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Greetings----

Supposed to be clear weather today. Lots of leaves to rake up which robs me of much time. Nothing happened yesterday, in contrast to the extremely busy Saturday. Only phone call was Krumholz--who is so skeptical--he wondered if OMNI had 24 pages. I don't think he believes I would get publicity like that.

Gradually getting around to my mailing list and notifying everybody. Before postage goes up to 20¢. At least they published it before that happened.

Woke up very groggy this morning. I don't think I will be much good all day.

While we are on the subject of photography and art and progress etc., I was reading a biography of Man Ray who flourished in the 20s and 30s--he started in New York as a boy and later went to Paris and met the Dadaists and Surrealists and had the "photogram" as one of his main creative outlets. Close to Marcel Duchamp and others like that and after WW II was in Hollywood for a time. Closest I ever got to him was to attend his lecture at the County Art Museum when it was in Exposition Park--that would be around 1950 or so. He went back to France later for his last years.

Then there is a British booklet also from the Brand Library with many color pictures of the abstract artists and the Op and Pop of the 1960s mostly.

Now why do I bring up abstraction? Partly because of the lucky accident that the fret-line pattern for the Megalyra got so close to the contemporary style that it was accepted as such. My mother would have frowned and sputtered and been very annoyed at this, no doubt. It took my niece a week or two to figure out and deduce that all those colored lines were NOT there for ornament, but had to MEAN something which of course they do.

But I bring it up just now for another reason: The Partchians are trying to stop certain avenues of musical progress and because of Partch's extreme iconoclasm and polemic revolt against the musical Establishment, the average layman doesn't see this in his FOLLOWERS. Therefore I am worried about Interval Foundation. It's many times easier to PREVENT such things than to try to alleviate or correct them after the damage is done. The blame attaches to these new followers, who came into the Partch movement after his death mostly, and who not really misinterpret Partch's ideas, but over-interpret, exaggerate, and misunderstand and overplead them.

It is very important where these new hangers-on COME FROM. They apparently come from the Ecology Religion, the Back-to-the-Farm cults, the Health-Foodists, the sages from India who live in Planned Poverty in some monastery or other so that their followers idealize the isolated villages of India and other remote places while reading about it in Los Angeles or New York Condominia. They get all steamed up about Natural Foods and Home Gardens and Raw Foods (which of course without teeth I can't negotiate, so they scold me real nasty) and then when some idea about natural living makes good sense, they overdo it till

it becomes a dreadful caricature and an object of justified ridicule from Ordinary People, so then the whole movement gets accused of the exaggerations and misdeed of a few kooks.

Anyway: it boils down to people who are Converted to the Religious Dogma of Natural This and Ecological That, and want to force it down my throat and yours, extend this concept to musical instruments and other arts, so that an electronic oboe is "artificial" or more "artificial" than a conventional oboe--which in fact is ridiculous. Oboe reeds do not grow on trees--the cane or other material has to be carefully shaped and fitted with cork and thread and other things and the metal keys in the oboe were not picked off bushes--they had to be mined and smelted and machined and fitted to the instrument. So the regular oboe and sax and flute and clarinet and horn are just as artificial as my electronic keyboard oboe and then some. So I get accused of being on the Side Of The Machine Dehumanizing Music &c. ad nauseam.

Violins may be made of wood but they go through an extremely elaborate processing and fitting with all kinds of artificial and contrived accessories and processes. Surely if I make vocal recordings that ought to be natural enough to satisfy the meanest cruelest fanatic.

So it was a pleasant surprise when the Boneworks people whom I was afraid of because I thought they might scold me about amplifying the Megalyra, said they understand why I didn't want to attempt an acoustic contrabass instrument. They realized it would be too big and heavy and would never be loud enough to be the foundation to support an orchestra or group.

Sabre-tooth tigers were natural but I don't think that made the cavemen any happier about being eaten by one.

The "natural" idea when carried too far also is used to put down progress in visual arts and to extol photographic-realist-painting as against abstractions. It hides reaction under the cloak of Conservatism.

The point I am getting to here, is that music is abstract art. "Program music" of the Romantic Period is supposed to be more natural but the labels such as Skaters' Waltz and Pastoral Symphony and the Battle of So-and-So and Moonlight Sonata and March of the Dwarfs and so on are not part of the music itself--they are rather suggestions or apocryphal explanations ~~####~~ TACKED ONTO the score or program, for laypersons too stupid or dense or philistine to appreciate purely musical forms.

I have to draw the line SOMEWHERE. I have to say in advance, Thus far and no farther. I don't want the ecologists and gurus and dancers and dramatists and inmates of the farm communes and members of way-out cults telling me that all my compositions have to be done on conventional acoustic instruments and have to have Romantic-Period titles and be ABOUT something in nature. If I want to write about nature I can make up a story or take photos or tell about something I experienced. If I compose something or build a new kind of instrument, this is to do something which CANNOT be put into words or painted in a picture--otherwise I would write it in words or have somebody paint that picture. A composition may be somewhat relevant to a title for other reasons, of course. But it isn't ONLY ABOUT THE TITLE, or words would do better.

