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THOUGHTS ON PITCH AND SOME CONSIDERATIONS CONNECTED WITH IT

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Edited by Austin Clarkson
My dear friends,

If you open your mouth (and you wish to), you get a tone
that sounds as you wish it to sound.
If you are angry, it will sound angry,
if you are enraptured, it will not sound as you would in grief,
or in a daze,
or having a rather low blood pressure.

**Spontaneous impulses obey to unified responses.**
The order in which muscle reflexes react on emotional conditions is supreme.
The peculiar **but unquestionable** tone which characterizes emotions
must have its source in **immensely continuous accumulations**
of human experiences and reactions.

Multiple qualities of tones are first observed in the human orbit:

- Get out of here...
- Oh... good morning...
- Ech, he hit me...
- Where had you been...
- Listen, let me tell you...
- Oh, gentlemen, consider the institution which never was or will be...
- How are you...
- Auh (in great pain...)
- I like you so very much...
- Be quiet, it's late...
- Great....
Abstracting the sound, one may get the following sequences:
  tough,
  enraptured,
  relaxed and formal,
  limpidly weeny,
  astonished,
  nervous,
  in great anxiety,
  warning and decisive,
  bellowing,
  presumptuous,
  kind—crying,
  determined and sure and profoundly amiable,
  suppressed and whispering.

That way an enormous variety of timbres is established.
There is the deeply set tone,
  the wavering,
  the quaky,
  the tight,
  the bright, solid, loose,
  the loud, pompous one,
  crying, shouting,
  shrieking, fainting,
  receding, growing,
  whispering, stuttering,
  checked, broken,
  and so on and so forth.
I don’t mean to set up a vocabulary of possibilities.
These are inexplicably vast
(depending upon the wealth of individual imagination
and its interest in selections).
I mean to point at men, at us, the human orbit,
it's tongue, vibration,
it's taken-for-granted, but nevertheless remarkably perfect and convincing
coincidence of tone and timbre,
with its emotional sphere and direction.
Most of those tones and timbres can be produced also mechanically.
All types and shade of sounds are thus specialized by instruments as well.
The repressed-, flowing-, heavy-, thick-,
the thin-, brittle-, bright-, dark-and-so-on tones,
and all those numerous combinations therefrom.
But man is a vast storehouse of other sensations too:
laughing, sobbing,
coughing, sniffing,
sneering, grunting,
snoring, sighing,
fluttering, rolling,
snapping, snacking,
smacking, cracking,
clicking, hissing,
hushing, scratching,
and so on, and so on, and so on...
For example:

```
P    ppp
G    q    q
RRRR R R R RR
SSSS S S S S S S
TTTT T T T T T T T
WWWWW WWWWWW WWWWWW
X    X
Z Z Z Z
Z Z Z Z
Z Z Z Z
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**Z**
Here one finds less vibrating tones, less pulsing ones
(no matter what their inflection, dynamic, and amplitude are).
The tones are cut to pieces or transformed into sensations
in which less voice, less breath, less air
less arrested resonance play a part.
but tongue, and throat, and teeth, and lips,
and all those numerous combinations therefrom.
For example:

As the tongue beats against the walls of the mouth,
suctions of the lips are made audible in form of little explosions,
and all forms of pressures are released into air,
the little uvula is made to trill,
and the tongue and lips are made to trill,
so hands beat hands, and fingers click,
hands rub hands,
and the feet hit the ground,
and the ground is rubbed by the feet.
For example:
Here, in the mouth of man,
tone,
inflection,
timbre,
mode of sensations,
are dormant and born into consciousness.

Man stores all that,
and in the song of birds man’s singing is contemplated,
and contemplated as well in the insect’s tonal snatches
and tonal sequences,
and in the dogs and the cows,
and the wind and the thunder,
and the sea, and the air, and the light.

In man all this is grounded.
Man is echo, consequence, tension, and anticipation.
Through man all sources go and all sources are open,
as visions, dreams, and plans.
The ears listen, observe, compare, store.
