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July 21, 1982

Dear Tom,

Enclosed is a copy of a letter from Robert L. Weaver. I would be very grateful if you could recall or research at your earliest convenience the connection to the Cahill descendant. My problem is that I have a candidacy exam in about 10 days, where I have to present my proposed dissertation topic. Having a good primary source would improve the looks of the research, so I hope you can help me.

Also, you mentioned your willingness to write a letter on behalf of the value and importance of this topic. I would like to take you up on your offer, and be able to show the letter to the exam committee. Others will see the letter later, so I think a "to whom it may concern" heading would be best.

Sorry to rush you on these items--I realize you may be on vacation or otherwise unable to come up with these on time. So do what you can when you can; many thanks.

Best regards,

Reynold Weidenaar

July 26, 1982

To Whom It May Concern:

Mr. Reynold Weidenaar has communicated his intention to do significant research on the history of electronic musical instruments. His topic, the Cahill Telharmonium involves an important instrument dating from the late Nineteenth century.

The Telhamonium is the archetype for the Hammond Organ, a ubiquitous instrument in popular music that has found some use in the Avant-Garde (Lukas Foss and others). More important, the Telharmonium was the first complete expression of principles that underlie the production of electronic music per se. the instrument was capable of accurate, reliable production of microtones (36 notes per octave), the implications of which were recognized by Busoni in his Sketch of a New Esthetic Of Music.

Although my PhD dissertation, The Evolution Of Electronic Musical Instruments In The United States (George Peabody College, 1972) touched on the Telharmonium, many aspects of its history remain unexplored. Ear witnesses of latter day models could be interviewed, among them perhaps some of the original performers on the instrument. The mystery concerning the demise of the instrument could be cleared up through examination of court records (the Telharmonium interfered with telephone service, and was the object of several lawsuits). Visits to the site of its construction (Mt. Holyoke, Massachusetts), and its installation ("Telharmonic Hall" at 39th and Broadway) would yield further information--rental agreements, etc. Quite possibly there are living descendants of Thaddeus or Arthur

Cahill who might shed light on the topic. Certainly there would be correspondence that would illuminate the Telharmonium's history. In particular, the files of the patent office would yield correspondence between Cahill and the patent examiner that would amplify the patent specifications.

Although I know Mr. Weidenaar only by reputation, from the days when he edited Electronic Music Review, I feel confident he is capable of doing an excellent job of researching and writing about up this topic. I intend to support his efforts with the informatin at my disposal. As an interested researcher, and as Director of the Electronic Arts Foundation--a nonprofit organization chartered in 1972 to promote electronic art forms and preserve their history--I urge you to do the same.

Sincerely,

Thomas L. Rhea, PhD

TLR/bm