

Tuesday 18 August 1981

Jonathan Glasier 3932 Aalemeda Place San Diego CA 92103

Good Morning & Stuff +++++

Overslept again--it does NOT afford additional rest, alas!--instead it leads to an oppressive grogginess, a drugged feeling that will take till almost noon to recover from.

After I went to the photo place yesterday afternoon and made them look through the stuff a second time and got all my duplicate prints I had ordered, and brought them back here and mailed them out to you and my niece, I got the xeroxing for the day together and went up to the distant xerox place and the big market since I was out of groceries. I took the two enlargements of my pictures of your instruments at the Studio and had them xeroxed so am enclonsing one each of the resulting copies. What I do in a case like this is to stick them down at the corners with rubber cement so it is just a temporary fastening, and so if you want some other captioning or no caption at all, that can be quickly arranged for. I thought I would mail out three copies of each to certain places to see what publicity for you and Interval it might engender.

Got awfully horribly tired with the two-mile walking so went to bed without supper. Doorbell went about 8:30 and there was Ed Kneifel coming after his copy-cassettes---no, not my music or anybody else;s--two cassettes of a CBS historical newscasts recording that he had lent me to be copied. So that thing is off my back now. He said he will go to Europe again in a month and be a way for a while.

Something about having gotten a Baldwin electronic organ on a big bargain and I guess hooking up new speakers to it at his Venice lodgings this Fall sometime. Well it aint my problem so I would much rather do the treasure-mapping or whatever to find such a bargain for myself. He doesn't have the persistence to finish a project like practicing on an instrument or in this case getting something to work again.

So I didn't get back to sleep early enough and am paying for that now. Neighborhood scuttlebutt here to the effect that the condomania may spread here to this place in about a year from now. My neighbors went over and talked to the people who are trying to sell units in the two completed condos across the street, last week, and that apparently is what is deducible from what they said.

Item in the local Gelndale paper to the effect that there are many NEW condominia but fewere condo-CONVERSIONS this last year--conversions have slowed almost to a halt in this area---though I thought they were plentiful in L A still---not sure about that.

Ten months now since the KPFFK interview and as far as I can find out it was never broadcast over that station so they do not want me to be known in Los Angeles even though the same interview has been broadcast in Northern California and in New York. Obviously it is never going to be heard in Los Angeles County and I must find some other means of publicity. I have heard absolutely nothing from Jeannie Pool since her phone call to me when she moved to Los Angeles, so maybe they have gotten to her also--or maybe she is occupied with all kinds of new tasks to take up all her time. So I can't count on anything from KPFFK and must have a subsititute quick!

Remember! there is no Megalyra on that interview tape anyway, so it should be done over on that account alone. By now, having heard other things, and having read more items, and having been interviewed for those articles, I have a pretty good idea of how an interview cassette should go. So I need somebody to do the whole thing over and center it on the Megalyra as introduction----this is the instrument with the greatest commercial potential--and then go on to other matters much as the October 1980 interview tape did, and with my new experience and all these patterns to go by, it can be slightly less than one hour instead of one hour and 15 minutes as the actual October interview was.

Since I have not heard from you since I returned to Glendale, I have to go by what you don't say and do lots of guesswork. A cassette lasting just under an hour (to permit announcements at beginning or end such as possible updating or giving the address to write to) could be duplicated 10 at a time and handed out or mailed out to certain places.

I don't have too much faith in radio or TV publicity anyhow since it is so EVANESCENT/EPHEMERAL----nobody remembered the phone numbers or addresses to call when they flash by so quick and the audience is not prepared to take them down from radio.

If it were a matter of a disk demo, then the time span is about 40 to 45 minutes at the most, 22½ minutes per side at the most. Shorter for those floppy disks that now can be put inside books etc. or given out by mailing, but they have serious drawbacks--jumping the needle out of the groove and the back side being heard through the front side as a very unpleasant noise pseudo-echo.

Articles in the magazines very recently about the Walkman and the other portable cassette players getting onto the market lately, so that there are more opportunities for people to hear cassettes.

Treasure-Map angle---I got some "spoils" from a local xerox place which were of a big company's budget report so am using it for this letter--getting all the money-symbols into other people's files and all that kind of metaphysical stuff.

I went through some books such as Norvell's that the Glendale Library seems to have a complete set of, and they have lots of other things of that sort---addressed to a readership quite different from either of us of course. So not too useful at our advanced stage and again-----dated. Something like the people who have a bookshelf which instead of books has two years of TIME or NEWSWEEK or something of the sort and nobody looks at OLD NEWS. Now, that KPFK October 1980 cassette, ten months old, is beginning to become OLD OBSOLETE NEWS, and if I move the broadcast would be worse than useless since nobody would reach me through it----no more forwarding of mail now, and no more referrals of phone numbers either.

