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Tooze 12 Febbyweri 1985
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Greetings from Forest Lawn Center *****

If I acted strange yesterday, it's the shaking-up from the fall. Although I did NOT bump my head on the pavement and did not see any stars nor go unconscious, it made me real woozy and hard to collect my thaughts. For instance, a long delay to turn on the French Department so I could explain the Enharmonic Genus to them.

About 8 PM last night, Chalmers called me and offered his appraisal of the Doty situation. He thinks it's a sort of burst of fanatic energy contingent upon this new opportunity to get out a magazine and be Editor--so he throws all caution to the winds and starts Tilting At Windmills. Lashing out at the Heretics.

I will have to use the electric typewriter more while my wrists are still sore. I have been afraid it would quit since the mechanism is termperamental. My left wrist was quite swollen Saturday night but this has now gone way down to just about normal.

One thought that was knocked out of my head--I's sorry about that--there is a French Cultural Center in San Francisco with which they could make very happy connections. At least there used to be. There was also an International Center which held meetings--that was way way back when I lived in San Francisco. I got help with Russian as well as French by going there in 1936.

All these things I couldn't think of till the middle of the night.

The other point: I did not ARGUE about moods, I DEMONSTRATED them with hardware, not tried to prove a theory on paper. This mathematizing obscures the mood issue, in that IT WAS IMPOSSIBLE TO PREDICT THE MOODS BEFORE THE PROPER INSTRUMENTS WERE GENERALLY AVAILABLE OR COULD BE RECORDED SO THAT ENOUGH PERSONS COULD HEAR MOODS FOR THEMSELVES! Let's add a few more exclamation points: !!!!!

You cannot predict the EMOTIONAL effect of a tuning-system by multiplying and dividing fractions or using logarithms to extract the nineteenth or twenty-second root of two. If Ellis could have predicted moods he would have done it; if certain composers could have predicted the mood of 18 (Busoni et al.) they would have done so. If Yasser could have predicted the mood of 19 with all his charts and diagrams and ten-line staves, wouldn't he have done it?

More importantly: if you had a 19-tone gamelan it would be so dull and bland that it would blunt the zonk of 19 and might cause the mood to be overlooked or minimized. But with a NORMAL timbre, such as Mandelbaum's pianos, the mood was assertively evident and turned me on. How can I mad make this clear to these dryasdust arid theorists? Timbre makes or breaks the rules of harmony. My tubular chime set changes all the rules of 12-tone harmony, as anybody playing church hymns on chimes knows already.

Very important here: the peculiar timbre of the computer output at the studio when Doty ran through his demos; the peculiar timbre of his gamelan also. That could create a bias I could never overcome at all becaus it changes the impact of EVERY interval just or tempered or plain inharmonic! Partch's bass marimbas likewise. Forster's Diamond Marimba 13-limit--again--special peculiar timbre altering the rules before he played the first note on that instrument.

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Mark Bolles

STRING MAN IN NOVATO:

From practical experience for some years, I knew that in order to get anybody to accept a 13-tone instrument, it had to be tamed. It would have been a waste of time to put 13 on an organ and expect the listeners to endure the continuous dissonance of those intervals sustained in normal tone qualities. But with the bland mellow aluminum bars furnished by John Gibbon, 13 was quite feasible and is in my yard.

The solution with 13 of course, is to use a MULTIPLE, such as 26, 39, or better yet 65, which could be done by computer.

Melodically on a one-note-at-a-time synthesizer, anything goes in 13 since we are not sounding two tones at once to create any dissonance, just an interesting and novel MELODIC pattern.

But all this is totally ignored by the propagandists both for and against just intonation and by the establishment as well as the way-out experimenters. They don't want me to discuss it. They wish I would go away forever.

Quit spoiling their beautiful theories.

Chalmers is beginning to appreciate things he ignored before, because he occasionally gets to hear something.

Not soon enough to do me any good, but soon enough to make the course smoother.

Have we spent effort and time and money just because of a love affair with fifth-grade arithmetic? Multiplying and dividing fractions? That's the means but not the end.

My pocket electronic calculator makes no noise at all. The keys do not click. So why confuse the calculating process needed for building or programming an instrument or computer, with the emotional effects of the sounds of ACTUAL COMPOSITIONS?

