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*** START OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK EXTRACTS FROM THE GALACTICK ALMANACK: MUSIC AROUND THE UNIVERSE ***



EXTRACTS FROM THE GALACTICK ALMANACK

Music Around the Universe

By LARRY M. HARRIS

Illustrated by DON MARTIN

[Transcriber's Note: This etext was produced from Galaxy Magazine June 1959.

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Don't take your eye off music ... there is going to be a lot more to it than meets the ear!

This first selection deals entirely with the Music Section of the Almanack. Passed over in this anthology, which is intended for general readership, are all references to the four-dimensional doubly extensive polyphony of Green III (interested parties are referred to "Time in Reverse, or the Musical Granny Knot," by Alfid Carp, *Papers of the Rigel Musicological Society*) or, for reasons of local censorship, the notices regarding Shem VI, VII and IX and the racial-sex "music" which is common on those planets.

All dates have been made conformable with the Terran Calendar (as in the standard Terran edition of the Almanack) by application of Winstock Benjamin's Least Square Variable Time Scale.

FEBRUARY 17: Today marks the birth date of Freem Freem, of Dubhe IV, perhaps the most celebrated child prodigy in musical history. Though it is, of course, true that he appeared in no concerts after the age of twelve, none who have seen the solidographs of his early performances can ever forget the intent face, the tense, accurate motions of the hands, the utter perfection of Freem's entire performance.



His first concert, given at the age of four, was an amazing spectacle. Respected critics refused to believe that Freem was as young as his manager (an octopoid from Fomalhaut) claimed, and were satisfied only by the sworn affidavit of Glerk, the well-known Sirian, who was present at the preliminary interviews.

Being a Sirian, Glerk was naturally incapable of dissimulation, and his earnest supersonics soon persuaded the critics of the truth. Freem was, in actuality, only four years old.

In the next eight years, Freem concertized throughout the Galaxy. His triumph on Deneb at the age of six, the stellar reception given him by a deputation of composers and critics from the Lesser Magellanic Cloud when he appeared in that sector, and the introduction (as an encore) of his single composition, the beloved *Memories of Old Age*, are still recalled.

And then, at the age of eleven, Freem's concerts ceased. Music-lovers throughout the Galaxy were stunned by the news that their famed prodigy would appear no longer. At the age of twelve, Freem Freem was dead.

Terrans have never felt this loss as deeply as other Galactic races, and it is not difficult to see

why. The standard "year" of Dubhe IV equals 300 Earth years; to the short-lived Terrans, Freem Freem had given his first concert at the age of 1200, and had died at the ripe old age of 3600 years.

"Calling a 1200-year-old being a child prodigy," states the Terran Dictionary of Music and Musicians, rather tartly, "is the kind of misstatement up with which we shall not put."

Particularly noteworthy is the parallel attitude expressed by the inhabitants of Terk I, whose "year" is approximately three Terran days, to the alleged "short" life of Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart.

MAY 12: Wilrik Rotha Rotha Delk Shkulma Tik was born on this date in 8080. Although he/she is renowned both as the creator of symphonic music on Wolf XVI and as the progenitor of the sole Galactic Censorship Law which remains in effect in this enlightened age, very little is actually known about the history of that law.



The full story is, very roughly, as follows:

In 8257, a composition was published by the firm of Scholer and Dichs (Sirius), the Concerto for Wood-Block and Orchestra by Tik. Since this was not only the first appearance of any composition by Tik, but was in fact the first composition of any kind to see publication from his planet of Wolf XVI, the musical world was astonished at the power, control and mastery the piece showed.

A review which is still extant stated: "It is not possible that a composition of such a high level of organization should be the first to proceed from a composer—or from an entire planet. Yet we must recognize the merit and worth of Tik's Concerto, and applaud the force of the composer, in a higher degree than usual."

