

JUST GUITARS

John Schneider, Guitar and Vocals
with members of Just Strings

Rebekah Raff, Kithara; Gene Sterling, Diamond Marimba

1 Rhythmicon I (1988) (5:06) **Carter Scholz**
17 justly tuned guitars (b. 1953)

Scenes from Něk Chand (2002) (9:07) **Lou Harrison**
National Steel Guitar (1917-2003)

2 I The Leaning Lady (3:58)

3 II The Rock Garden (2:13)

4 III The sinuous arcade with swings and arches (2:56)

5 Tandy's Tango (1992) (3:31)

6 Cinna (1957) (2:06)

7 Palace Music (1971/88) (2:18)

Plaint & Variations on 'Song of Palestine' (7:45)

8 Plaint (3:08)

9 Variations (4:37)

10 Serenado por Gitaro (1952) (1:49)

11 Letter from Hobo Pablo (1943) (3:25) **Harry Partch**
Original version for intoning voice, Adapted Guitar I and Kithara (1901-1974)

December 1942 (1942) (6:45)
Voice and Adapted Guitar I

12 I Come Away, Death (Shakespeare) (2:59)

13 II The Heron (Tsurayuki) (1:16)

14 III The Rose (Ella Young) (2:30)

Three Intrusions (1949) (5:06)
Voice, Adapted Guitar II, Diamond Marimba

15 I The Rose (Ella Young) (2:02)

16 II The Crane (Tsurayuki) (1:52)

17 III The Waterfall (Ella Young) (1:12)

Harp of New Albion (1984/95) (14:01) **Terry Riley**

18 I New Albion Chorale (9:10) (b. 1935)

19 II Cadence of the Wind (4:51)

20 Lament (1981) (6:26)

John Schneider
(b. 1950)

Scenes from Něk Chand, Letter from Hobo Pablo,
December 1942, Three Intrusions and Lament are first recordings

Dedicated to the living memory of Lou Harrison (1917-2003)

"Cherish, Conserve, Consider, Create"

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But this is no mere experiment in acoustics: the composer cunningly controls the timing and order of each harmonic's entrance and exit, weaving a fascinating polyphonic web where rhythm begets harmony, which in turns begets melody. Scholz is a composer, writer, performer, science fiction author, computer music programmer, graphic and font designer, editor.....polymath!

Lou Harrison

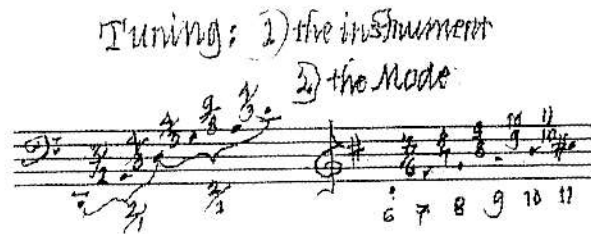
After reading Partch's *Genesis of a Music* (1949), Lou Harrison bought a tuning hammer and 'never looked back'. His first efforts in composing in Just Intonation were studies in Pythagorean tuning which became his *Pastorales* (1949/51), and a few years later came the *Incidental Music for Corneille's 'Cinna'* (1956) for a retuned piano with single strings and tacked hammers. In the interim, a letter to composer Frank Wigglesworth who was learning guitar in Rome included the Esperanto entitled *Serenado por Gitaro* (1952). In the letter Harrison exclaims, "...When did you take up the guitar? I'm cocoo for it!...". In the performance notes, Harrison provides these hopeful directions:

Anyone who just might own a guitar with moveable frets should arrange these to play the "Intense Diatonic" (Syntonen Diatonic), which is the "vocal" major scale. The piece will sound lovely in that tuning.

This fretting/tuning was not fully realized for another two decades, when San Francisco guitarist Tom Stone invented the Guitar with Interchangeable Fingerboards, inspiring Harrison to begin five Suites, each in a different tuning. The

first became the *Serenade* for guitar and percussion (1978), while the second began with the *Plaint & Variations on 'Song of Palestine'*. Sadly, the project was eventually abandoned while these first two movements were subsumed by the *String Quartet Set* (1979). Though Harrison did not use the guitar again until recently, the solo repertoire has been permanently enriched by many arrangements of various harp and keyboard works, so much so that he has joked that he has almost become a 'baroque composer'.