Can you feed a hungry man by making him eat the recipe pages torn out of your cookbook? Somebody who never made clam chowder before needs a cookbook to find out how; but you can't eat the recipe. The ink and paper have no calories.

Similarly my 19-tone fretting table and frequency and beat tables have no mood. My just tables have no mood either. It is as useless to keep shouting "5/4 5/4 5/4" at someone who has never been allowed to hear a just major third sustained on an organ, as it would be to get out the a map of San Francisco and expect them to enjoy the view from Twin Peaks by looking at the street-grid on the map. Or to feel the fog. Having made enemies in the past by just this serious mistake, I know better now. If I conduct a polemic crusade, I will lose and also help Doty to split the non-12 movement into at least THREE if now not more warring factions.

Carrillo, Haba, Whitman (Haba's pupil), and about a dozen others, mostly of the 1920s or so when the abortive quartertone movement flourished, were on the opposite extreme from Doty and the Partch Religious Sect he didn't want started. They (Carrillo and Haba) did not want any just intonation--all you have to do is read that book of Carrillo's essays that you lent me once and had me translate from. There are terrific polemics against Helmholtz and I guess against Ellis but I think he blames Helmholtz for everything. Carrillo contended in some of those essays that there is only one whole-tone and that is 1 to the sixth root of two and nothing else--no 9:8 and no 10:9 and 81:80 was ridiculous. Otherwise he wouldn't have been so stupid as to have a 54-tone piano built! I can excuse the 18-tone pianos because of Busoni concurring. But 30 when 31 is good and 30 almost useless and 29 is better than 30; 42 when both 41 and 43 are better?

Maybe Doty is equating all non-12 equal temperament experimentation with the subdivisions of the Sixth-Part-of-an-Octave policy of Busoni, Carrillo, and Haba? United we Stand; Divided we Fall. If we do not hang together, we shall hang separately!

We cannot afford to fragment the xenharmonic movement because the 12-tone establishment will sneer at us, injure our reputations, belittle us, discourage all the public from listening to our music, fence us out of society, and denounce us in print--they have done all these things for more than my lifetime of 67½ years, so I know this the HARD WAY!! Why must I go through any more abuse from the Pianolaters? Must the fanaticism of Carillo (read his feuilletons in that book you once lent me) generate the mirror-image fanaticism of Doty which sees nothing but evil in quartertones and third-tones? Just because Carrillo and Haba and some others did not want any just intonation, must I suffer Doty's snide remarks? It is not my quarrel! I refuse to take the consequences of Doty's reactions to the other-extreme factions.

I am nearing the end of my life and I could have been killed by that car last Saturday, in which case this house would have been already emptied by last evening and you would have been unable to trace anything in these premises, for it would have been buried in the Dump.

I therefore cannot afford the energy to mount a Crusade and certainly I have no spare time nor spare energy to combat Doty and split the Movement at least THREE ways. This is exactly why Esperanto did not set the world on fire. The Idists split the Esperanto movement and then came along about 500 other artificial languages to cause internecine warfare for the last 70 years. Maybe 80 years would be more accurate.

If it had not been for the fragmentation of the Esperanto movement back in 1905 and 1910, I could have been talking to all of you in Esperanto instead of wrestling with French Grammar yesterday! That is what is going to happen to non-12 if we dissipate our energy in abstract arguments in print and don't play enough non-12 music and record it so other people can hear the systems for themselves.

I am not getting anywhere with the Megalyra because nobody will take it to places in Los Angeles where I could demonstrate it to other musicians. Nor am I allowed to get it (the four instruments) into the hands of Los Angeles musicians willing to play it solo and in ensembles with existing groups. I am the victim of fragmentation in that regard.

Divide and Rule. The old Roman prescription for stopping anyone from succeeding. If the Musical Establishment can keep us at war with one another, there will never be any non-12 music heard.

I am punished for having succeeded with my experiments! Do you realize this? I am criticized because my equipment does not cost enough! McAuley talks about doing something for all the ten years I have known him, but does nothing because he is part of the establishment. He wants to store all my instruments in a basement so NOBODY WILL EVER SEE OR HEAR THEM. I bring this up now because you asked "Did McAuley plan a High-Tech-looking instrument?" No, not something using Lucite or Plexiglas or Perspex or having that Computer Panelboard Look or IBM look either. A dark mahogany board with the tiniest possible inlaid lines and just shades of brown, no real colors like red or blue or green--that would be too hippy gaudy for him. He is trying to force me to redesign the Megalyra to take it far from my specification and definition. So that I will lose my sound-sculpture or visual-art reputation.