Into them an outer world breaks in,
and an inner world witnesses all of it as aboriginally known,
as an expressive past might break out of tones,
inflections, timbres, sensations,
being taken over,
symbolized,
\text{a belated} | \text{continuance},
or an expressive immediacy is breaking through its ears,
irreversible,
undelayable,
actual.

Because man is light and air and sea,
and the birds are in him,
and the earthy tones and modes of sensations
are his earth in his ears,
and his ears are his,
and there the nerves do vibrate farther and deeper,
No peculiarity is greater and more monstrous than man’s is,
and all tones and all vibrations not collected by him
swing away—away, lost to the world
(which is unconscious of its own).
In man vibrations multiply, regenerate, and are **unlost**.
Any sound is man’s sound,
And be it by his control.

A tone can be as long or as short as possible.
If man is measure of possibilities,
then the tone is as long as his breath lasts,
or as short as his vocal cords can execute it.
If mechanical conditions of whatever sort manage a tone’s duration,
the duration might outlast a life’s length,
meaning no measurement altogether can be established.
Because man will establish the measurement,
because man will say stop, and man will say go.
Duration is a human experience, and shortness as well.
  In man’s time a short while is stretched to no time of all length
    (by the terror of fear).
In man’s time that same short while
  transcends the borderline of its consciousness,
    when man is lost to the depth of his concentration.
    Time there is unhinged and no time available.
    Infinity is present.
    Because nothing limited is counted there,
      everything is of an equally infinite length.
Thus, only in man’s time the **doubleness of all time’s length** is existent:
  No time of all length,
  And all time of no length.

Face it!
Only in man’s **deeper trails** time transcends its narrowness
    by the depth of man’s concentration.
Only in man’s deeper trails **concentration is infinite**,
    thus stretching in a snapshot of time through its continual extensions,
      and dwelling in a time’s twinkle with a sense of its endlessness
        (but actually spending two minutes).
Face it!
The boundlessness of possibilities recoils into the boundedness of the human condition.

Duration is decided by the context,
    and not by time which is spent on consuming time.
Whatever time is needed by a course of action to materialize its very purposes,
    this is the time, a time of a definite actuality.
A second which is not expected to pass,
    is not the second whose passing is expected.
All what matters is the time which acts in succession of interdependent reactions.
No time is of any length (including its most intolerable one)
    where length is not consciously spaced in regard to the course in which it happens.
Without that spaciousness of retrospection,
    the projection of time loses its very momentum, and at any moment.
The depth of the instant is decided by the weight of its surrounding time.
Thus, time is measured by what man decides to happen.
A moment’s orbit and its proper length
    are decided by man’s sense for differences
    and how they come about, and what they amount to.
Tantamount to what happens is the avoidance of letting things happen in a moment which is of no importance to either happenings.
Man knows that each thing and each event have a total range of their own.
Unless this total range is known,
the parts are not equivalents of the whole.
If a total range is known, then an intercourse of things or events
   can either extend the range of an already settled totality,
      (in which case an extension might be superfluous)
   or a false perspective is created
      in which events and things are duped and made absurd.
But what a false absurdity that is!
   Unredeemable and bitterly unnecessary,
      since the real absurdities can escape and profit from
   the cemeteries of the living.

There is one perspective (and blessed be this one)
   where an intercourse of things or events takes the reality by a surprise,
   and where the shock of surprise turns absurdity absurd,
   and man is saved for man’s sake
      (and no other sake there is).

Things or events are either man’s things or man’s events
   or nothing is worth a notion.
A tree does not need to be told it is a tree.
   But in man’s notion, a leaf has to be a leaf to water a plant,
      and a pencil (even on a borderline of demoniac confusion)
   has to be a pencil which cannot be watered,
      as a leaf cannot hold a lead.
This is worth a notion,
   And watch a child when it gives names and seeks order.
I have spoken by now a great deal about other things,
   instead of continuing to talk about pitch.
I did not evade it.
   But I could not evade to talk not about pitch.
A number of inescapable circumstances surround all elements in music.
   (I recall to you my first talk where I spent some time with them.)
If it is expected that any sensation, timbre, pitch, or sound of whatever kind,
   will eventually be drawn into those complex phenomena
   like time, manner of event, and course of action,
then the character of engagement is of greater concern to me
   than the pitch itself.