Lou Harrison's most recent guitar work was written for National Steel Guitar, custom fretted in Just Intonation. The *Scenes from Nek Chand* (2002) uses a six-note mode based on the 6th through 12th harmonics generated by the note G, including the pungent 11th, which is almost an exact quartertone:



The score tells this story: "While Mother played an afternoon of Mah Jong with friends, we children listened to records or radio. We heard a lot of Hawaiian music - and the sliding and waving tones of their guitars - I remember over a gap of almost 80 years. The wonderful sculpture and architecture of Nek Chand, near Chandigarh (Northern India) set me to composing three small pieces in admiration." Created from the detritus of an urban renewal project, folk artist Nek Chand's extra-

ordinary five acre Rock Garden is populated with hundreds of fantastic sculptures and structures that have enchanted millions of visitors since its opening in 1976.

Though *Tandy's Tango* was written in 1992 for equal-tempered piano and dedicated to dancer Tandy Beal, the composer tells us that, "...it comes right out of the movie palaces of the '30's - Fred Astaire & Ginger Rogers!". This solo guitar version uses Just Intonation in C-major. The tackpiano used for Corneille's *Cinna* (1957) is tuned to 7-limit Just Intonation, that is, a tuning that uses the substantially



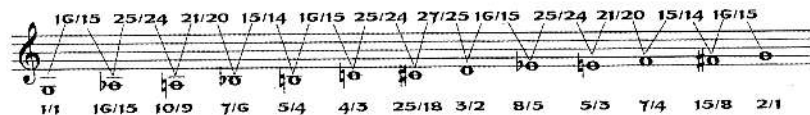
♫ Lou Harrison, 1955, 7-Limit Just Intonation For Cinna ♫



TUNING OF THE TACK PIANO. LOWER 'a' ABOUT 1/2 STEP



WHICH WILL RESULT IN THE FOLLOWING:

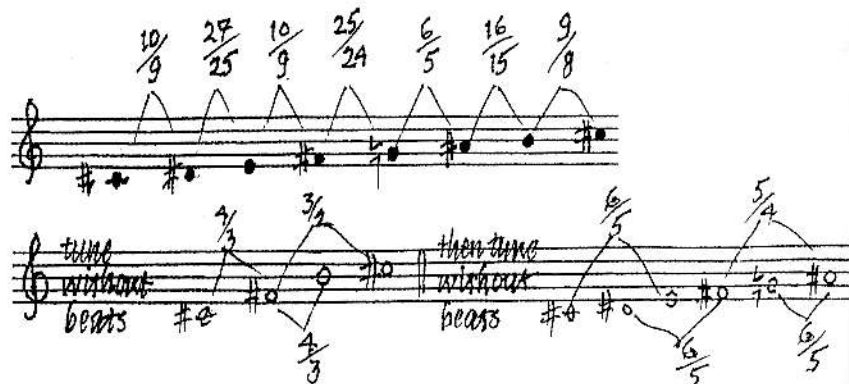


flattened 7th harmonic as the 'subminor' third in several instances. Throughout this fourth movement marked 'medium slow', the tonality toggles between pure A-major and C-major triads, connected by deliciously piquant modulatory passages.

Originally for solo harp, *Palace Music* (1971/88) accompanied Scene IX of Harrison's puppet opera *Young Caesar*. The music is based on a pure F# major triad and is tuned thusly:

Harry Partch

Though he trained as a concert pianist, Harry Partch's first 'microtonal' instrument was a viola that was customized in 1929; fitted with a cello neck and fingerboard and restrung an octave below the violin, the Adapted Viola was played between the knees like a viola da gamba. The guitar was the second instrument that he adapted to his newly devised Monophonic Scale of Just Intonation. While the fingerboard of the Adapted Viola was peppered with brads to mark 29 of the dozens of intervals/octave used for his groundbreaking song cycle *17 Lyrics by Li Po* (1930/33), the Martin parlor guitar purchased in 1934 posed other challenges. He tells us, "The usual low, wire-type frets were not very satisfactory, and I eventually fitted high, stainless-steel frets into slots in a brass plate which was then screwed onto the neck."



