

NEV

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Greetings from Uphill---

I went to my almost-neighbor the other evening and missed him, so went to the grocery and had to climb back up here again. He missed me all the way to the store and back up, but arrived just when I reached my front porch, so took me back to his place after all. As soon as I had restuffed the icebox, of course.

I went to the alley at the other end of this block and picked up assorted stones and gravel. Now I have my very own Rock Group.

The other night I was thinking of your extended meantone table--the one that went 50 notes in each direction or something like that. A 702 $\frac{1}{2}$ fifth emerges eventually. How would one calculate what equal temperament(s) could be derived from this coincidence?

Here is a clue: I suspect that the 612-tone temperament was discovered by Educated Guess, in this wise: The difference between 700 $\frac{1}{2}$, the fifth of the 12-tone system, and 701.955 $\frac{1}{2}$ the just fifth, works out to slightly less than a 600th of an octave. Therefore White simply looked around for the next multiple of 12 which was greater than 600, and 612 was quickly discovered.

Would proceeding from the skhisma give the same 612? After all, the difference between 1.955 and 1.954 is a neurotic perfectionist killjoy spoilsport's dream.

More clues: Take the way in which meantone is related to pythagorean, and the Helmholtzian temperament is derived from this as a sort of second-order concept. Also, of course, the skhismic thirds of the Pythagorean carried out far enough. The attempt to find an equal temperament simulating these derivatives results in 53-tone. Probably some larger number would fit this prescription better--something of interest to hairsplitters and idealizers, up in the thousands.

Another approach: Take temperaments which have glaring errors, such as 19. But the error of the major third and that of the fifth cancel out almost, so search multiples of 19 which approach this error. Eureka! 171.

Can this trick be done with 22? (I suspect it can be in more than one way.) For instance, in 22 the errors of the fifth and the subminor seventh can be canceled out to give that system's almost perfect 9:7. Whea--an even number of 22nds, therefore this good 9:7 is in the 11 system, so try multiples of 11 way up. Your table gives fair approaches in 77 and 99. But are there better ones way up in the hundreds of tones? Anything as "ideal" as is 171?

Or, take inharmonic systems like 13. 65 emerges. 17? It so happens that 612 is also a multiple of 17. !!!

So you have material for an article someday when you get computer time.

JHC

I heard from Bart Russel of Plainview N.Y., the language-constructor etc.--his response to my latest pamphlet, the Langer example, was to derive further examples from hers, which show reading-aloud (i.e. what I call Translo) ambiguities in several ways. This is so well done that I will rewrite it into a new leaflet. I will give Numalittera equivalents for all his new derived examples.

I have the separation-syllables and other schemes, such as end-of-radical, end-parenthesis, end-of-exponent, end-of-subscript, etc. which are needed to resolve the ambiguities he cites, but I neglected to repeat all these together in a neat package so people would understand that I took care and thought of such irritating ambiguity-makers. I have been repeatedly criticized for omissions when I in fact took care of all those troubles.

Most important was a syllable to stand for a BLANK SPACE.

There has been a satisfactory response to the latest, 9-page, pamphlet, so I can safely continue from there. It has been suggested, by Dave Fletcher, that I divide it into three separate sections.

Now that Arthur Koestler's ACT OF CREATION is available at one-tenth the original cost in paperback, what do you think of his pop biology and evolution and genetics? I presume all over the Berkeley campus people are reading it---IF they can buy a powerful enough magnifying glass.

The "Last Whole Earth Catalog" contains a spiel on Synthesizers by Walter Carlos of Switched-On fame. He is surprisingly critical.

Grinding out the new Exposé will proceed well into August. Very tedious. The window-fan fell on the Varityper and crogged it. One of these days it will fall to pieces.

Talk about Invasion of Privacy! The latest Sciendollargy circular mailing-pieces contain something like 200 questions, many of them highly personal. So do the handwritten letters. For instance: Have you moved? Are you still there? Exactly how many hours of auditing have you had since 1951? What are you doing these days? One fellow I know got rid of them by using all the business-reply envelopes to return the oldest of their circulars he could find around the house. The postmen are beginning to complain bitterly of the mountainous burden of mail they put out. I got two yesterday. Duplicates of what I already had, at that. So I mailed one of them back in the reply envelope with the notation that their computer was stuttering. I am cynical enough about it to assume that will only make it worse. Then I will have to start writing REFUSED on their envelopes. My patience is at the bitter end and I am not amused any more. When people start accusing me of being a member of that bunch, that is really serious! They see all this stuff around my house, or arrive here when the mail is arriving. And recent letters from Sen. claim me as a member. How do you expel yourself from an organization you never joined?

Yours