But now about pitch.
If all sorts of utterly shredded tones are abundantly existent,
   so tones of greater length, unchecked resonance, clashing vibration as well,
Listen:

\[ K\text{ch}: \text{oeer} \quad \text{put} - k\quad \text{tip} \quad \text{tip} \quad p/ - d - d \]

Here the exposure of a tone—vibrating, resonant, and definite—
   is the exclusive object of sensation:
A tone is used more frequent,
more varyingly interspersed with either shredded tones
or sounds of a different kind.
Some extremely high pitch was introduced to **offset the pattern**
(offsetting a pattern is a pattern itself).
It is **because of consistent habits** a new form of academism.
Now more tones are used, extremes of all sorts.
Pitch behave like dots in a **vast sphere of different pitch possibilities**.

The **greater the distances** are between the pitches,
the easier it is to communicate a spheroid vastness.
A primary source of pleasure in doing it
derives from an **indulgence in less measurable proportions**.
Man, adjusted to his continual **rational checkup**, 
watches what happens **beyond the borderlines of his own human space**.
After a while, everything transcends everything’s borderlines.
As the thing could not hold out (or hold itself) for too long a time,
a continual state of getting **away from the thing** takes place.
of quitting the condition of which one does not attempt the curiosity to know whether the condition itself is perhaps its own instead.

Motion might then circle in insides, detecting core contradiction and argument, instead of driving away towards borderlines and continued outwards, spilling over those borderlines' core contradiction and argument.

Everything then dissipates,

Yes, from pitch to non-pitch, from sound to noise, from there to everywhere to nowhere, shuttling between recurring non-recurrences—conditioning the quitting of conditions, trapped in an infinite perspective to outrun motion, and midwifing the birth of transforming something to which consciousness is denied what it is.

So swings to Bum and then to and then to Tsch and then to 

and to tsch - mmm - k' - kā. å̂ å̂ å̂ very dear!!

ach mmm tpkm tpkm tpkm — kerk kerk clack — oo oo oo oo yee

Staud
This, a modest example of continual transitions,
could well be what it is,

* a panorama of set situations. *

But that vivid exchange taking place between all sorts of audibles,
could be transferred to the sphere of resonant pitches alone,
which (as in the case of previous audibles)
could be executed by any instrument
conceivable of coming close to the type of sound imagined.

And the greater the flexibility and antinomy of situations
in exchange (or transition),
(so typical for contemporaries working in orbits of multiple dimensions)
the quicker the flight of pitches through vast spheres,
the quicker the collapse of pitch ranges,
the quicker the shooting of pitches into most opposite directions,
the more rapid the change of struck, plucked, beaten, blown,

and differently devised tones produced by
 strings, reeds, tubes; pipes, glass, metal,
 and so and so forth.

If one eliminates all these surfaces and sensibilities,

* then a tone is a pitch among twelve other different ones. *

Each tone in succession differs from a preceding one
as being a half-tone higher or lower.

One might object that the difference is *too* subtle, or *not subtle* enough.

Those who complain about the narrow scale of pitch sensibilities,
use infinitely subtler divisions of a whole tone,
which then is divided into 3,4,5,6,7, or more tones.
That does not have by implication anything to do with
a greater compositional sensibility.
I even think it must be in its way.
The principles which govern articulation and differentiation
on a basis of limited units
don’t differ whether one works with twelve or twenty-four (pitch) units.
The greater the number of variables,
the smaller the number of definite categories.
The number of (basically different) basic units is limited.
Unlimited only is the number of modifications.
Thus, the greater the number of available pitches is
(this includes eventually all modes of sensations),
the greater becomes the tendency to unify less tangible differences
among the pitches with the more striking ones,
and define orbits of sensations
(where a more or less greater fluctuation of sensibilities
pertain to the sensation itself).
Thus, the number of available sensations shrinks,
but the importance of definite tangible categories
among the sensations grows.
In dealing with pluralities,
differentiation is a matter of reducing them to categories of specific
(sensations.
In dealing with a limited number of sensations,
differentiation is a matter of developing pluralities
through distinct and responsible variation.