The original sketches for Harrison's *Variations* on 13th century Minnesinger Walther von der Vogelweide's "Nu Alrest Lebe Ich Mir Werde" were made in 1940 and completed in 1978 for a guitar fretted in Pythagorean Intonation. The original unaccompanied melody is in medieval bar form (AAB), which the composer alters slightly by transposing the second 'A' phrase down an octave. The "Palestinlied" was probably written to encourage enlistment in the Crusade of 1228, and though Harrison's *Variations* are in European-style quintal counterpoint, the taqsim-like coda is reminiscent of the Middle-Eastern 'ud. The text reminds us that, "Christians, Jews and Heathens all claim this land as their own.....the whole world is at war over this land..." - how little has changed in eight centuries.



Partch used the instrument for *Barstow: 8 Hitchhikers' Inscriptions* (1941) [Just West Coast, BRIDGE 9041], the much lengthier *U.S. Highball* (1943) and the works below, but was dissatisfied enough with the limitation of what must have been very uncomfortable replaceable frets, that in 1945 he created a fretless amplified version of Adapted Guitar I (now lost), and a Hawaiian-type slide guitar with ten strings called Adapted Guitar II. In 1952, Partch covered the brass plate of the original Guitar I and used it as a slide guitar with unison strings in most of his later works.

Partch was a notorious reviser, often reworking earlier compositions to include his newly created instruments, and though *Barstow* and *U.S. Highball* were the longest pieces to be reorchestrated, *The Letter* was re-written three times, lastly for the film *The Dreamer That Remains* (1972). The text comes from a letter that the composer received in 1935 from a hobo friend and is quoted in its entirety in Partch's hobo journal *Bitter Music* (1936). The original version was composed in 1943 while Partch was working on the second draft of *U.S. Highball* in Ithaca, New York, and bore the title: *Letter from Hobo Pablo*. The composer wrote, "The piece is stylized partly to underline the perverse humor and the obviously warm regard, but mostly to convey - through sound and rhythm - the delight of reading a very unexpected letter from an old companion for the first time."

In 1970, just before reworking the piece for the last time, Partch wrote this pencil note on the first version: "In retrospect, I think this is a better version than the re-writing, summer 1955. But the old Guitar I would need to be found or one like it built (photo in book)." My new Adapted Guitar I (1991) does use standard guitar frets, and is accompanied by Partch's original Kithara which he made in Adult Education workshops in Los Angeles in 1938. It is an imaginative gloss on its ancient Greek namesake, grouping its 72-strings into twelve parallel 'hexads', Partch's basic six-note chordal unit. Eight hexads are played like harp strings, while the remaining four can produce gliding tones, tuned by moveable pyrex rods which run underneath them.

The opening of Partch's long lost song cycle *December 1942* begins with a setting of the jester's song "Come Away Death" from Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night* (II, iv), inspired no doubt by Douglas Moore's 1925 solo a cappella setting of the text that Partch praises in *Genesis* as "...truly a Monophonic concept even though its words are not treated as spoken words." Partch's own version uniquely includes both spoken and intoned text in unmetered rhythm, dividing the second of two verses with a short vocalise in counterpoint with an microtonally ascending chromatic guitar line. Vocalise is featured in all three songs, mimicking the heron's mournful cry in the setting of the 13th century Japanese poem "The Uta", or closing Ella Young's 1938 poem "The Rose", which is accompanied throughout by the rhythmic "five finger exercise" pattern of tapping on the the guitar's top. (This percussive technique was so essential to Partch's technique that when he built his new fretless electric Adapted Guitar I in 1945, he included a special tap plate in place of a pick guard, with its own individual microphone.) Whether the manuscript of these brief lyrical pieces was lost or destroyed, we will never know - but a recently rediscovered 1945 microfilm copy has insured their continued existence.

