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Greetings *****

Accident late yesterday: fell off the front porch on by my back into the bushes and skinned both arms and must have slipped either on the doormat or defective heel heels on the shoes I had on at the time. First such accident in this house. So I will be sore for a few days.

I got nearly all the files straightened out into the new and other filing-places. Lots of dust and dirt on them. It is important, not just for me, but for other people, to have all the material on scales and tuning and instruments etc. in some kind of order. The way it was in that old wood wooden affair nobody could ever have found anything. I also found the Creativity Meeting stuff and it will now be accessible. I found that much of the filing folders as well as some of the contents had turned brown and crumbled--some time ago I reclaimed old folders from obsolete correspondence so I may be able to replace the worst ones.

I have been mulling over John R. Pierce's letter---I don't think we should reprint it in INTERVAL, but instead I have to write some kind of abstract and I guess it will have to be deferred until a later issue so I can do that right---perhaps write about my experiences in having heard 19-tone without realizing I was hearing it, then the influence of the defective Hammond-Organ-type tone-quality, and the wide gap between the official purpose of this experiment and the second REAL experiment which occurred without being planned or intended. This has considerable bearing on the Melody=vs.=Harmony problem. It is very important that I don't embarrass Pierce or confront the INTERVAL readers with all this technical language which they would seriously misunderstand without some background explanation.

2/1 might be vaguely understood by Partch-devotees, maybe; but 2.4 : 1 and its relation to the 19-tone system require more explanation than that letter would give any reader who had not attended the Pierce lecture, so that would put him as well as me in a very bad light.

It's much more difficult to rewrite and abstract and explain and summarize than I thought it would be so I have to put it off to another issue. By that time there will be something else to tie it into---for instance, it could be discussed in connection with the general task of non-12 for synthetizers. Or non-12 on computers.

The whole subject dovetails neatly enough into the question of AUDITORY ILLUSIONS, about which there is not enough written. Certain musical effects are based on illusions and much of the concert pianist's mystique is the perpetration of tricks on the audience by anything from suggestion to hypnotism to misdirection. Something like the famous renowned Elba Tone which requires a special ceiling as well as shoulder-rest, I guess? It is almost sickening to have to read the average music critic's reviews of the concert pianists who are praised for their personal tone which was actually the happenstance of the piano-manufacturer and whoever adjusted the action---the tuner of the piano doesn't have too much to say about it. And then Mr. Chraszczewski or Prof. von Scheissberg gets all the credit for what the workers at the Baldwin or Steinway or Bösendorfer factory did!

There ain't no justice! Much of what Partch railed against and fought against, such as the extremely artificial atmosphere of the Opera House and the Symphony Hall and the piano keyboard etc., is not the fault of the performers as he contends or at least as he implies: it is the spirit of the mid-nineteenth century, the divorce between art and science, the First Industrial Revolution which took industry out of the village shop and the small town artisan and concentrated it in huge smoky factories with heavy expensive machinery and created the idea that no-one may work at home, the worker must commute to the big factory, no-one is competent to oversee the Whole General Picture, but must do or die his right not to reason why as the poem has it. Indeed that poem was written during that very period. Today we have the Home Computer coming in, the Do-It-Yourself craftsman making all kinds of things which they weren't allowed to make or even dream of making 30 years ago, let alone 80 years ago. What I am driving at is that Partch was a Do-It-Yourselfer about 50 years ahead of his time and the 50 years are now up. He was rebelling against the terribly uptight world which existed when I was 2 or 12 years old--the period of the Narrow Specialist and Shoemaker Stick To DYour Last.

The mistake that Pierce's assistants made and that the people who made the demo tape for him at IRCAM in Paris made, or that was allowed to be made through innocent ignorance (not malicious meanness like John Diamond!) was to assume that the 1928 ideals of Henry Ford I and Laurens Hammond and General Motors and General Electric of that time, and Steinway & Sons and Chickering and Baldwin and whoever the big organ factory was then, the mistake was to take the 7-less tone quality of the Hammond Organ (let's be scrupulously fair here and exonerate the latest models of Hammond Organs which are differently made) as Perfection arrived at by Experts after Intensive Research. It was an innocent mistake. It wasn't malicious, but the results of it are all the more dangerous and devastating and obnoxious because they Meant Well.

Now if I write this experiment up the wrong way, or if I am lacking in tact, or if I say too much in the wrong order of presentation, I could do an equal amount of harm! We have enough confusion as it is without making things intolerable. Nobody knows what a tone is, what a microtone is, what an octave is, nor why the fifth has to do with the third harmonic and the third has to do with the fifth harmonic. The more I explain the more I am accused of dodging the issue and malicious confusatory cussedness. Elhba didn't want me to say semisharp and sesquisharp for the quartertone signs. Well I have been at it for 50 years and should have some rights. Haba had the right to say what the German terms for quartertones should be and what the Czech terms should be, but not the right to say anything about the English terms. Vyshnegradski proposed certain French terms--again that does not have anything to do with the English terminology.

Now mix up all the foregoing with astrological signs and eating raw carrots and raw celery and eggshells stewed with nutshells and vitamins O, Z, and Wg and plans for a monastic retreat where nobody would ever come to hear the Megalyra or the Elastic Tuning Organ, and. I don't think that is the way I care to spend my remaining years. In fact it makes me feel like a Deprogrammer! It should be obvious enough that the Megalyra is not the emaciated ascetic affair that would be used to accompany the prayer-chants in a Hindu-style monastery or to be sequestered in a basement somewhere by a closed in-group jealously guarding their private sacred secrets from the Common Herd. Rather I see the Megalyra as a power trip for some big husky/fellows in rock groups or in big places

--huge amphitheaters or stadia or large halls where the Megalyra played by such imposing personages could hold its own against a full orchestra or big band or thundering organ or rock group or whatever and give me some notoriety while I am still alive as well as the several other people who will be promoting and performing on it during the brief time-slot which is left to me. * * * I asked for a Big Idea that would attract and command attention and I got it! Surely I've waited long enough for my turn and if I don't use my turn it will then be my fault for goofing off and missing my very Last Chance.

After falling onto my back and scratching my arms and shoulders last evening and lying helpless for about five minutes in the bushes since there was nothing to grasp to help me get up and nobody knew I was in this predicament nor willing to help me, it warns me sternly how fragile and precarious my present situation is. It was a narrow escape from breaking a bone or gashing my head or something of the sort. Something might have fallen on me. I may not have much time to get all the publicity. At the library yesterday afternoon, I took the magazines over to a reading-table and it had two books open on DHow to Evict a Tenant. Could be an omen? I.e. that my stay here is about to end? They brought one of those portable shacks to the now vacant lot across the street--it says FINANCED BY BANK OF AMERICA. Meanwhile the gardeners and landscapers are at work on the first condo while at the second condo they laid some of that Synthetic Turf down--now that's the last straw--Fake Grass. Shows what kind of people have this dreadful Condomania Greed.

Phone rang yesterday and it was that horrid wouldbe filmmaker in Venice again---she wants to come on the afternoon of Sunday 9 August--I suppose it will be more last-minute cancellations----or maybe I can cook up a good and convincing alibi by that time let's hope. I am not about to give such a pushy procrastinator any free film background music.

Yours,