

Psunday 1 Martch 1981

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Greetings-----

Got a long letter from Harold Waage Saturday afternoon and he enclosed a sample of special music to try out the automatic just major thirds and automatic septimal intervals on his organ-- i.e. some of the things he is going to use on a demo cassette later.

So I sent him a xerox of two pages of the OMNI article and some answers to his questions about 22-tone among other things.

Evidently by now, he is only trying to make 19th-century organ music sound better and smoother; he is not really trying to open the non-12 doors for 1981 composers. But he is much more openminded than Conviser about the same things.

I told him not to expect any welcomes from organ manufacturers, but to seek out some small factories which might now be making non-musical items--only they will be openminded. Or some musician might want a custom job and this could work so for some rock group.

I enclose a xerox of his two-page music sample, since this would be a very useful thing to experiment with later--somebody in Interval Foundation could do well to compare just and 12-tone this way.

It occurred to me that if his automatic just-ification scheme were applied to a 17- or 19tone keyboard it might work. So I told him .

He put the fatal question: Is his thing non-12? I can't give a straight answer--it is impossible to play a third-tone or quarter-tone melody on it and to have intervals that far apart at the same time --that is, sound a septimal interval against a tertian one or a just major third against a pythagorean major third or produce 11-based intervals or some of the things I am doing on my guitars. So I had to evade and answer around the question.

The problem here is: He is going to try promoting this automatic just from 12-keyboard scheme to all the OBVIOUS firms which will unanimously discourage him and throw him downstairs. Yet some broadminded person in a non-music business might hear the just intervals and eagerly accept build a half-dozen of them. This is a custom job and could be promoted as such for very special people, but the mass marketers would put him in a box and nail the lid down.

At least with Xerox places here I can preserve his notion for somebody else to take it the next step or two.

Heavy rain and thunder and lightning most of the night. Clyde Corson bought an OMNI, saw the picture and flipped. Phoned me from far off Lawndale.

Put it this way: Suppose I had submitted the Prototype Megalyra to Gibson or Fender or Whatever, I would never have gotten into OMNI

with those Totem Poles in vivid colors. And they would have shrunk to 4½ ft. The antimusicians know everything and the composer knows nothing.

The late Paul Beaver, back in 1967 or so, would not consider an amplifying clavichord over 5 octaves. Yet it was the bottom and top octaves that were its glory and reason for making it at all.

(The keyboard would not have gone through certain recording and broadcasting studio doors nor have fitted in his car trunk.)

Glén has to go to Florida and Nevada and other places about 15 March so I will be stranded here with nobody to take me anywhere on business--till April or something. Y The new administration wants bus fares all over the USA to go way beyond the reach of the poor people who have no cars. So I will be caught in a vicious circle. I will not be able to get full advantage from the OMNI article because I will not be able to take my instruments to any interested party.

Quite likely somebody in the San Fernando Vally--whether close like North Hollywood or Burbank or distant like Canoga Park or Northridge--will be well-off and want to make some kind of promoter deal or custom copying of my instruments or something to do with the compositions or synthesizers or records. They may not want to come to Glendale. Or it might be Hollywood or West Hollywood or the beaches.

I am in a very dangerous position with respect to the people who came from Glendale News-Press and questioned me about how I made my living--I might get into trouble -- there are several possibilities. I was ~~x~~ evasive the other day, but will have to answer something--can I trust them to talk off the record? On the other hand, no instruments were sold yet, and my odd jobs like tuning or refretting are within the allowance. Nobody will believe I was so ill for so long. It will be a little safer when I reach 65, which is 14 months from now. The people running the City of Glendale want to get rid of all the poor people and so that could be why I have been treated so nasty for 4 years and 8 months. That is, if certain people here know more about me they would harass everybody till I was forced out. The City spurned a big Federal grant for a housing project recently.

Maybe some VIP reading OMNI will become my sponsor or business partner or promoter. The point I am making is, if OMNI can afford to put that full-page picture in there to the tune of a million copies, just for the sake of an Image, then some bigwig can afford to rescue me from Glendale and put me in a proper studio/residence and promote the instruments and get most of the profits. More likely it is a question of a second-order promoter--an agent who finds another more powerful agent, or a promoter who sells the idea of me to another bigger promoter. Or the manager of a rock group that would use a Megalyra or just possibly a visual affair--the instruments as abstract art. OMNI being an international magazine the sponsor might even be abroad. Another thing I have to realize is that the business deal(s) might be temporary and I might later have to seek someone else. I got 20 more copies of that leaflet mentioning Interval so something might come your way.

If other forces start wresting the Foundation from you, maybe you should think (and Treasure Map) in terms of getting personal publicity as I just got. Insurance anyhow. Up and down this Coast, not just locally. I will report as each thing happens.

Yours

I haven't been paid for Denny's regretting job, but: Denny wanted me to put up the money for most of the gas to go down to the Partch concert at San Diego State--I had not then heard about the performance in Northridge and guess he didn't either--and of course I already have seen the production some time ago, so it wasn't that necessary for me to see it again. Now if he really wanted to help he could have taken me to the metal places in the Valley so I could do the 22- and 24-ton metal bars and the bridges for the Newel Posts. (Conviser couldn't even imagine someone in the field as long as I have been, unable ever to save up for a car. I didn't want to tell him all my sad life story about the chronic illnesses etc.) I have lost many jobs and chances to be consultant because I was too poor which "proved" my incompetence to be an advisor about anything whatever.

Now I have the biggest opportunity in all my life for the next three weeks while that magazine is current, but when I say that I have no transportation so can't go to anybody else's place, or that I have no capital so I can't build a new instrument to order, or they see the incomplete instruments which let the cat out of the bag and show my poverty, then they will turn me down.

Perhaps I can eventually find somebody to do the actual shopping for the tuning-device and the metal bars so they don't have to come after me, someone who is hardnosed when it comes to haggling and beating the price down. I suspect the prices of those devices are highly inflated, comparing them to the price of a frequency counter at the electronic shops. So it could be that for that kind of a deal I shouldn't be present. This is a mere subdivision of the fact that I must have agent(s) and promoter(s). No matter whether I have to stay here in Glendale the rest of my life or whether I move to whatever other location. The vicious circle is that I can't have a partner or agent until I already have them. Because it takes an agent to find me one. Reduction ad absurdum. He has to find himself. Whether the OMNI article can break this vicious circle remains to be seen.

Jon Lackey set up the other vicious circle--I had to have another amplifying clavichord already in working order so that I could get the virtuoso to record on it at a professional recording studio and of course all that is impossible because there is no money for any of those things so it will never happen. And he knew that and kept saying it everytime he spoke to me. That is, I have no right to copy or play my existing tapes. I must go to my grave quietly. Where did he get all this authority over me? Terrific dilemma? Shall I or shall I not tell him about the Omni picture? Maybe I should wait till I make an actual profitable deal because of someone seeing it and coming here. Surely he subscribes to OMNI. Maybe let him call me. The reason I suspect Lackey of hostility is that he refused to admit that the Megalyra and Newel Post were abstract sculptures--even after they were at LAICA. Professional jealousy is a terrible beast. It's obvious after all this time that he would never find me any agent or partner or give me the tiniest moral support. So I have stayed away.

The hopeful fact is that OMNI spent all that money on the article and the photographer spent all that valuable time and enjoyed doing it, so if they think I was worth the trouble someone else will and become the sponsor or agent or whatever in the Hollywood area. All I need is one person in a million of the readers.

Yours