

charlemagne palestine

it all begins around 1962 new york city
i hear a disc by alwin nikolai the american choreographer
he invents his own music using tape manipulation techniques
i'm barely 15 at the time mysterious rhythmic sounds muffled
as though underwater muted pops bangs gongs outerspace
i 'm curious soon i attended a concert
dancers all covered in fabrics plastics metals hoops
all sorts of kaleidoscopic shapes
i'm hooked after the concert i go backstage i'm the only kid
a grey haired friendly looking man asks me what i think
i must have bubbled he laughs it's alwin nikolai himself
he invites me to visit his tape studio it blows me away
piles of sound effects discs percussion instruments from africa asia
pots and pans all sorts of metal and wooden junk tens of mallats all sizes
variable speed tape decks sine tone oscillators a big box full of metal springs
acting as echo machine early reverb
we watch everything through an oscilloscope
tones are waves over waves under waves next to waves upon waves wow !
looking back one of the single most important connections
i would ever make i became a tape studio mascot

becoming 3 surrealistic studies over n over n over n over
repetition first a symptom becomes signature disease
meet ingram marshall uptown columbia-princeton official studio
big ampex enormous ibm computer a real laboratory i meet
usseachevsky davidovsky arel mimarogolu babbit too formal
prefer downtown new york university mort subotnick don buchla serge tcherepnin
multi-media artists musicians dancers all together
begin late at night rows of oscillators filters fused with white noise
now part of voltage controlled synthesizers
stratospheric atmospheres like real space travel
long long dense washes of sound color
l'avventura monster felix alloy orion lapis
it's 1967 already tape music in concert too dead too cold
live interactions build small bellish instruments in brass aluminium
background electronic sonorities foreground voice bells percussion
discover pipe organ ancient synthesizer hundreds of tones blowing air
meditative sound environments hours and hours of sonorous continuums
lush dense internal rhythms only tone against tone
beatings overtones helmholtz would orgasm back in studio
sine to saw tooth tune and filter endlessly every night long
search for the golden sonority like an alchemist
yeah those sounds lovely hypnotic yeah ooh yeah ahhhh

hundreds of hours internal eternal motion undulation beating vibrating
element versus element frequency versus frequency versus architecture
the shell and the nut unified together an inseparable unit
2 fifths 3 fifths 2 major sevenths 4 minor thirds perfect fourth tritone
i dream of a drone machine many oscillators many filters buchla and tcherepnin
realize my dream 32 sine to saw tooth super stable 10 turn potentiometers
banks of octave and band pass filters all in funky wooden boxes
my ticket to sonorous paradise traveling all over america making
golden sounds mixing tuning filtering fusing
in all kinds of spaces indoor outdoor teeny tiny huge
enormous
its 1970 i happen upon a bosendorfer imperial grand piano of vienna
i hear beatings overtones phasings symphonies in its astounding harmonics
begin impressionistically sweet repeats of ozone melodies
soon bells synthesizers organs fuse into a flamenco
alternating tone upon tone upon tone upon tone upon tone
sustain pedal down pure intervals grow larger deeper vaster
strumming music lower depths timbral assault musashi wallenda
minimal sonic presentations become adventures sagas epics
objective abstract perfections turn into drama melodrama psychodrama
the performer presenter begins to break down
the lowest tones in piano land violent bloody strings flying

the intervals start to blur is it the chemistry is it the breakdown
disonance after disonance after disonance after disonance uncontrollable
once so soothing now all garbled painful vicious
where why who when what which whoa whoa
the gyroscope looses balance in its heaviness
it wavers and stops it's 1979
except for fleeting sightings soundings
15 years of silence not cage silence rage silence
then suddenly suddenly a new generation sends smoke signals
ancient treatises are re discovered and disseminated
as the phoenix from the ashes a resurrection
charlemagne palestine the netherlands

1997