

Thursday World 3 July 1986

Johnny Reinhard 211 W 108 st # 42 New York NY 10025

Greetings *****

Apropos of your German studies: David Hill closed out his stuff in storage in Orange and Jonathan took me up there to help him unload his stuff in the huge factory-like complex for self-storage. Looked like an aircraft factory. Endless endless corridors and stairways and interminable metal filing table and desk each 5 feet by 2 1/2 ft. and a metal filing cabinet as oversized each of the two drawers that it was brought here to put my sheet music into. Big enough for all of that. All these were stashed tight with books which I carted down the narrow stairway to the ground outside and then David Hill sorted them. Loaded up Jonathan's truck real tight. David Hill took the air conditioner and most of the reference books and things to Yonkersville with him and will be doing computer music there.

So I got the Wahrig Deutsches Wörterbuch which is bigger than the Webster's Collegiate which it resembles. Contains a grammar and spelling department in front. Looked up Kurweil--that means "pastime or hobby".

Couple of books on IC's and microprocessors. Some 5" tape reels. A microphone.

Hjorne Buchtrup sent me a letter and cassette of Laila about a Harold Solitsky and a cassette of Solitsky's pieces -- to the Glendale address also so it was delayed. The change of address order will expire in a week or two so this was just under the wire. I apologise in advance if I've misspelt these two people. Eugen Kibball would resemble both of them. He can't spell today or eat.

I'm itching and burning--flea bites all over me. In Glendale the roaches ate the fleas. Here they are slow to multiply. They came and sprayed all 4 houses again & onto the other morning.

Didn't get to finish playing back the cassette till last night. Of course I immediately acknowledged receipt when I got the package with it and the cassette. I can't quite figure this thing out: it as he appears that Solitsky took a few quarter-tones onto what is basically 12-tone college music repertoire standard atonality, and pleads he cannot leave the closed system if or the Soviet Union; S. miracle because of expediency--in order to get performance. In fact, the instance, a quarter-tone violin piece accompanied by an orthodox 12-tone piano in tired ordinary 12. This I regret to have to say, is not progress. It is that he doesn't have to remain in that straitjacket when he has tape and electric and computer and reformed guitars. If he can afford to get there there are sentences that were on the tape--practically no stumbles or glitters of the

then he can afford to get computer time or somebody to put something on a computer without any restriction to 12. I hope you understand I am not criticizing atonality. I have done it. But why 12 for all atonality? Two times twelve does not eliminate that problem at all. When we have 13 and 16 and 23 and 20 and other nonharmonic scales, and we have oodles of new instruments and means of retuning, there is no need to stay within the 19th-century straitjacket.

The question is Progress versus Stagnation. I can't be quiet or meek about it. I had to wait fifty years for the means to escape 12. Now my life is almost over. I have no time left to wait for anybody to condescend to propose something for the future which I am not going to have. Today a car could run over me and mash me into the pavement. The traffic in this neighborhood is horrendous. It isn't just being 69 years old--it's the terrible risk for everybody in a city where the traffic is ten times what that city was built to handle.

Sure, in 1938 when I was copying out the parts for my Quartetone Fantasy I was only 20 going on 31 and had a future. This is 40 years later. And here in one of the leaflets now on my desk, or rather David Hill's desk that he just gave me, is Solotsky's leaflet proclaiming that he had to reject 19 and 31 because of Expediency--the ONLY way to get performed. He had to chain the violin that could play quartetones, to the orthodox antique piano that could only play 12. So he was not free to explore the resources of 24.. Well I have reflected guitars to everything from 14 to 34. And all these jobs cost less than one piano costs today. Expediency? One quartetone added to a 12-tone chord does not make it "microtonal" since it is lost in the clangor. Result: it sounds too much like what the college music department would grind out by the yard, the mile, the TON. If I didn't say this was intended as microtonal in two dimensions would accept it as pure orthodox conventional 12-tone serialism or something.

What the hell am I to do? I don't want to hurt these fellows' feelings. But I have to insist as a matter of wounded pride that there must be progress. We can't let the piano chain us to the middle of the 19th century. I cannot allow the public to go on being fooled into thinking that we are still at 1938. I hope you get my point: John Chalmers will not concede me any right to uphold my point. The implication of Solotsky's statement in one of the leaflets is that it is IMPOSSIBLE to get any 13 or other nonharmonic scale atonal compositions heard. I don't think he even GUESSES or has been allowed to learn that there are special scales which are excellent for atonality, and that it doesn't cost an arm and a leg to rent a guitar to 13, 14, 15, 16, ... about 16 as the limit. Another point is that when 12-tone equal temperament got and soon will ruin it, have saturated all the listeners to music, both live and on radio or records, this creates PROBLEMS of listeners such, that it makes it next to impossible for any regular music listener to be perturbed about the use of that same 12 tone scale and those same 12-tone instruments such as pianos and organs, to be taken by the serialists and atonalists as non-harmonic, as not subject to the classical or jazz or popular music rules of harmony. No fiction as in no triads or tetrads or cadences or song accompaniments had ever been played in that 12-tone scale? But if the atonalists moved to 13 or 14 series and 13 or 14 timbres, then their clichés would lose at least some of their power. Maybe I'm wasting time and paper. But I can't let this implication pass. That no current progress is made beyond what Beethoven chooses to write or Schönberg chooses to write.

That Diamonds are Forever does not mean that Pinos are Forever. Steinway Company is not the Pope or the Chief Rabbi. The other day I walked into the local Piano Emporium. When they are willing to admit that other scales exist. I didn't ask them to tune any piano to mine, for I have other old instruments. Unlike Russ Kischall, who would have gone to that store with a blunderbuss and some kindling to burn all the pianos.

The new issue of INTERNAL is at the printers right now, with keyboard articles. Keisler, Terpstra, Davis, et al. Xonharmonically yours,