Three Intrusions (1949) are the first compositions to use the newly invented Diamond Marimba and the Adapted Guitar II, as well as the first of many subsequent groups to use the whimsical title "Intrusion". Two are actually substantial revisions from *December 1942*. Strangely, the second song in both sets uses exactly the same text; but its avian subject, initially translated as "the heron", subsequently becomes "the crane", while the 1949 rewrite of "The Rose" contains a second line not found in the earlier version. Musically, the later compositions are longer, more harmonically complex and melodically subtle than their progenitors, akin more to the art song style of the Li Po songs of the '30's than the folksy Americana pieces of the early '40's. In the concluding "Waterfall", Partch features the liquid glissandi of Adapted Guitar II while taking advantage of the Diamond's terraced keys to create cascades of descending arpeggios impossible on any standard marimba.

Letter from Hobo Pablo

Cincinnati, Ohio October 2nd, 1935

Hello Pal!

Gee, I was glad to hear from you,
believe it or not pal I just received your letter today
It must have followed me all over the world,
But it got to my wife and she broke it open and read it and
sent it to me this morning. Well, I come back East and run into a shotgun
wedding, and I was the goat! So back on the bum again.

Well, pal, I had a swell time in Cincy 'til my wife's father found out I was
back, and then the little lamb was led up to the altar. So now I'm just out of jail,
and feeling fine, and I think I have a job starting the 12th of October, and I truly
hope my dear little wife is dead by then!

Give Kentucky my best regards, and tell him I'm not doing so well,
but looking to score before long, in fact I've got to or get in jail again, and it is
cold out here.

And I'm not good looking enough to get by that way, do you get the drift?

So I'll say goodnight, and good luck,
hoping to hear from you at once, and tell me all the news,

Your Pal, Pablo

(performed from original ms. courtesy of Harry Partch Archive, University of Illinois Music Library)

DECEMBER 1942

Come Away Death (William Shakespeare Twelfth Night, II:iv)

Come away, come away Death
and in sad cypress, let me be laid.
Fly away, fly away breath,
I am slain by a fair cruel maid.

My shroud of white, stuck all with yew
O prepare it! my part of death,
No one so true, did share it.

Not a flower, not a flower sweet
on my black coffin let there be strown
Not a friend, not a friend greet
My poor corse where my bones shall be thrown.

A thousand thousand sighs to save, lay me O
where sad true lover never find my grave
to weep there.

The Heron (Tsurayuki)

The heron, its cry is mournful in the reed plain,
As though it had called to mind something
which it wanted to forget.

(translated by Arthur Waley, Japanese Poetry: The 'Uta' [Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1919])

The Rose (Ella Young)

The rose that blooms in paradise
Burns with an ecstasy too sweet for mortal eyes
To lose it is to lose delight beyond compare
To have it is to have despair.

from Marzilian and Other Poems (Oceano, CA: Harbison & Harbison, 1938)

Three Intrusions (1949)

The Rose (Ella Young)

The rose that blooms in paradise
Burns with an ecstasy too sweet for mortal eyes
But sometimes down the jasper walls a petal falls,
toward earth and night
To lose it is to lose delight beyond compare
To have it is to have despair.

from *Marzilian and Other Poems* (Oceano, CA: Harbison & Harbison, 1938)

The Crane (Tsurayuki-Waley)

Its cry is mournful in the reed plain,
As though it had called to mind something
which it wanted to forget.

(translated by Arthur Waley, *Japanese Poetry: The 'Uta'* [Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1919])

The Waterfall (Ella Young)

O shouting multitudes, leaping from crag to crag
gesticulating, wrestling with limbs intertwined
Why are you so eager to leave the sunlight,
So eager for the pool of oblivion?

from *Marzilian and Other Poems* (Oceano, CA: Harbison & Harbison, 1938)

Terry Riley

Mix unequal parts of jazz pianist, raga singer, seminal minimalist, tabla player, saxophonist, tape composer, world traveler, and one begins to get an idea of the myriad influences that have inspired Terry Riley's singular music. Having studied the Hindustani vocal style with Pandit Pran Nath in the early 1970's, Riley's first experiments with instrumental Just Intonation began with a retuned Vox electronic organ which he used in many of his Dervish compositions.

