ran across a reference in The Book of Lists or some such affair one night, to the artificial language by Jean François Sudre, called Solresol. This is a whole artificial language composed entirely of the seven solfeggio syllables and at the time--just before World War I--had some enthusiastic supporters. It is singable and performable, but of course very monotonous. Every once in a while the idea comes up again. It could be responsible for the horrible confusion about Numaudo being a "language" and all the vile abuse I get for that.

There is at least one other artificial language made up of solfeggio syllables, in the 1930's, called Spatari from its inventor's name and having eight syllables, BO for the high do or nj number 8 in the European moveable system. I don't think it was ever actually spoken, as Solresol was on a very small scale, but details of it were published in the magazine then called Radio News edited then by Hugo Gernsback.

The worst word used against me is and has always been, hobbyist. I have been dismissed from all help and consideration and even human companionship on the ground that nothing I ever did or said or wrote was ever work. This is why I have to be so nagging and obnoxious about Numaudo not being a LANGUAGE, since the hobby and amateur and pastime accusations are hurled at any and all artificial languages.

All through my 20s and 30s and most of my 40s, I was forever being dismissed as a hobbyist or amateur and never taken seriously. I had to age enough to look elderly before there was any letup in this kind of slander and abuse. I was almost always being given the "I'm a very important, busy man and you are bothering me with trifles. Get lost!" ploy. Nobody would ever tell me why. It wasn't Image, since I tried everything. It might have been just a synonym for the other accusation, that I was ahead of my time. But after the Stormy 1960s that was never used against me, until last year's phone call with Jon Lackey, who keeps on saying that I must not expect anyone to help me or recognize me or respect me because I am still ahead of my time. Nobody else says that now.

The Non-12 Movement and the Numaudo System both are equally likely to get dismissed as hobbies or not taken seriously, so they must be conducted on an Underground basis; in the 1980s meaning of Underground which is somewhat different from the 1960 or 1970 meaning. "Not Invented Here" as the Detroit manufacturers always told wouldbe automotive inventors. Because they did and because Germany, Italy, Japan, and other countries didn't say that, they are now going bankrupt and having all those troubles. But the revenge of the inventors comes too late to help any inventor.

Therefore I see this Educational Politics business as the most unlikely, impossible channel to promote either non-12 or Numaudo. It must be done outside of the conventional channels--otherwise it will be killed deader than a doornail. Every since you told me about Educational Politics I have lain awake every night -- awakened three or four times a night, worrying about it and wondering what to tell you.

The way to get around the Roadblocks is a New Network of People, and it already is started. I think the new blood has to come



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from outside the musical and educational establishments. There is an example of almost exactly what I mean right there in San Diego--look at John Metzger. Back in 1938 I had long discussions with him about what wonderful possibilities lay ahead for electronic music and for quartertones, and with deep sadness and regret I have to say that all that was killed off in him long ago, and he is still back there in the 19th century. Do you want to end up like that when you are 63?

Or for that matter, Tom Stone. Whoever advised him, wanted him to be a conventional person -- right out of a 1928 office or maybe a 1930 bank. And to make the sales effort to the musical establishment. You know what has happened; I don't have to belabor the point. If his sales approach had been in the current sense underground and bypassing the human roadblocks, he might have succeeded. His approach and advertising campaign might have sold defense plant equipment, or stocks and bonds, or insurance policies right here in Glendale, or maybe cemetery lots in Forest Lawn. It would have been very successful for that. But he turned off the rock groups and the people outside music like the handicraft shops and people in other walks of life on their days off wanting a second career or an avocation, or a Growth and Enrichment Educational Program in Evening Classes etc. etc.

One of my recent inquiries about my compositions comes from a fellow who apparently is in word processing and I guess has music as a sideline. He read the letter in Computer Music Newsletter which is now three years old and probably in the library stacks or some dusty storeroom. So my letter isn't quite dead, just hibernating.

No, this won't make a lot of money for me--I will only break even if I sell him some tapes. What it does do is show where non-12 can be promoted and where it cannot. Probably, now that you have a mailing-list for Interval of fair size, you can tabulate what background or jobs or fields the subscribers are in. Then you will have a clue how to convert the Foundation into a going concern instead of a mere paper plan. I do not mean to send out a questionnaire at present. Just to infer what kind of people and what their interest and occupational profiles are, from what information they have already given you. I have an educated guess, which I have already detailed here. If you sent out a questionnaire at the present time, you would be forcing answers and get them only for a small part of the total population, and it would be highly misleading--i.e. the answerers would give you what they thought you wanted to hear, not the truth about themselves, and you would be worse off than if you hadn't done it. Something like the Ford Motor Co.'s experience with the famous Edsel.

Something like John Chalmers being recruited by Merck & Co. in some awful place in New Jersey and regretting it and having all kinds of futile frustrations and terrible troubles. They misled him and he deceived himself into taking that job, with horrid results.

Or my many terrible mistakes, such as learning the wrong languages and corresponding with the wrong people in the 30s and 40s, and my mother moving to the wrong communities and my sending out the wrong publications in the 50s and 60s to the wrong people, so I remained ill and poor and unknown. Until about 1972. Yours