

Thoradi 22 May 1986
No Johnny Reinhard 211 W 108 st # 42 New York NY 10025

Greetings ***

This will show you how stingy I have to be, in business on a broken shoestring: I had to get out the 3-in-One Oil from the kitchen shelf and put it on the typewriter ribbon (one drop every 4 inches and let it stand overnigh) so I could extend the life of this much-pounded ribbon. Ribbons dry out before the ink is really gone--you can almost double their life.

I got a huge envelope of with a NY city return address yesterday and thought it was your new journal Pitch. Nope. It was from one John A. Beattie who had phoned me about a month ago or such a matter about a notation scheme -- he had been in touch with Tom Reed of Music 6-6 in Missouri of course and got my name that way. It's a combination of ordinary notes printed in badly faded gray (50% halftone screen I think) but all note-heads are removed and replaced with numerals 0 through 11 for the 12-half-steps. The numerals and some other things are printed in dense black. Since half-notes could not be told from quarter-notes if the heads are removed and replaced with black numerals, italic numerals are used as the "heads" of such half-notes.

This is offered as very new. Well, Julian Carrillo replaced note-heads with numerals long long ago--indeed it might have been then I was born. Funny, how Reed with all his publishing of new notations knew absolutely nothing about Carrillo's notation and I had to inform him. This new fellow might have some excuse for not knowing about Carrillo, however.

I suggested to Beattie that he revise his circulars etc. somewhat to appeal to people who are by buying the new portable keyboards, since they are likely to be much more hospitable to numbering pitches 1 th 0 through 11 than the stuffy old-hat hidebound music-teachers and their students on dusty nineteenth old pianos that he seems to be addressing. Also to promote his notation to computer buyers who again are more hospitable to numbering pitches.

It's appalling: Tom Reed and nearly all the other people connected with the 6-6 movement are back there in 1870 with Schumann and Schubert and Beethoven and Debussy is too modern for them even though they want to impose whole-tone scales on everybody with whole-tone keyboards! It just doesn't make any sense.

Beattie is in advertising typography and proofreading such, so is very neat in all the sheets that he sent me. Quite different from the sloppy stuff I got from some sources. He probably would blow a fuse if Chalmers wrote him.

Chalmers was here yesterday. On his way to Oakland, Mills College for the Summer. Had a hard time catching Jonathan at home. Finally did. Papa Estevane is here from Mexico and stopped in yesterday morning also to bring me some cassettes. So now I can grind out more copies. Also Jonathan took me over to his father's and mother's home and I got a few of his father's tapes to copy onto cassettes so they will now be much more accessible if somebody want to play the compositions or even hear them.

Chalmers finally got me III 9 the revised Xenharmonikon in which my Ellis article but not the Table of Errors in Temperaments, appears. Dan Wolf evidently forgot me. Or sent it to Glendale.

If you get Xenharmonikon 9 look at all the oddball scores in it! --Wasn't that a Donnybrook in Computer Music Journal between Helen Fowler and the redoubtable David Doty? Just Indignation!

Chalmers says he will put an article in the Computer Music Journal--there is a call, to be answered in June, for articles to go into a special microtonal and tuning and temperament issue to be published next year I suppose when they get around to it.

The magazine impresses me as uptight, not like the early issues from way back. MIT stuffiness no doubt. I couldn't get in there on a bet. I wrote in that I had a considerable collection of tapes in non-twelve, others as well as my own stuff. Do they know of any microtonal archive?

I frankly do not expect a to be answered.

After three months I wasn't able to get into it, I was taken to the storage garage the other day and retrieved some papers and things--but I cannot find any of the missing dictionaries I will need if I get any more translations to do. It's going to cost me dearly if I have to rep see all these books.

The trouble is: I can walk the 3/4 mile to the garage all right, but since the accident in which my shoulders were injured just over a year ago, I can't open and close that door to the garage--it is not properly counterweighted and it is balky and rusty and I could get hurt if I tried. So somebody has to take me and we have to open and shut it together.

My metal tube and bar instruments are there in boxes in a dead silence for ten months now, so nobody in San Diego has ever seen or heard them and nobody even believes I built them or ever had them in my yard back in Glendale.

All that work and time gone down the drain and they may never be set up in San Diego. They might even die with me. Or before I do.

Glen Prior wrote me and wanted a copy from his record, of the one or two of the pieces on the record, put on a cassette so that he could send it when submitting his application to that Philadelphia Music America Festival in 1987. Took me some time to get this done. But I did get it off to him so he may be able to take his 31-tone 3 1/2 octave marimba to Philadelphia and show it. Neither Jonathan nor I got any application forms. I doubt I could go to it but somebody might take a Megalyra or a Newel Post.

Chalmers told me that the Houston Festival ran out of money and nobody would allow microtonal instruments at the two possible spaces where Jonathan could have exhibited. So he did nothing--he was frozen out.

I am headed today downtown to the xerox place and will xerox an article from the London Economist that Chalfont sent me about the ICA INMAM deal. Now that's way far out, man! Howard Chalfont is in a small town in Germany near Trenchon, and subscribed to the London Economist and so I learn the latest about the French citadel of revolution via England via Germany and eventually it gets here. That wins the Leather Medal for the Grand Runaround.

My 55 years of composing and losing most of the stuff I wrote before the days of Xerox. Well that pulls the rug out from under the notation-reformers. There are at least 25 quarter-tone notations in use; there are at least 5 notations in use for 31-tone; there is no way to do a good job on 22-tone which is why it never gets a fair hearing and I was forced to overdub for anybody to hear 22 at all. Some ofasley Blackwood's notations are comical. I could never perform from his scores. Well who is going to read his 500 pages of handwriting anyway, even though it is far more legible than John Chalmers'.

What is this perverse cranky snobishness that keeps people like them from using a typewriter? My father wouldn't either. He got over it when he reached 60. Maybe computers will cure that trouble? Yours