

Tooze 3 March 1981

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Greetings--

Chalmers got a deserved rebuke and I was off the hook--what happened was that when he came here yesterday, Conviser's letter to me arrived and it said "Received a 6-page letter from Chalmers. Absolutely Indecipherable!" So he couldn't complain about it to me.

Conviser admitted hearing the cassette-copy. So I guess he will have to admit I played the cello in just intonation, theory or not.

He enclosed a xerox of another J A S A article, about inharmonically related tones and whether they were or were not dissonant.

Which is somewhat relevant to John Gibbon's Bell Garden I would think.

Chalmers said that Ervin or somebody had told him that Craig Hundley had taken a film-soundtrack-making-opportunity away from Francisco Lupica and so got the money and the credit away from Lupica also. (Lupica's Cosmic Beam, built by Minzelle or whatever his name was up in Ventura County.) So that means I must not expect any encouragement or help from Hundley at all, Chalmers continued. That makes the situation far more serious than I suspected. But on the other hand it would put Lupica on my side, wouldn't it? I met him once and had no problems.

So maybe some opportunities may be taken from me now that I am in a sort of adversary-position in the Omni article. The problem really is to prevent such things, to forestall such a competitive situation happening. But how do you go about preventing something which might not happen in the first place? It may not be as bad as it could be. I could provoke a confrontation purely by accident. Or someone else who is tactless or careless could provoke it. --This isn't a laughing matter, considering what happened to Hacklemann's clavichord, being re-lent out without Hacklemann's consent and having to be repaired.

Chalmers did not think that ~~Ervin's~~ Ervin's things could be published very soon--I guess he has a timidity attack again or something.

I may get to go to the Brand Library today, well ahead of due date for the records and books, and shown them the OMNI.

Haven't heard any more from Karl Berger, so I guess that was a false alarm. About the building of amplifying clavichords.

Brnad Brand Library had a record by one Jack Crossan of South Pasadena (at least he lived there four years ago) and it has piano, clavichord, and harpsichord, with some celesta, the various numbers on the album being spliced together with almost no break at all. So it is an excellent comparison affair, although the usual fault of harpsichordists playing the clavichord without vibrato and thousands of little hard dry tinkles. Both the clavichord and harpsichord were Neupert, which might account for the hard tinny tones.

That is, I must not criticize Crossan's lack of vibrato until I know how flexible or stiff the Neupert clavichord was. The old business of the keyboard performer being the helpless slave of the manufacturer. It is my understanding that Neupert is nasty mean to performers, refusing to deal with them directly whereas many other harpsichord makers are quite willing to consult with the customers.

Chalmers re-laid the 13-tone bars to his scheme so he could demonstrate the 8- and 5-tone scales which result. So now I don't have to puzzle over those rows of hastily scribbled numbers and make all kinds of mistakes trying to decipher them.

Just copy down the layout as he made it and then it will be available for those who wish to try it. It does look as though some people are now sold on 13.

It boils down to the need for moral support and backing up when a sudden business deal or offer is made to me and I am all alone against three or four smart scheming parties. I could have a legal disaster by signing something in a hurry or being pushed into a corner and then having to turn an opportunity down because I cannot get anybody's advice quick.

Ervin should have asked my permission before lending my clavichord-tape copy-cassette to Hundley. I should at least have been aware that it was lent out and not returned. There will always be this risk that he will get somebody else to make an amplifying clavichord and thus freeze me out of ever having one again myself. I never could get publicity for the amplifying clavichord from 1940 onward through all these years. Fortunately I did get publicity for the new Newel Post and Megalyra almost from the beginning. Even videotape, and certain correspondence at the very beginning of the Megalyra before the first pickups were on it.

What troubles me now is that I have prepared for so many years and warned everybody I could that some day would come that I needed moral support and now I am deserted just at the moment when some sudden opportunity is about to happen, and may have to reject it and be lonely and see someone else do it in my place because I can't trust the other parties in a three-against-one situation. Glen is leaving town in a week or so and will be gone a month or such a matter so that is just exactly the most likely time for such a rush-rush deal.

After all: Ervin rushed and pressured me to hurry up and do something about the clavichord when he knew I had no floor space to build it, and then when it came to a showdown to preserve the frame from the rainstorms he refused. So how could I trust him now? Then Denny tells me none of my tapes is good enough to play for any people he would bring so he won't bring them until I have professional equipment and record all the tapes over to his impossible standards. Which would be ten years from now if ever. So wouldn't I be foolish to accede to that? Where's the money to rent professional recording studios? So what he was saying was that I am to be punished for being poor, and for living within my means and for doing what I can with what I have instead of waiting till 20 years after my death. I have been punished enough for not having transportation--I can't buy the tuning device I have saved up for because I cannot shop around and can't buy the metal bars and bridge material I have already saved up to buy because I can't get to the metal places.