Inspired by his long time friend LaMonte Young's *Well-Tuned Piano*, Riley retuned the piano for his two-hour *Harp of New Albion*, using a scale of pure $3/2$ fifths and $5/4$ thirds. This tuning is called 5-limit Just Intonation because the fifth harmonic is the highest prime, and still produces an amazing 35 distinct ratios from twelve notes of the octave.

C#	D	D#	E	E#	F#	G	G#	A	A#	B	B#
<u>1</u>	<u>16</u>	<u>9</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>64</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>8</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>16</u>	<u>15</u>
1	15	8	5	4	3	45	2	5	3	9	8

Like the famed unmeasured preludes of the 18th century French clavecin school, Riley's score reveals nothing more than a series of chords notated mostly in whole notes, giving the performer the greatest possible rhythmic freedom to explore given motivic material. The unusual modulation to six tonal centers is rare in 5-limit tuning, but reveals exquisite dissonances which Riley exploits to great effect in what is essentially an idiomatic piano piece, making translation to the guitar difficult at best. Of the original eleven movements, two work well when transposed down a semitone.

John Schneider

Lament (1981) fulfilled an old aspiration of mine to write solo guitar music of several parts with tightly chromatic voice-leading and a constantly developing thematic structure. Though not strictly programmatic, the music does describe the tension and separateness between two seemingly irreconcilable forces (two perfect fifths, G#/D# and C/G) which, through a process of gradual transformation, finally reach resolution and eventual unity. The piece uses the 'Pythagorean' circle of pure fifths (B-flat-D#), which traditionally produces unusually harsh major thirds, making tonal resolution virtually impossible - except for one delicious anomaly, which closes the piece.

-- John Schneider

John Schneider is an internationally recognized guitarist, composer, author and broadcaster whose weekly television and radio programs have brought the sound of the guitar into millions of homes for the past twenty years. He holds a Ph.D. in Physics and Music from the University of Wales, music degrees from the University of California and the Royal College of Music [London], and is past President of the Guitar Foundation of America. A specialist in contemporary music, Schneider's *The Contemporary Guitar* (University of California Press) has become the standard text in the field.

For the past two decades, he has performed almost exclusively on the Well-Tempered Guitar which uses different patterns of fretting according to the key or tuning system required. Recitals include Renaissance and Baroque repertoire in their original temperaments, as well as contemporary music in alternative tunings by such composers as Lou Harrison and Ben Johnston, among others. Since 1991, Schneider's

concerts also included vocal works of the pioneer American composer Harry Partch (1901-1974), which he sings while accompanying himself on replicas of Partch's Adapted Guitars [steel stringed instruments refretted in Just Intonation] and the Adapted Viola. The 1990's also saw the creation of his chamber group JUST STRINGS, a quartet of guitar/harp/cello/percussion devoted to the performance of music in alternative tunings. In 1995, JUST STRINGS was invited by the Japanese Embassy to present a series of lectures and concerts throughout Japan under the auspices of the prestigious Interlink Festival which annually selects one American ensemble to represent new trends in American Music.

Schneider has performed in Europe, Japan and throughout North America, and been soloist on NPR's "Performance Today" and PRI's "New Sounds". He has been featured by New Music America, New York's American Festival of Microtonal Music, Denver's Microstock, California's Mozart Festival, the DaCamera Society, Southwest Chamber Music, New American Music Festival, the Los Angeles Philharmonic, and the BBC's documentary on the music of Harry Partch. Recent performances include Holland's six-city HARRY PARTCH: Truth About Tune Tour, and his stage adaptation of Partch's *Barstow* for Contemporary Opera Marin. He has recorded for the El Maestro, Etcetera, Bridge, New Albion, Cambria and Pitch record labels.