Even more amazing than the foregoing was the speed with which Tik's compositions followed one another. The Concerto was followed by a sonata, Tik's *Tock*, his/her Free-Fall Ballet for Centipedals, *Lights! Action! Comrades!*, a Symphony, an Imbroglio for Unstrung Violin, and fourteen Wolfish Rhapsodies—*all within the year*!

Scholars visited Wolf XVI and reported once again that there was no musical history on the planet.

Success, fame and money were Tik's. Succeeding compositions were received with an amount of enthusiasm that would have done credit to any musician.

And Wolf XVI seemed to awaken at his/her touch. Within ten years, there was a school of composition established there, and works of astounding complexity and beauty came pouring forth. The "great flowering," as it was called, seemed to inspire other planets as well—to name only a few, Dog XII, Goldstone IX and Trent II (whose inhabitants, dwelling underwater for the most part, had never had anything like a musical history).

Tik's own income began to go down as the process continued. Then the astonishing truth was discovered.

Tik was not a composer at all—merely an electronics technician! He/she had recorded the sounds of the planet's main downtown business center and slowed the recording to half-speed. Since the inhabitants of Wolf XVI converse in batlike squeals, this slowing resulted in a series of patterns which fell within sonic range, and which had all of the scope and the complexity of music itself.

The other planets had copied the trick and soon the Galaxy was glutted with this electronic "music." The climax came when a judge on Paolo III aided in the recording of a court trial over which he presided. During the two weeks of subsonic testimony, speech and bustle, he supervised recording apparatus and, in fact, announced that he had performed the actual "arrangement" involved: speeding up the recordings so that the two-week subsonic trial became a half-hour fantasia.

The judge lost the subsequent election and irrationally placed the blame on the recording (which had not been well-received by the critics). Single-handed, he restored the state of pure music by pushing through the Galactic Assembly a censorship rule requiring that all recording companies, musicians, technicians and composers be limited to the normal sonic range of the planet on which they were working.

Tik himself, after the passage of this law, eked out a bare living as a translator from the supersonic. He died, alone and friendless, in 9501.

JUNE 4: The composition, on this date, in 8236, of Wladislaw Wladislaw's Concertino for Enclosed Harp stirs reflections in musical minds of the inventor and first virtuoso on this instrument, the ingenious Barsak Gh. Therwent of Canopus XII. Nowadays, with compositions for that instrument as common as the *chadlas* of Gh. Therwent's home planet, we are likely to pass over the startling and almost accidental circumstance that led to his marvelous discovery.



As a small boy, Gh. Therwent was enamored of music and musicians; he played the *gleep*-flute before the age of eight and, using his hair-thin minor arms, was an accomplished performer on the Irish (or small open) harp in his fifteenth year. A tendency to confuse the strings of the harp with his own digital extremities, however, seemed serious enough to rule out a concert career for the young *flalk*, and when an Earth-made piano was delivered to the home of a neighbor who fancied himself a collector of baroque instruments, young Gh. was among the first to attempt playing on it.

Unfortunately, he could not muster pressure sufficient in his secondary arms and digits to depress the keys; more, he kept slipping between them. It was one such slip that led to his discovery of the enclosed strings at the back of the piano (a spinet).

The subtle sonorities of plucked strings at the back of a closed chamber excited him, and he continued research into the instrument in a somewhat more organized manner. Soon he was able to give a concert of music which he himself had arranged—and when Wladislaw Wladislaw

dedicated his composition to Gh., the performer's future was assured.

The rest of his triumphant story is too well known to repeat here. The single observation on Gh. Therwent's playing, however, by the composer Ratling, is perhaps worthy of note.

"He don't play on the white keys, and he don't play on the black keys," said Ratling, with that cultivated lack of grammar which made him famous as an eccentric. "He plays in the cracks!"

IULY 23: On this date, the Hrrshtk Notes were discovered in a welf-shop cellar on Deneb III.



These notes are, quite certainly, alone in their originality, and in the force which they have had on the growth of subsequent musicians.