But man doesn’t deal with sensations and their attributes alone.
Man organizes the degrees of sensibilities in a way in which all of them share a cooler place:
not the place of flesh and nerves, but the place which stores them;
not the place where the flesh can get weary and the nerves can get lax,
but the place which gives depth to the flesh and depth to the nerves,
where man can dwell in his insides
and take the flesh and the nerves where they dwell in man,
and not man in them.
Man conceives, thinks, combines, grows, and acts,
man rejects, takes in, furthers, and anticipates.
Man remembers (Man is remembered).
Man traces back (Man is traced back).
Man falls back beyond himself.
Man falls out before himself.
Man’s unique actuality is the series of consequences which lends depth to any time
in which he comprehends himself in a summary way.
Man’s continuity is a conscious act of his life.
No sensibility which doesn’t involve man’s consciousness is worth the trouble of disturbing man.
All sensibility in art is the skin of spirit and thoughts.
Only in spirit and thoughts sensibilities survive their passing charges.
Charged that way and with the depth of consciousness,
all sensibilities fall back to their depth
in moments of their completion.
Outside is but another dimension.
If one knows that, one almost knows them all.
And one can enter any outside point,
because one immediately moves in the direction towards all other points.

Carrying these with you,
at no point interrupting the interflowing connections
(at no point interrupting the past,
at no point being cheated by the present,
or lured into it not knowing what its real time is),
then you can live at any given point,
Even if you fall out of it,
you will carry with you the burden of making the effort to connect.
No such burden is of weight,
as wings in flight are of no weight,
and of no weight the body which they carry.
Surface is but another dimension,
Sensibilities but another extension of insides,
The present but another point in connection (or continuing) time,
A flower’s scent, the anatomy of its beauty,
are but equivalents to the scent of truth
in the teachings of botany.

There is someone. I sense his life’s impact.
Behind the surface’s window hangs always the same curtain.
I know its weight without touching anything.
Behind that, it’s always the same depth one falls into.
One even does not fall anymore.
One just expects it.
   As a next step within a series of steps.
It’s always the same stone which one lifts
   (and even doesn’t move a finger anymore).
It’s always the same concentration, deep and without strain,
   which doesn’t let one out so easy.

All is pregnant and charged,
and depth is man’s due,
and man’s filter,
   and all,
   that is,
   is what it is
   All together.
And without that it is litter,
and if not litter, it’s falling apart.
There is no dimension to turn to,
   but the dimension of a continual collapse.
There is no door through which to enter,
   and no wall to lean on,
And you walk a thousand miles,
   and you haven’t moved a bit.
You walked your feet bloody stepping on the same spot.
You are without time.
Because you have gambled wrong,
   you even have lost the Blossom of the Moment.
You are without a moment.
The last thing to do is to kill time.
That is the not-so-witty suicide
    in which to survive without getting hurt.
(But you even have killed your sensibilities.)
Seek to get all points. They don't come easy.
But you will have learned which to do without,
    or how to knot them together.
I am concerned with not breaking my nose on light surfaces.
I am not the one who's taking risks in shallow waters.

There are flat surfaces and deep ones.
I am in praise of the deep ones.

But back to the pitch.

Remember the twelve half-tones and the possible complaint they're too many of them,
    and of the many too few.
Remember how to deal through categories with pluralities,
    and through distinct and responsible variation with limited numbers of
    (sensations.

A tone alone is called a prime.
    Every tone can be a prime if relations to other tones are not considered.
But this has to be done.
One gets stuck with each of the tones,
    If one doesn't constantly free oneself through setting up relations,
    thus freeing the tones from being always primes, and nothing else.
One hears in relations.
   If it becomes a question of relating the tone to itself,
   one can find the same tone on different places
   within the framework of all others.

Almost all tones reappear eight times on the keyboard,
   meaning one has eight octaves,
   of which each octave comprises all twelve tones.
It's a rather neat assortment:
   eight times distributed over the whole musical area
   (if you want to look at it this way).

Tones could be extended beyond the present limit of high and low tones.
   But a considerable limitation (to be sure) is offered by the human ear,
   which at some point stops to distinguish the subtler shades of
   (pitch differences.

