

Saturday 11 July 1981

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Greetings----

Horrors! the ribbons wear out FAST--almost time for another. The don't make 'm like they useta.

It has taken this much of July and the entire month of June to catch up with the dealy delay caused two years ago by the Art Exhibit at LAICA and PS 1. Finally one set of pickups is on the red Megalyra. Twelve more pickups have to be wound to complete it. The green Megalyra and Drone III are done so that you can exchange instruments now. And then the Drone II and yellow Megalyra can be repaired.

Still no way for me to get the metal to make anything else nor to complete the new newel posts. Purely a transportation problem, since I saved up for the mea metal quite a while ago.

More notational Nonsense and Foolishness and just plain Outrage. Roger Johnson (Assoc. Prof. Ramapo College N J) SCORES: an anthology of new music, 150-odd scores and some of them are VERY odd; Macmillan 1981. That Karl Berger in New York State is represented also. The compulsory John Cage is included, of course.

The whole thing gives me an impression of trivialization --as though several yearxs of scraping the Bottom Of The Barrel have at last Worn Things Very Thin. I just can't get enthusiastic. Nobody is into non-12 even though there is one piece for two pianos a quartertone apart that probably could be done pretty well on a quartertone guitar. Much of it is mere Directions to Do Something Foolish and Empty.

There is a list of publications etc. and Interval is listed with "La Jolla" instead of San Diego h but the right Zip, 92102; and then your Box No. is given as 2087. So you will never get any mail or subscriptions THAT way. This is just as bad as the old fellow who tried to come here about three years ago and complained he couldn't find me in GLENDORA.

Don't ask me to review this thing--I'm too mad. At least I have found out what kind of people they recruited for the San Francisco bash. Have I toiled and waited and built up a body of compositions and practiced and built instruments for THIS? It's as though they wanted to give the Establishment a silly laughing-stock to jeer at and then dismiss the whole thing.

I can't just trot out my standard objection that Notation has Too Much Power and that the things are mere Visual Pieces because half of them do not use notation at all, but are Directions To Do Something Crazy. It has the flavor of one of those booklets of Sun Stunts to Do at a Party.

From the preface this is intended for schools to perform some of the things which are supposed to be easy to do.

I suppose I could write out the standard piano-tuning routine

using some funny notation signs etc. and these Creeps wouldn't even know I had lifted it from the customary textbooks!

It wouldn't be any more boring to listen for 1 1/2 hours to somebody tuning a piano than to some of those alleged pieces. That's the thing that is making me so angry about it: they deliberately try to BORE the audience. They know they have scraped the bottom of the barrel; that there is Nowhere To Go anymore.

We offer one of the solutions and we are Spurned. And then some Quack like You Know Who comes to UCSD and lectures and scolds all of us. I don't think Beethoven intended that the Adagio of the 1 Ninth Symphony be used as a WEAPON. I guess it backfired.

One thing at the Brand Library I had not noticed before--there is a large format very expensive--about \$60--book called the Penrose Annual. I took the 81 edition out--examples of commercial art of various kinds and graphic arts and typography, might give you some ideas about promotions for Interval and for the Foundation Brochures or Leaflets or letterheads or various kinds of posters and publications you might have in the future. Printed in England.

There was a new Th Ethnomusicology thing which has a couple of chapters on African music so here was that term Griot that was used on the Program leaflet we got at the concert. Lots of pictures in that book too. Apparently they prefer the term Mbira to Kalimba for that instrument.

I now have too many instruments to keep all of them in good repair. Somebody else has got to do some of the maintenance from now on. If I get pressed any harder for time and and get as tired as I have some of these days in the past two months, then I will have to put a lot of stuff in storage if someone will volunteer to store the uncompleted instruments. Otherwise they may get left behind when I have to move. One alternative would be to call the uncompleted instruments a piece of visual art and store it with someone running a gallery or connected with art gallery circles, then they would arrange that it be shown once a year someplace. The houses across the street are now reduced to shreds of rubble and truck after truck has hauled away the good boards--mostly to Tijuana of course.

Since I could not get in the business meeting and nobody has told me anything about it much and there is nobody in all Los Angeles to talk to about such things and nothing has happened about the above matters--where to store stuff in emergencies and who would be willing to back me up with moral support if I get a sudden business deal or offer, I can't plan anything and I can't be sure that I will have anything -- I might lose everything overnight. That is, the LIFE publicity could be a case of too much too soon if I am one against three or four high-pressure people. Buzz Kimball was such a drain on me--expecting me to promote Don Schertz so he could dump that onto me.

Every time I try to delegate something or even try to give it away with no strings attached, it's thrown right back in my face and I am expected to do everything singlehanded. Then this business of Glen selling his car before it quite completely so he can't come over here for very much and can't take back the stuff he stored here which is eating quite a bit of floor space up the last several months. And then when the baby arrives he won't have any time.

I may have made a deal on a 4-drawer filing cabinet--I cleared the space for it so that the wooden affair can be junked --probably the 4 drawers will not hold enough and I will have to get a second one somehow. I have put this thing off for all the 5 years I have been here in the hope I could move before getting it so as to have one less cumbersome thing to move, but files that cannot be consulted are worthless, so I better take the offer.

I suppose, if push comes to shove I could take all the files out of it and put them in boxes again and sell the thing if I can't move it. This has nothing to do with my correspondence files that are in cartons for back years and in an apple-crate for current. That would need only a 2-drawer affair at the most, but nowhere to put it here.

Chris Banta was here Thursday of course (Brand Library) and offered to check the tuning of some of my metal bars and to adjust one or two of the big speaker-boxes--i.e. "tune" them to the speakers for best bass response. He brought a 5-tone wooden-bar set. He has some ideas for an overtone-series marimba, a non-octave set, and some kind of interval-row. I suppose this collection of marimbas would end up as a unit to be rented out when it was not being demonstrated at schools etc. The other thing is a 5-tone marimba.

His occupation with Helmholtz resonators will be relevant to the use of gourds as resonators. I wonder, if he goes to CME and/or to Danlee Mitchell's Parton Memorial at SDSC, whether anything would come of it--it seems the logical places to promote his affairs, but if I am still helplessly unemployable and no transportation and no business partners and nowhere to store anything and nobody to demonstrate my instruments in L A County and no way to take advantage of the LIFE publicity, I can't dare encourage him too much, or he will be disappointed like me.

Chalmers' scribbles are getting worse and so his tables and handwritten proposals and diagrams of various kinds will be lost. Either he starts ~~scribbling~~ typing everything, or it's a waste of time. The last two months have brought me a pile of pages and pages of layouts and keyboard proposals and proposed scales and I cannot try them out because I can't decipher them and if I promote a mistake from my misreading, what good is that? At least is it's not my problem.

Yours

Just a year since I wrote him about this matter.