

Sunday 27 April 1986

Johnny Reinhard 211 108 st NY NY 10025

Greetings from West of the West of the Westerns \*\*\*\*\*

I suppose you found that out--that the locale of the oat-and-hayburner cowboy stories was Texas, Arizona, New Mexico, and to some extent Colorado and Utah etc., not here in the Coastal Strip of California. I alluded to this some 25 years ago when I fixed up a 22-tone piece called Ultra-Oriental--this is the EAST shore of the Pacific Ocean and with the West Coast as the entry point for jillions of Asian and islander immigrants, exceeding the East Coast ports now, and all the miles and miles of signs in Korean as well as Japanese, Chinese, Vietnamese and who knows what else all over Los Angeles, Southern California is not an inappropriate place to do research carrying musical scales and tunings beyond what the Orient ever did for or to or with or at them.

I am all alone this week. No place to go and no way to get there. Jonathan is in Arizona and may even go to New Mexico before returning a week from now. There is no Interval Foundation Studio and no plans at all for any San Diego concerts and I am miffed. He stopped in for a few minutes and left the enclosed announcement (5 copies) with me--Julian is a little village up in the mountains in east San Diego County and so this affair, just like the Mexican event, has little or nothing to do with me. I presume about 20 people who cannot go to Mexico for one reason or another will be able to go to this Julian thing--its value would be to show the connection between US American Indians and the Mexicans and to promote Indian drums and similar instruments--maybe to get some people into making instruments who never would do so otherwise.

It took nine months to the day, to get a letter of mine into the San Diego Reader. Finally it happened this last Thursday after numerous failures. I will be pasting it up and xeroxing it in a day or two so I can send that out. Fortunately I was able in the letter to tie three things together: The University programs which occasionally have dealt with musical innovations; the storage of Partch's instruments at SDSU and the amount of Partch's work which was done in the San Diego area; this new four-man team of guitar redesigners and the fact that I was taken to one of their workshops and tried out that guitar and showed David Willard my refrettings.

Don't feel under any pressure about the Quartertone Fantasy other than to show it around. After half a century of neglect and silence all I can really expect is to write it out for synthesizer and get that recorded if I live long enough. The main thing to emphasize is that I wrote it in 1937-38. To prove that I was using xenharmonics long before Blackwood or Doty or the others who have been making such noise about their stuff. There's only one other xerox of the score, which I sent to John Chalmers two years ago in desperation. Fire insurance really. The Glendale place was a tremendous firehazard with extremely flammable trees and shrubbery and all kinds of underbrush and flammable houses and more stuff next door on all sides. I'm lucky to have gotten out of there at all. Here, I am half a block from the First Station--I could walk over to give the alarm.

I have lost 12 pounds from the recent flu and other illness. Only now are things getting back to normal. However--first real illness since moving here last July. This is a healthier place--less smog and far less dust.

Didier was here again and I was able to give him the xerox of Edwin M. Cood's Keyboard Bibliography compiled in Stanford U. in 1982. Paul Vandervoort up near Sacramento phoned him, and he has other information about new keyboards.

I got the postcard from Carnegie Hall--Zonacozophone and all that!--forwarded from Glendale. Also a new letter from Buzz Kimball--he sent away for more electronic parts and will build another gizmo to demonstrate non-twelve with.

I can't find that 2-cello duet score at all. I went through things again. Probably mixed up with a box of non-musical papers and the reason for that was that I did make copies about a year ago. If I can't locate it by Summer I would do better writing it over again (I do have a tape overdub) than searching anymore.

The other cello-in-19 thing also exists on tape, but it was played much too slowly and so the tape of that one is useless for copying.

It's a matter of crude crass hardboiled economics: I can't afford to attend concerts because I can't afford transportation and huge ticket prices today, so how can I expect anybody else to afford my concerts if I ever can give any? I have no storage space to keep the instruments I already made. The amplifying clavichord was destroyed because I had nowhere to store it. 46 years work down the drain. It was built in March 1940 in Santa Monica and I had to move 20 times. I can't make anybody believe I made it or that I used it till about 1966 when the house my mother and I were living in in Los Angeles at the time was condemned and demolished and in effect confiscated. My mother's will was never probated and thus it went for L.A. property taxes. We were shoved into an apartment across the city, which then went to pieces and so after her death I was hounded from pillar to post.

I was too ill--nobody would hire me for anything.

So I can't wax enthusiastic about the concert tour of Lou Harrison's piano piece in Kimberger. Where the hell would I put a piano in here? Actual experiment shows that 13 guitars can be stored in the same space taken up by an upright piano and as for a grand--well why beat a dead horse? I was damned foolish to make over 250 metal tubes and bars now that I have nowhere to lay them out or show anybody--all is silent in boxes.

The question is Progress vs. Stagnation. It's that simple. I'll send you a xerox of the article in the previous weeks Reader, the one to which I responded and you will see that the traditionalist guitarists don't even want an improved acoustic guitar.

I don't know how you were treated when you went to the University Music Dept. in La Jolla, but I presume it was a failure unless you inform me to the contrary. I was very badly treated by some newcomers four years ago to the University--I understand conditions have improved since then and the latest replacement people there may be more favorable. I hope so but the rebuffs and insults were too horrible to withstand so I cannot be optimistic at all. The very fact that Jonathan nor anyone else never took me there in the 9 months since I moved here, speaks volumes. Thank you for warning me about Danlee Mitchell--I might have nagged him and gotten into a very embarrassing position if you hadn't warned me. He could have walked here--it's that close--just over to the market and across the bridge! In effect I am being told to get out of San Diego. Where next? -- John Chalmers may be able to do something since he was brought up here--he will be passing through on the way to Northern California very soon.

I do not have time nor energy to promote crippled instruments and scales--I mean 12 out of 19 or 12 out of just intonation or anything that prevents modulation or forces the playing of wrong notes. I do not consider it progress to re-tune a piano to some incomplete system like that. It misleads. David Hill used 26 different pitches to render my organ prelude in just intonation, with commas and septimal intervals. You can't do that on a piano. You would even have trouble with two pianos since 26 is more than 24. If David Hill followed my marks that well, and didn't give me alibis and excuses, it then became my duty to perform some of his themes by cello overdub, which I have done and sent to him. Why need I put up with any other people's misinformation such as the notion that meantone can't exceed 12 notes per octave? Or that terrible dangerous falsehood that modulation is not possible in just intonation--my prelude goes all the way from E-flat major to F# major and at least two different comma levels of D minor and other keys. All this nonsense printed in today's books, after I refuted it with actual recordings? I hope nobody forbids things to Marnen--but there are real mean nasty enemies of progress out there.