Somebody at CME UCSD brought in the sign language poetry for the totally deaf to make music look unnecessary. Haven't we had our lesson?! Do I have to leave all the fame and fortune and recognition to John Cage? This is my last chance, hence the Annual Report. I am getting good acknowledgments of it, but will anything be done? If I had been taken to the hospital Saturday, I would have had no home nor personal effects left. Nobody would ever know--I would have disappeared completely. I have come that close now, to Nonpersonhood! I need referrals and it should be obvious that these are referrals you can't do anything about, but you can tell others. I need a practical business network such that I get to and from the groceries and supply-houses and places to demonstrate

and lecture and to certain social events etc. So suppose I spell it out: Suppose I get this offer to move to the new studios in San Diego. In that case I must have two affairs that you cannot provide because you don't have the connections and will not have the time. But referral-chains might make it possible. The first thing is to make business arrangements here before I move--to keep me going until I move, and to find me a Los Angeles Representative willing to take three or four instruments and keep them in L A and demonstrate them and take orders if there ever are any. The second thing is to contact people in San Diego in addition to your already established network, so that my efforts to start Creativity Meetings and to get people to take me to and from supply places and markets will not burden you at all. That Granville Murphy who already is at the Better World Workshop in San Diego could help me if he wanted, but after 33 years of practically nothing I doubt it seriously. I have written off UCSD forever--one insult before NO AUDIENCE is enough. But there are other colleges and interest-groups and networks in San Diego, so it doesn't matter.

Jeff would have to work hard to keep going so wouldn't have too much time to help me, but he did promise the other night when he phoned me that there MUST be 19-tone ensembles.

I didn't want to concentrate on disaster yesterday, but if I had fallen toward that car instead of away from it, I would be dead. That's how close I came. A once-in-fifty-years event. I have avoided or prevented all the narrow escapes in fifty long years. But nobody is perfect.

I have no more time left. I can't count on even a day. Anybody who says they are too busy means they never will do anything. It will be too late.

I have a trivial problem at the moment: I was told that I am mentioned in the current issue of Keyboard magazine in Bill Irwin's page. (Pop organ playing mostly.) But there is no place in Glendale I can go even to read it, much less xerox it. So I will lose the benefit of that mention. I went to the Los Angeles Library after leaving the doctor's office. They do not take Keyboard. Well maybe somebody will see it and send me a xerox.

The same thing will happen when the L A Times article comes out-- I won't know which issue of the paper it is and must depend on somebody who takes the paper to watch it for me. Then I can get xeroxes. Otherwise I will never see it. They have not yet made the appointment for a photo if any. Hope I'm not in as much pain then as I am now. Just put out the rubbish. Very little of course.

I think I can make a copy-cassette next week for Pierre-Jean. I was figuring on the later date the 17th you said you were coming through; that's why I didn't have one ready. I bought half a dozen blank cassettes.

About time now to get the mail. There are certain hours of day there is no airplane noise and I can record outdoors. I got the Megalyra at one of those times. I think Jeff and some other people are going to be glad that you and your father have produced the 19-tone duets. How about something snappy with the 17-tone banjo when you get back down there?

Go through your 12-tone guitar repertory and find a piece which contrasts with 19 as much as possible. Each will make the other stand out. That will answer the question Why 19? and a similar affair will answer the question Why Just? without having to write a single word. Irony of Ironies: When I was planning articles to afford Ellis the first kind word in a century, I get Doty's blast. Did I cause him to turn on me? What did Ellis do to start off Lloyd's debunking and Barbour's slander and some others' mean snide remarks? If there is no hope of a united non-12 movement, then I guess we have to get famous for our instruments and computer programs. Lance Bowling who has the record and publishing co. in Long Beach is willing to publicize my Five Subminor Sketches one way or another. He might help David Hill if and only if I can play my cards right. Here is his box no.: Lance Bowling, Cambria Records & Publishing, Box 374, Lomita CA 90274. I'll look up the String Man in Novato and put it on page 1. yours