

Monday 23 February 1981

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Greetings-----

Got a phone call from Houston late yesterday that the March OMNI had reached there and that my picture was in there with a portion of the music article. So I hotfooted it out of here to the newsstand which was closed, alas! but I could see through the window that the February OMNI was still in its place on the rack. So I went to the two distant markets, which had every other current magazine except OMNI and they normally carry quite a number of copies of it, so I guess they didn't get it either. Or It could simply be the Sunday. More likely, the copies have not yet reached this Pacific Coast and will not be here till Tuesday or such a matter. I doubt such a heavy magazine would be airlifted.

They may, of course, mail me a copy from NY. But I can't count on that. So, since the text evidently is favorable to Non-Twelve, you should figure out how to take advantage of that for this coming month--there ought to be some way you could lecture on your non-12 work and demonstrate what you have accomplished, and what the Interval Foundation is for and more important what it has done so far already.

Then you could demonstrate the mood-differences between 17 and 19, between those and 31. And tie it in by telling how you have given me moral support and collaboration. The thing is that where I have no transportation and will not get seen very much in Los Angeles so I won't be able to take full advantage of this one month during which March OMNI is current, at least you can take advantage of it and strike while the iron is hot and tell people what you have been exploring and so on. Wish I could go into more concrete details but I haven't seen the article yet and don't know whether Craig Hundley's share of the article will or will not overshadow mine, and whether or not he is involved with non-12 beyond the Hacklemann keyboard etc. It is now fully five years since he pumped me for all that information and from that day to this has never given me the time of day nor allowed me to see what he has done, nor written or phoned me nor sent anybody here to tell me about it. All I know about him is what Glen has told me now and then in passing.

Supposedly this afternoon is when Glen and John Campbell will be performing the arrangement of my 31-tone portion, part IX, of In Limbo and videotaping it and I will be taken over there. George Secor will be playing the Megalyra. I have to replace a broken string. After the recording sessions, of course.

Denny had said something about a Partch Concert Tuesday evening at San Diego State to which he is going. He was to have seen John Gibbon yesterday or today. So maybe he will have some news or other. I suppose the OMNI article can be used to remind people of Partch's pioneering also. I don't know how much Partch is mentioned, but I think he has been. I suppose I have to stay pretty close to the phone this coming week in hope that somebody will call me about the article. If I don't make connections with the Los Angeles musical world pretty soon, I will be too old to do anything about my instruments and take part in anything fruitful--so let's hope this publicity amounts to something. I received the notice from Mills College about the San Francisco Festival in June and unfortunately don't have more pictures to send them because I already had to send them out to the other places such as LIFE. Guess I'll tell them to read OMNI and that I have been promised some pictures from those West Hollywood photographers but this will take some time.

I simply can't plan ahead as far as June. I might be ill or exhausted then. But no matter. You have a set of my instruments. It would be disastrous for my reputation to make promises I couldn't keep. For instance, Denny was trying to get me to go to that Partch concert and here he was looking straight at me at nearly 11 PM and should have seen how tired I was and I couldn't possibly make a quickie trip like that just to attend a concert and run back here. Of course I have the perfect alibi now: the need to be available here when OMNI hits the streets or the subscribers who are VIP's get their copies, which might even be this afternoon.

Indeed, Denny's visit the other day left me with a bad feeling----he was complaining that my tapes were not good enough to copy or let anybody hear them and / he couldn't bring certain people here yet because I would have to practice more etc. etc.--almost the same line as Jon Lackey had used---and in this case, even less excuse to demand perfection of me! Maybe he was setting up an alibi in advance for thus permitting him to make extravagant promises about helping me this way or that, then when it comes down to the put-up-or-shut-up, he could always say that since I didn't have professional this and laboratory perfection That, why it would be no use bringing Mr. So-&-So to hear it.

The answer to that, of course, is the reception I got at the concerts you let me take part in two years ago.

Furthermore, I am not going to be helped or sponsored or get any backing or moral support or derivative publicity from this current burst of publicity, if I shrink back from it and hide away trying to prepare myself further; or if I stop copying my clavichord tapes because they weren't made in an expensive Hollywood Studio a month ago rather than 1956. It's just like what I told you before: if I have any friends they will understand that I have to make do with what I already have and live within my means. My enemies will still be as nasty as ever even if I got the professional equipment and expensive studio time: they would, like any blackmailer, demand more and more and more. And keep on procrastinating. Unless I get my present stuff heard and seen, nobody would have any reason for bettering my equipment or condition.

Yesterday late I was going over the Helmholtz/Ellis book and the Duodenarium--maybe it's time to translate some of Ellis's century-old stuff into contemporary English and explain it to the readers of Interval. Ellis should be vindicated after all the abuse he had from Barbour and the 12-tone Serialists and the 19th-century-worshipping music-teachers and piano-makers.

Which suggested another thing: You are involved in public school music and questions of music education. Now, as I have demonstrated for quite some time, non-12 requires the Interfacing of Art & Science. Which in turn means, getting Acoustics down to school-kid level in small pleasant doses. The reasons for wanting just intonation REQUIRE scientific experiments, demos, and explanations, which belong to Acoustics and therefore to Physics and therefore this means you could be involved in Science Education along the lines of the Need for Scientific Literacy among Our Youth etc. Or the need to have some of them study engineering and music as Gary Morrison is doing.

So that means you do not have to be in the position of Art As Luxury begging for Sponsors and Grants, but you are promoting Just Intonation and the calculations and building (engineering, design) of instruments, the mathematics of theory such as ratios and logarithms for the tempered systems, and of course the electronics involved, not only in building electronic instruments, but with such things as tuning-devices, effects-boxes, recording, amplifiers, &c. You can Play Both Sides of the Street! If the new administration and the hardboiled realists et al. harass you, you are teaching Applied Acoustics and Physics involved with instrument making, aren't you? So that should get its own backing from the Science Education people. Then the handicraft side of instrument-making should get backing or at least moral support from the industrial practical Real World Out There. This isn't all poetry and religion; it's solid Hardware. Such things as this Omni break should make the whole affair more respectable. At least for a few people whom we can plead to while the iron is still Hot. You, too, can be a Shameless Opportunist.

Yours,