To begin at the beginning: it is well established that Ludwig Hrrshtk, perhaps the most widely known Denebian composer, died of overwork in his prime. His compositions, until the famous T85 discoveries of G'g Rash, were almost alone in their universal appeal. Races the Galaxy over have thrilled to Hrrshtk's Second Symphony, his Concerto for Old Men, and the inspiring Classic Mambo Suite. It is, as a matter of fact, said that G'g Rash himself was led to his discovery by considering the question:

"How can many different races, experiencing totally different emotions in totally different ways, agree on the importance of a single musical composition by Hrrshtk? How can all share a single emotional experience?"

His researches delved deeply into the Hrrshtk compositions, and a tentative theory based on the Most Common Harmonic, now shown to have been totally mistaken, led to the T85 discoveries.

The Hrrshtk notes, however, found long afterward, provide the real answer.

Among a pile of sketches and musical fragments was found a long list—or, rather, a series of lists. In the form of a Galactic Dictionary, the paper is divided into many columns, each headed with the name of a different planet.

Rather than describe this document, we are printing an excerpt from it herewith:

DENEB III	ITERRA	MARS	FOMALHAUT II	ISIRIUS VII
Love	Anger	Hunger	Sadness	Madness
Hate	Joy	F'rit	Prayer	Love
Prayer	Madness	Sadness	Full	Joy
Vilb	NPE	Non-F'rit	tGolk	NPE

In completed form, the document contains over one hundred and fifty separate listings for race, and over six hundred separate emotional or subject headings. In some places (like the Terra and Sirius listing for Vilb, above), the text is marked NPE, and this has been taken to mean No Precise Equivalent. For instance, such a marking appears after the Denebian shhr for both Terra and Mars, although Sirius has the listing grk and Fomalhaut plarat in the desert.

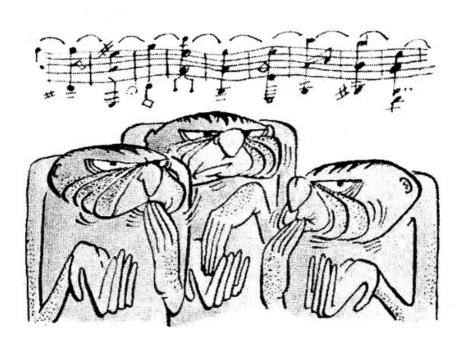
Hrrshtk may be hailed, therefore, as the discoverer of the Doctrine of Emotional Equivalency,

later promulgated in a different form by Space Patrol Psychiatrist Rodney Garman. Further, the document alluded to above explains a phrase in Hrrshtk's noted letter to Dibble Young, which has puzzled commentators since its first appearance.

Hrrshtk is here alluding to the composition of his Revolutionary Ode, which all Terra knows as the most perfect expression of true love to be found in music:

"It's a Revolutionary Ode to me, my friend—but not to you. As we say here, one man's mood is another man's passion."

SEPTEMBER 1: On this date in the year 9909, Treth Schmaltar died on his home planet of Wellington V. All the Galaxy knows his famous Symphonic Storm Suite; less known, but equally interesting, is the history and development of its solo instrument.



The natives of Wellington V feed on airborne plankton, which is carried by the vibrations of sound or speech. This was a little-known fact for many years, but did account for the joy with which the first explorers on Wellington V were greeted. Their speech created waves that fed the natives.

When eating, the natives emit a strange humming noise, due to the action of the peculiar glottis. These facts drove the first settlers, like Treth Schmaltar, to the invention of a new instrument.

This was a large drumlike construction with a small hole in its side through which airborne plankton could enter. Inside the drum, a Wellingtonian crouched. When the drum was beaten, the air vibrations drove plankton into the native's mouth, and he ate and hummed.

(A mechanical device has since replaced the native. This is, of course, due to the terrific expense of importing both natives and plankton to other planets than Wellington V for concerts.)