Partch's compositions are really Grand Opera or maybe Wagnerian Music-Drama. The musicians are supposed to be actors and dancers, so as to integrate the whole performance more than Wagner ever did--while Wagner wanted to integrate all the arts--drama, music, poetry, scenery--Partch carried it at least one step further--the musical instruments themselves, the singers as musicians, the dancers as musicians, the musicians as actors/dancers, and so on. So that might be a justification for "natural" instruments in the sense of acoustic instruments which had to be PROPS or SCENERY as well as musical instruments. At the live concert in Northridge 20 years ago or whenever it was--15 years or what I forget, where Partch lectured in person, and the only time I actually met him, he answered somebody that the records didn't do justice because they had no visual performance, no scenery, no visible action, just the music. So he was doing several arts at once, in an integrated fashion, not just music as I have been putting on tape. The argument about acoustical instruments ONLY for Partch's music-DRAMAS does not apply to what I am doing. It is unfair for people to extend it to me. I don't write poetry or operas and don't write plays and put on visual spectacles.

I may engage in visual arts and some of the instruments may be sculptures, but that is not part of the music played on the instruments--it is more of a coincidence or an accidental opportunity.

The red Megalyra is not going to sound different from the green one. It might be suitable for a different auditorium or studio or different people to play it in public, of course, but that isn't the sound.

Part of this is mere accident and necessity and financial problems and other factors quite out of my control. I can't write operas like Partch because I cannot afford the time or the money and don't have the energy to see such a thing through to completion and I don't want to impose on other people the way he did, directing them and rehearsing them and urging them on. I had to live within my means and avoid losing friends by not asking them to give up too much of their time and energy and go so far out of their way.

Or apply it to your own case: Think of all the expensive studio time for rehearsals it would have taken for that improvisation at CME with the recording studio and Pepe and your father, had everything been written down--it would have had to be Carrillo's notation and all of us would have had to learn it at cost of midnight-oil and time, and come back for three or four rehearsals. You had sense enough to avoid all that and save a load of money!

The next time someone scolds me about electronic instruments or tape overdubs or synthesizers or computers, I will call them crazy Luddites. I do not have any more patience. If I had surrendered to these fanatics, they would simply, like any other blackmailers, have demanded more and more and wanted all my time and energy and kept me from composing or performing anything. They are the enemies of all progress.

These Partch-followers seem to think that if Partch did it a certain way, I must also--and you must also--and so if they run your Foundation I won't be very welcome there. In that respect, it is fortunate that the OMNI article steered clear of that phase of recent history and didn't get me mixed up with the ACOUSTIC INSTRUMENTS EXCLUSIVELY crowd.

I haven't forced you or anybody else to build electronic instruments and I haven't told you what to play on the Megalyra or Drone instrument or Kosmolyra. But Denny came here and started to tell me my existing tapes were not good enough to be heard in public just like Lackey's polemics 2 years ago. (I understand Lackey is now in Sunland or someplace up in the hills.)

Nobody has the right to put me in a double-bind. That is, to set up impossible conditions such as making it cost too much for me to be heard anywhere. Or to make me wait till dead. Or to insist that some virtuoso pianist be the only performer on my amplifying clavichord if it is ever made. (Most of the clavichord recordings I have ever heard, were done by concert Typists.)

And I don't want to end up a church organist or writing ritual magic background for you know whom or merely providing behind-the-scenes orchestra-pit stuff for dancers or films or some ego-inflated music therapist.

I suppose I sound repetitious but the problem is getting worse and until it starts decreasing I have to do what I can to prevent it stopping me in my tracks. I am also trying to save you from falling for ~~xxx~~ smooth-talk from somebody who would like to rob your energy and enslave you to their religion or cause or whatever. I don't want to wait until someone rips you off and then complain about it when it is too late for me to warn you. I wasted oodles of time on the semantic people and their fellow-kooks back in 1950-60.

Let me put it another way: There is plenty of publicity and outlet and moral and financial support for the OTHER arts such as drama film photography dance painting sculpture -- and for 1860 program music and the orchestras and pianos to play it on -- and for athletics and sports which is what "corporeal" means to some people. There are, in other words, people willing to contribute time energy and money to the things Partch did which were NOT his 43-tone just system--they would, no doubt, finance the rewriting of all his scores for conventional instruments tuned to 12-tone temperament, I dare say. During the last twenty years I have read too many music critic ~~#####~~ columns which either implied this or came out in the open and said as much! This will indeed happen unless somebody stops it.

Ergo: if the purpose and energy and finances and time-of-the-people within the Interval Foundation is expended too much on things which are not NECESSARILY tied to non-twelve scales, then there will be too little time and money and energy and desire and incentive available to refret guitars and build just psalteries and organs and train violinists to play just or 19 or 31 or 22 or 17, and to train people to sing just intervals and use the new instruments already in existence. It will all be siphoned off to opera or drama or dance or other artforms which already are available from the 12-tone groups and persons and institutions. And that is exactly what the piano and organ factories would want. % % % AT LAST! I think I've got it pinned down for you. I've been beating around the bush and unable to be this definite--the energy and time and money of the Interval Foundation should not be siphoned off by things which do not compel the use of non-12 music. This money and time and energy should be applied ONLY to what CANNOT be done with the 12-tone equal temperament. Otherwise the Refusers-To-Leave-12 will control you and stop your progress. We must go on tuning pianos and playing 12-tone guitars, but not inside the Foundation. Yours