We have to be careful not to spend our time or energy or thought on ephemerals. When there are other writings and recordings that would be more permanent, or at least would last us for two or three years' use. For instance: My INTERFACING ART & SCIENCE leaflet is 18 years old or such a matter, and has been updated and revised about 7 times. I am trying to get rid of all the obsolete copies of such things--I used up about 300 pages of such affairs as second-sheets for carbon copies, since there are two sides to a sheet of paper.

I found out how to rewind the carbon ribbons this machine uses so can use them twice, but that's the limit of course.

Ozalid paper doubled in price just the 5 years I have been living here, so the chances are it will not be cheaper than xerox anymore. 34¢ per sheet at present (the 4¢ is for ammonia and electricity) so at the present break-even point there are other considerations keeping me using it to small extent: one is saving the mile or so walk to any xeroxing place, and the other is where I already have this tremendous investment of time over the past 30 yd years in onionskin paper originals for music, and still another is the occasional need to keep certain things confidential. The disadvantages at the present time are that black-line paper is unavailable anymore, so the music is blue-line now; when the paper gets old it turns brown and a gray-brown background appears; if you don't use up the paper within a reasonable period it gets noisy---all kinds of specks and spots on it and that faded look.

So I suppose when the mercury-vapor lamp burns out or the motors in it (drive motor and fan motor) burn out I will simply quit and have to take the things to be xeroxed instead. Before I had the machine I exposed them in sunlight--which is feasible most of the year in Southern California of course. The only machine I needed for that was a stopwatch.

But as time goes on I will have less and less use for music notation anyhow. The ozalid machine will last a couple of years or so since I use it sparingly. By that time someplace will be convenient to us where a xerox machine will be cheaper because of the many firms competing in that copymachine arena now.

Just like the way I am considering the organ here--it has three years or so to go and will be very useful during that time because nobody else has ELE ELASTIC TUNING with the notes controlling ONE ANOTHER'S pitches. I have enough replacement tubes and replacement parts to keep it going that long. Maybe I better take a hint from Kneifel's alleged bargain and look for a used electronic organ or an abandoned organ-kit and detwevulate it. By the time I would find such a thing and modify it, the original organ here would be still aw working for another year or so that I could use the two together. Then when it quit I wouldn't be screaming and lamenting.

There is also the chance that I could get into the electronic organ business in the way I am 41 years in the piano-tuning business already. Then I could get hold of a lot of defunct organs and cannibalize them to make some kind of 19-tone organ that would have its master oscillators tunable. I have to leave this option open as long as possible. Good thing Interval didn't get locked in to the Scalatron--wouldn't that have been a white-elephant of an orphan for us! As long as you and your friends are looking around for church buildings, why not look for such abandoned organs? Conn or Baldwin older models, or older model combo organs. But a half finished Artisan or other such organ kit would be better for the 12-to-19 modification.

The Minshall organs are good for their consoles and keyboards but the electronic part was a serious design-engineering mistake so there must be some of them thrown out. That was about 20 to 15 years ago. Because of the cost in TIME of such rebuilding, one would have to beat the price down to practically nothing of course.

I don't even know whether I will ever have the time for such a rebuilding project, but I have to keep the idea going because I can't wait forever to have an organ to practice on and to record with and to use in teaching or in concert. Some of these instruments would be transportable.

Probably the best idea is modular----build or rebuild in such manner--my own organ is built that way---that it can be unplugged and the separate parts packed in a van conveniently. My tone generator unit merely rests on the black wooden stand--it is not bolted to it but just sits by its own weight. The keyboard had 15' of cable and PLUGS IN. The pedal unit also is in three modules. Any amplifiers and speakers can be used with it---with either pedal or manual units. I wonder if I ever explained all this to you---no matter of having to move a 400 lb. piano around or a 10-ton pipe-organ.

You must understand also that considerations like that---my awareness of how many years or how many months /this or that thing has left of its life--MUST be borne in mind constantly and taken into account regarding my INVENTORY OF INSTRUMENTS. ~~Some~~things are very very permanent, like, the 17-tone tubulongs and the 10- and 14-tone metal bars. They could last a century. The tuboforks should be good for several centuries. The 13-tone bars are surely for a generation to come. The guitars for about ten or twenty years I would think. My present amplifiers for maybe three to five years each. The speaker boxes for ten anyhow, maybe more. But the keyboard oboe only 5 years--I have replacement parts and tubes for that long. I should build transistor versions.

