

Thursday 15 January 1981

Jonathan Glaster 3932 Alameda Place San Diego CA 92103

Greetings--

More light showers predicted--they aren't sure when. I have another sheet of plastic so will lessen the damage this time.

Have you read the two pamphlets in French by Fokker--Les Cinquièmes de Ton and Expériences musicales avec les genres musicaux de Leonhard Euler contenant la septième harmonique? Ran across the latter one again the other day--it contains short organ pieces for the 31-tone organ based on Euler's schemes. The Fifth-Tones affair is so called because the word dièse in French got used for the ordinary meaning of the # sign so could not also be used for the much smaller diésis. 30 is fifth-tones, so--maybe just maybe that would be a good way to set out the Carrillo approach vis-a-vis the Fokker approach? Haba mentioned 30-tone but didn't write very much in it.

So if you were wondering where to get more articles for future issues of Interval, this should do. Since Fokker lived to be 92 or some such incredible age, I guess that proves that 7 ratios are not dangerous to one's health! If there was any harm in harmonic sevenths, it should have shown up by then!

I was awakened several times during the night as usual. So I considered the Neville Movie idea--it is not explicitly detailed in his books but is in a radio lecture and we got hold of the transcript about 18 years ago or such a matter. If you visualize what you are after, put motion and sight and sound and kinaesthesia into it. Not a snapshot of some stage in the affair such as a pot of gold at the end of the rainbow, but the dialog and scenery of part of the event desired to happen. What do you want said to you, and what is to be your reply? This is the one thing a treasure-map can't do, since it stands still like a page in a book or a poster. (Question: What if you made a Futurist poster? Like Boccioni or Severini trying to paint time?)

Notice please: the concert pianist or conductor or traditional music teacher is immersing themselves into 19th-century pictures and maybe the movie they say of Chopin's or Beethoven's life or the book they read about Bach, Beethoven, or Brahms or maybe Schubert. Something indeed like Freudian analysis where one withdraws into the worst of childhood events and pictures them and re-hears them, or Fundamentalist indoctrination which pictures Bible characters doing their thing and held up as role-models--back to 500 B.C. not merely back to America in 1903 or 1840 when the missionaries were being sent out. No wonder we have had no progress in music when the Nostalgia Promoters have forced upon us, the pictures and sounds and sensations and philosophies and attitudes and social customs and atmospheres of Bach, Beethoven, and Brahms! This is perversion or misuse of the Neville Movie technique quoted above!

I have been going around with discomfort and irritation about the backward Musical Establishment and writing about it and talking about it, but I should have been more explicit about why it annoys me. And what we can do about it! Stop re-enacting the movie about Beethoven's life and times, or Schumann's life and times, or Tchaikovsky's 19th-century Russian scenes, and make up your own movie about January 1981 and what is possible and affordable now.



MILLIONS, not just thousands, of musically-inclined people and many of them performers who therefore are influencing the mere listeners, are using the WRONG, UPSIDE-DOWN Treasure Maps and running the wrong Neville Movies in their minds, picturing scenes from Chopin's life or his environment while they practice or listen to records of Chopin, and so for Rimsky-Korsakov and Scriabin and Debussy and the Strausses and Handel and Couperin and all the rest. Since musicians are already selected from the population to be more sensitive and more capable of imagining or able to visualize more vividly and to imaging movies or dialog or conversation or environments (historical novel fashion) more vividly and compellingly than "ordinary people", can't you see what harm this is doing? Of course this is holding music progress back. How could it do anything else but?

Look at a Baldwin or Steinway ad in the magazines, selling us just such upside-down backward treasure-map-style images. Filling our minds with the PAST, not the PRESENT which is where we can act.

So our battle is not ~~the~~ fought on the arid landscape of Arithmetic and Logarithms and Proportions, nor on the Euclidean Plains where Makeig lays out his web of Fifths and Thirds. It is not fought on the Radical Fringe where the Twelfth Root of Two is reputed to dwell. We have to replace in our own minds at least, the historical-novel and sentimental-movie pictures and sounds that the Establishment Musicians are forcing upon us all the time, with more realistic pictures of the art and drama and music and environment of 1981 and after. We have laboratories and tuning devices and modern abstractions in the galleries and airplanes and new cities and computers and amplifiers and typewriters and TV screens and synthesizers and cassettes video and audio. All that plus everything else in the contemporary scene must be in the Neville Movie somewhere, even if it is temporarily out of sight in the background or merely logically implied by what it is in the picture foreground.

We don't have to fight the 12th Root of 2 so hard because that image is only in the minds of the non-composing ~~musicians~~ non-performer theorists, and the open-minded broad-minded tolerant contemporary people we need for our movement never heard of the 12-tone system, so why explain it until they have already heard our just and 31 and 19 and 17 and 22? Then, with our background against which to judge it, you can explain about 12 to them.

It is as though some Government official had passed a law that all computer statements from banks had to be printed in Roman numerals. That is the situation in Establishment Music today, with transposing instruments and C-clefs and all that kind of foolish nonsense cluttering up everybody's mind.

Too late to send you yesterday, I got a letter from a long time acquaintance in San Francisco (met him in 1935 and at his advanced age he still poses for art classes) wanting to know why I didn't follow in Yehudi Menuhin's footsteps and remain in the field of legitimate music. Ouch! If he ever met Tom Nunn he would have a heart attack for sure. He has never allowed me to send him a cassette.

More scribbles from Chalmers, who was explaining that Carrillo's wealthy relatives paid for all those excellent performances. Yours