Thus, a peculiarity of native life led not only to the Symphonic Storm Suite, but to such lovely compositions as Schmaltar's Hum-Drum Sonata.

SEPTEMBER 30: The victimization of the swanlike inhabitants of Harsh XII, perhaps the most pitiful musical scandal of the ages, was begun by Ferd Pill, born on this date in 8181. Pill, who died penitent in a neuterary of the Benedictine Order, is said to have conceived his idea after perusing some early Terran legends about the swan.



He never represented himself as the composer, but always as the agent or representative of a Harsh XII inhabitant. In the short space of three years, he sold over two hundred songs, none of great length but all, as musicians agree to this day, of a startling and almost un-Hnau-like beauty.

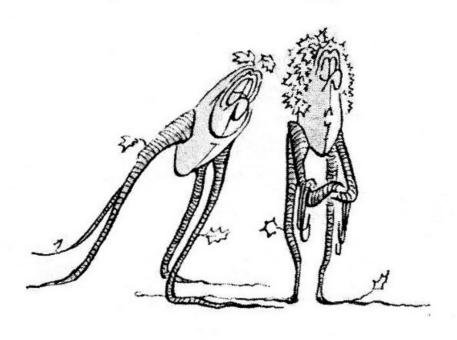
When a clerk in the records department of Pill's publishers discovered that Pill, having listed himself as the heir of each of the Harsh XII composers, was in fact collecting their money, an investigation began.

That the composers were in fact dead was easily discovered. That Pill was their murderer was the next matter that came to light.

In an agony of self-abasement, Pill confessed his crime. "The Harshians don't sing at all," he said. "They don't make a sound. But—like the legendary swan of old Terra—they do deliver themselves of one song in dying. I murdered them in order to record these songs, and then sold the recordings."

Pill's subsequent escape from the prison in which he was confined, and his trip to the sanctuary of the neuterary, were said to have been arranged by the grateful widow of one of the murdered Harshians, who had been enabled by her mate's death to remarry with a younger and handsomer Harshian.

DECEMBER 5 : Today marks the birthday of Timmis Calk, a science teacher of Lavoris



Calk is almost forgotten today, but his magnificent Student Orchestra created a storm both of approval and protest when it was first seen in 9734. Critics on both sides of what rapidly became a Galaxywide controversy were forced, however, to acknowledge the magnificent playing of the Student Orchestra and its great technical attainments.

Its story begins with Calk himself and his sweetheart, a lovely being named Silla.

Though Calk's love for Silla was true and profound, Silla did not return his affectionate feelings. She was an anti-scientist, a musician. The sects were split on Lavoris II to such an extent that marriage between Calk and his beloved would have meant crossing the class lines—something which Silla, a music-lover, was unwilling to contemplate.

Calk therefore determined to prove to her that a scientist could be just as artistic as any musician. Months of hard work followed, until finally he was ready.

He engaged the great Drick Hall for his first concert—and the program consisted entirely of classical works of great difficulty. Beethoven's Ninth Symphony opened the program, and Fenk's Reversed Ode closed it. Calk had no time for the plaudits of critics and audience; he went searching for Silla.

But he was too late. She had heard his concert—and had immediately accepted the marriage proposal of a childhood sweetheart.

Calk nearly committed suicide. But at the last moment, he tossed the spraying-bottle away and went back to Silla.

"Why?" he said. "Why did you reject me, after hearing the marvelous music which I created?"

"You are not a musician, but a scientist," Silla said. "Any musician would have refrained from *growing* his orchestra from seeds."

Unable to understand her esthetic revulsion, Calk determined there and then to continue his work with the Student Orchestra (it made a great deal more money than science-teaching). Wrapping his rootlets around his branches, he rolled away from her with crackling dignity.

*** END OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK EXTRACTS FROM THE GALACTICK ALMANACK: MUSIC AROUND THE UNIVERSE ***

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