My special organ about three or four years--that's three or four years if it were being used every day. It's hours of operation, not just years of silent stored existence. The clavichord is already dead and gone for 6 years alas. Any clavichord project means building new ones from scratch. 40 years of my life gone down the drain. Made all the more painful by Kneifel coming back to Los Angeles and being so unrealistic about this. Where was he when I needed help? Wasting his time, that's what. Then scolding me for what is NOT MY FAULT. Blaming the victim for the crimes of the mugger!!

Some of the other instruments and things are about 2- or 3-year affairs. I need a sponsor to make extensive repairs on the orthodox cello. The amplifying cello merely needs new pickups. Once the amplifying cello gets the proper pickups it will be good for 30 years. So any Inventory of Instruments is necessarily very misleading! Radically different life-spans. The Megalyra life-span depends on the available people to maintain them. About the same as any electric guitar I would say. Short or long depending on how much CARE they get.

*MORAL: Write provisions for care and maintenance and repair and replacement of instruments into the Interval Foundation official documents! Do it now! Before there are all kinds of defunct things wasting away.*

Now: I have just had the devastating experience of going through boxes and drawers full of papers and other records and throwing out ooooooodles of obsolete junk. And finding other stuff I thought someone had destroyed or refused to bring here. Things, in this period of rapid change in lifestyles and conditions, get obsolete long before they would have in 1928 when I was a miserable boy. Much of the average person's idea of permanence or endurance of objects is now dangerously false--things just don't last anymore. So that means I have to revise most of my writings periodically. You are better off with a magazine than a book.

It was very discouraging Saturday noon when Clyde Corson was here and had not changed his ideas about such matters and was holding onto obsolete notions and obsolete projections of the future--and the future he was telling me about is already History. He wants to be a science writer but is using popular magazines which re-digest news which has already appeared in technical journals and was about six months old before it got into there. And then acts disappointed because I don't get enthusiastic over the old wornout news.

We are, of course, making news ourselves and have the newest instruments and the newest tunes and the latest information about no-12 since we are at the cutting-edge of this field. The shoe is on the other foot. We have to get more followers and more repeaters and retellers of our discoveries and get that info out before it becomes stale. We learned some lessons from the Elhba experience--most important item for now is that Europe is way behind us. I listened carefully to Elhba's story of his travels and the Haba Institute part of it, and have pieced it together with what I have been reading and the result is--the leadership has been handed to us by default. The 300-year tradition has been, that Europe, especially Germany, Italy, and Austria, were the Musical Leaders and therefore they were the Supreme Authority and the World Standard and the Keepers of Progress in Music---but after two world wars and other events and after American leadership in electronics, they rested on their laurels and so here is this opportunity to be first with the latest and we don't realize how great and wonderful all this is.

I felt very uncomfortable with Edward Kneifel at 9 PM last night and didn't exactly realize why--I do this morning!: I wouldn't dare tell an European immigrant that this shift of the cutting-edge of progress in music had occurred and furthermore that I was now, thanks to your collaboration and thanks to the OMNI article publicity pushed into a position where I may be able to profit by it or at least take advantage of it-----I had to keep silent and that was an unconscious strain on me last night on top of my physical tiredness from the 2 mile walking. And nearly burning my dinner besides.

He wondered why I didn't pester the Universities until I got some position like Composer-in-Residence or Guest Lecturer or Researcher or whatnot---well of course you know all about that! They are way behind what you have done---notice I said "have done" not "planned to do". Why do you suppose I took the enclosed pictures and the ones I sent the other day? To prove what you had done! Some of those people at the University are deliberately SLOWING DOWN so as to make their careers last as long as possible--maybe they resent us because we are TOO MUCH TOO SOON?

This should explain my policy of going after people nominally OUTSIDE MUSIC, but actually very much interested in music and not yet brainwashed or stupefied into acceptance of 19th-century norms--this is where we can get acceptance of Tubulongs and metal bars and amplifying cellos and keyboard oboes and Megalyra family instruments and theremins and other electronic instruments and non-12 guitars. Why waste time on the hopeless cases--those whose creativity has been surgically extracted.? You can readily see how this ties in with my Creativity Booklet and those Meetings. The recent phenomenon of new children moving into my neighborhood and coming over to play the instruments in the yard is another case in point--it shows that people will accept musical progress if they haven't already been conditioned against it.

My publicity was not in a music magazine! ponder that. Yours