John Schneider works as a music Professor at Pierce College in Los Angeles, is music director for Just Strings, and is the founding artistic director of MicroFest, an annual festival of microtonal music. His radio show *Global Village* can be heard weekly on Pacifica Radio's KPFK at 90.7-fm in Los Angeles and worldwide at www.kpfk.org. He lives in Venice, California with his wife Jody, daughters Emily and Erin, and dog Blue.

Just Strings is a unique ensemble that specializes in the performance of music in Just Intonation. Since their formation in 1991 to perform the music of Lou Harrison and Harry Partch, they have gone on to commission and premiere works by Larry Polansky, Mamoru Fujieda, John Luther Adams, Mari Takano, Sasha Bogdonawitsch and others. Most recently, they have performed for the Chamber Music in Historic Sites series, the LA County Museum of Art, UCLA's Partch Centennial Celebration, and Sacramento's Festival of New American Music. Just Strings is the resident ensemble of MicroFest, Los Angeles' yearly festival of microtonal music. Rebekah Raff works as a folk, classical and ethnic harpist here in Los Angeles where she has trained at Cal Arts and Pierce College. Gene Sterling's musical career has spanned 25 years of performing such diverse styles ranging from Jazz, R&B, Pop, Rock 'N Roll and Classical. As a drummer and percussionist, performing and recording with artists such as The Don Ellis Band, Johnny Otis and Lainie Kazan, Sterling spent 10 years traveling extensively throughout the U.S., Europe and Canada. He also recorded with the Harry Partch Ensemble in the late 1960's. Later tours to West Africa and Japan stimulated an interest in ethnic percussion playing and a BFA degree in music at Cal Arts.

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Instruments

Gibson "Johnny Smith" (1968) electro-acoustic jazz guitar **1**
Fender Jazz Bass Guitar **1**
National Resophonic Tri-Cone (2002) Just Intonation Model **2 - 4**
Vogt (1988) Fine-Tunable Fretboard **5 - 7**
Mattingly (1983) w/ Novatone Interchangeable Fingerboards **8 - 10 , 18 - 20**
Takamine F-310 S Adapted Guitar I copy **11 - 14**
Kithara I (1938); Martin D-12-28 (1974) Adapted Guitar II copy **15 - 17**
Diamond Marimba copy (2001)

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Robert Starobin, webmaster

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Photograph of John Schneider and Lou Harrison: Todd Burlingame
Photograph of Harry Partch with guitar, courtesy of the Harry Partch Foundation Archive
Photograph of Lou Harrison: John Schneider
Design: Alexis Napoliello

Rhythmicon I: performed from original manuscript courtesy of the composer
Tandy's Tango: Peermusic Classical, New York
Cinna: Hermes Beard
Palace Music: performed from original manuscript courtesy of composer
Plaint & Variations on 'Song of Palestine': Peermusic Classical, New York
Serenado por Gitaro: Salvi Harp Corporation
Three Intrusions, Letter from Hobo Pablo and December 1942: performed from the
original manuscript courtesy of the Harry Partch Archive, University of Illinois
Music Library
Harp of New Albion: performed from original manuscript courtesy of composer
Lament: performed from the composer's manuscript



Guitar CDs on Bridge

Just West Coast: Microtonal Music for Guitar and Harp by Harrison,
Partch, Cage and Young
John Schneider, guitar; Amy Shulman, harp
BRIDGE 9041

Lost & Found: Electric Guitar music composed and performed by Steve Mackey
BRIDGE 9065

New Music with Guitar, Vols. 1-3.

Music by Sondheim, Carter, Takemitsu, Henze, Lennon, Kolb, Bland and Babbitt
David Starobin, guitar
BRIDGE 9009

Newdance: 18 New Dances for Solo Guitar
David Starobin, guitar
BRIDGE 9084

Freedom: Josh White, guitar and the Golden Gate Quartet in Concert (1940)
A Concert to Celebrate the 75th Anniversary of the Thirteenth Amendment
BRIDGE 9114



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