   So the difference is of no difference.
   One would react like someone who is deaf.
   But one isn’t.

Thus, to perceive a distinguishable pitch difference
   is a prerequisite of noticing, setting up pitch relations at large,
   which becomes then a primary act of listening,
   of constantly re-actualizing part of past situations,
   for the sake of finding oneself in the present
   AT THE RIGHT MOMENT.
   (But let’s not go into this again.)
I said before that every tone (if no other relations are established) can relate itself eight times to different same tones. It’s the difference in size, or level, or self-distance, but otherwise it’s the same tone.

Some people feel differences like these count heavier than the changes of pitch which take place within the orbit of twelve tones.

Some people think that pitch does not matter. It’s anyway all the same because of pitch.

Or they will distinguish only high, middle, and low, and that’s all what pitch there is.

But why not declare the whole thing as one body, where high, middle, and low is one (three as one), and cash in the whole thing?

(That’s what my father did who actually was so pitch-deaf that he couldn’t fathom why a low tone is not a high one although this makes real sense on compositional grounds.)

O why (if one is already capable of discerning high from middle from low) stop all of a sudden and deny these distinctions to the regions of high, middle, low, speaking of high, middle, low in the high region, in the middle and in the low.

One thing I grant indeed to all of us, namely, a rather variable state of susceptibility in regard to the constant use of similar materials.

In regards to the prime, which can meet itself as an identical pitch eight times,
but in different sizes, this might be stated: the release of distances, of segmenting, dividing, proportioning the (whole pitch orbit (call it a span of regions, or call it space) is a primary activity of any pitch. Not only space is open, to be entered at any point and to be related to any other one, but the concept of moving distances, of spacing, of actuating them, is a dominant factor in carrying tones from one spot to another. Spatial activity and fluid dimensions of one tone seeking out its multiple (identities (in existence on eight different levels) are lowest forms of tonal life. Any discrepancy in range of possible activities between constituent organic factors are most evident signs of it. The greater the activity is on the part of one element, the duller becomes the limited state of another one, if it is incapable of participating in form of complementary (or competitive) activities— ALL activity is a summary one. All!! Dimensions of width are created if octaves of a different size are used. Used are all, and all is up to the dynamic nature of the tone itself. The width of a tone (meaning the distance between two identical) is due to proportioning different highs and lows in octaves (or later in all available other intervals).
The relations between proportions is swift and elastic, establishing the coordination of extremes as norm, of rapid shifts of great irregular proportions as rule, and establishing the flexible (dimensional) tone and spatial activity as one reciprocal unit.

(about opposites and the non-exceedable extreme
I have spoken at length in my former lecture.)

But let me express with great concern the following:
The annullment of negation, the appearance of a thing, both itself and its opposite, yet irreconcilable, both itself and its opposite, yet bare and irreducible, both itself and its opposite, yet non-transitory.

This annullment of negation compels us to bring into the range of activities so vast a number of diverting complementary components, that they are not equivalent to the loss of a fundamental principle.

If a thing moves in continual extremes of opposites, then the very loss of an element of the reverse undifferentiates the bundle of irreversible opposites, and liquidates their position, which otherwise could be fully assumed.

Without an ensemble of EQUIVALENT complementary components, every extreme is doomed to degenerate in its own exaggeration.

Any radicalism incapable of settling any possible situation within the domain of existing ones (and acting equally radically in these as in those whose radicalism one has mastered)
chokes itself to death.
Man is to be fed in all his sources,
and art as a human proposition shall not break the mirrors
through which these sources flow.

Because all flow back into man,
and man’s radicalism is a total one,
and its totality is the only issue.

Only if a high maturity of action to all elements is guaranteed,
and all elements enjoy their rich interchange,
then one element (while isolated and bare)
will start reproducing all elements in its own image
(and within its own condition).

But as far as I am concerned,
I favor a more universal position.

But back to the pitch.

The prime is followed by the second.
A second is either a successive step (moving, a motivic particle),
or it is a combination of two pitch positions,
in which case it is called an interval.
The prime (identical with itself) is a tone.
We may call an interval a more complex tone.
But the complexity of one tone is one of associations, not facts.
If dealing with intervals, one anew faces a number of situations,
Either one hears an interval as one entity,
or one hears it as a contracted motion of one tone,
moving so fast into a next position
that both positions coincide.

This attitude to project motion into what-is-without is an attitude
known to all branches of human activity.
It is self-revelation of motion in matter which man attests instinctually.

A third form of listening to an interval
conceives both tones as separate, competitive, and opposite.

Originated in man’s dialectical thinking, in observing nature,
in examining it through sustained series of test and critique,
this attitude constantly intervenes with the equilibrium in matter,
just disclosing the very events of checked opposites.

The second is the classical interval of our time.
It has the attraction which all relatively new things enjoy.
Its newness results from a shift in emphasis
(which is so much part of the history of human preoccupations).

The shift in emphasis from one favorite interval to another one,
from one form of delight and identification to other ones equally valid,
exhausts naturally rather quick the sources of fascination.
And thus the second (and all what goes with it)
has lost much of its original beauty.

But beauty, as always, is a matter of coordinated equivalents,
among which this interval has still (and I’m sure for a good while)
the importance of a principal axis-interval.
Each interval (this and the following ones) sounds as no other one, but they all sound as equals in the world of intervals. Each interval encompasses the possibilities of each of all other ones, so that, among the many forms of an intervallic evolution, one will demonstrate a constant absorption of those not in use. Inherent in an interval is its immediate spatial potential, meaning that each of the tones which make the interval can contact any of the eight identical tones existing within the total orbit of pitches. This is the fluid dimension into which every interval extends. Another dimension is the harmonic inversion, whereby a second can be a seventh or a ninth, a third, a sixth or a tenth, and a fourth, a fifth. The procedure is that the lower tone moves an octave higher to its next identical, while the upper tone remains unchanged. This circling in octaves around an unchanging tone removes from an interval its staticity. Or, to state it differently, every interval has multiple levels on which it can exist. Or the interval is what it proves to be in the sum of its multiple (manifestations).

Thus, a very thing is a continual potential which can be relieved from its pluralities by turning to one of the singular forms, or it can be relieved from its singular form,
by escaping into its multiple dimensions.
Thus, one is also many (but determined).
The third itself is open and close (but determined).

A third is a third and sounds like it.
But if a second (and its derivatives), as I said before,
assumes the role of a more direct or more indirect axis interval,
then certain interactions become evident
whereby all other intervals eventually become differentiating generators
of the complex of a second (and its derivatives).
(But let me not go into this.)

No interval lives actually any longer in a state of a unique purity.
Because being a compositional element (and not a number),
it is either in a state of verging on its derivatives or multiple dimensions,
or it shares the circle of an evolution where one is about to become the other,
or where one is presumed the complement of another.

So speedy has become the tendency of inter-absorptions,
that one has to compose into an interval
by reducing enormously the state of perpetual fluctuation.

Thirds (and their derivatives) have enjoyed, as axis intervals of the past,
the great preference throughout centuries.

Today the same thirds enjoy the strange pleasure
of being the indispensable intervals,
because of their striking difference from all other adjacent ones.
Furthermore, imbued with experiences from the past as its survivors,
they enjoy the consternation of a paradox
in being used as what they never were intended to be,
namely, contrasting intervals within a bunch of others,
which had served as their own contrasts.

Lastly, there is the interval of the fourth (and its derivative, the fifth).
They share the same situation with the other ones,
that none is replaceable by another other,
but that at one point all of them assume a similar character,
where none of them is separated from the other:
because the next step in the evolution of intervals
is the fusion of a minimum of two into a complex.
This will be the fusion of two opposites into basic units,
which from then on assume a similar role
to that in which the interval once functioned.
From then on it is called the complex interval.
So much for today.
    And I have covered exactly a beginning.
Forgive me if facts mean so little to me
    that I wish you would read them in a book.
This is the reason why I constantly slip off into grounds,
    where I witness, unfatigued and with amazement,
    the principles which cause the facts to originate.
And because I am a man,
    I want to spy out what is so incredible behind creation.
    Thus, I take nothing for granted.

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