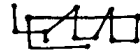


THE CORPOREALISM OF HARRY PARTCH *

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What was planned this past winter for Harry Partch cannot now take place, because he died last fall. But that underlines the urgency that something else has to happen: the rescue of his life-work, which could easily slide into oblivion.

More than is usually the case there is after Harry Partch's death little certainty that any continuity will result from his life's efforts. Practically none of his works are performable without his instruments, and there is only one set of those. They are quite perishable and very difficult to maintain in playable condition. If anything of his work is to survive beyond a very few years, even with dedicated efforts on the part of people now concerned, the effort will have to be well supported.

Partch did say, and then gainsaid in his recently republished *Genesis of a Music*,¹ that perhaps recordings could be a solution for such a composer as he. If the recording became the definitive art work, as with magnetic tape compositions, which are like paintings, otherwise unpromising undertakings such as his might become feasible. But just about everything Partch composed is not only music but also theater. Although he did some films, most of his works are for the stage. They are heavy on the visual side, and not only because of the instruments, themselves works of sculpture, but as total visual theater. Their impact is not received simply by listening to the music. You do get something, but less even than from an opera you have never seen.

Corporealism was a theory that Partch lived. It is a vehement protest against what he considered the negation of the body and the bodily in our society. It resulted specifically in an attack on *abstraction*. What that meant to him was first of all that music should not be separated from words or visible actions, whether theatrical, choreographic or simply musi-

* This article is derived from a talk given January 24, 1975 at the Center for Music Experiment of the University of California at San Diego.

¹ Da Capo Press, 1974.

cally functional. He directed us to see *people doing things*. He felt that aspect to be just as much music as tones or rhythms: as any of the parameters we have abstracted from the total musical experience to serve as *elements* of music.

Not only acoustics books but also manuals on musicianship usually start out by citing these elements. They anatomize music variously, but all focus on abstract categories. Harry Partch would have been more apt to cite things that pointed to what he was saying.

He would have been more inclined to point out that in *The Bewitched* he was concerned with *liberation*, than to discuss his 43-tone microtonal scales. This liberation (among other things from musical slavishness) is achieved by a most unpromising and unpromised means: a witch. Partch knew, as we know, that no witch is going to appear to “unwitch” us, but he insisted upon this symbol.

Why a witch? Partly in order to call to mind very ancient traditions, antedating even patriarchal society and resting upon a belief in magic and sorcery. But Partch had no such beliefs. I would compare him in certain respects to William Blake, but he was certainly no seer of visions. His visions were about as corporeal as his boiled coffee. He had little interest in or patience with the “far-out” side of life except for his affirmation that everything which happens is *that far out*. If the meaning of events is sometimes obscure, it is also sometimes obvious, and not infrequently blatant. Partch was also by turns obscure, obvious, and blatant; but he was always natural, loose, free, and uncaring of anyone’s opinions. There was some defiance in that, but I think very little, since these attitudes were as integral to his artistic point of view as to his life-style.

We are dealing with a man who was the son of apostate missionary parents: an apt symbol. There was perhaps nothing that he rejected more vehemently than telling other people what to do. And yet of course he found himself in a position where he was, even more than most composers, doing just that. He did not accept John Cage’s solution, which was to stop telling people what to do. By Harry Partch’s definition this was to stop making art.

He opted instead to go back to more ancient traditions than the European. He had no use for European civilization, although willy-nilly he was in part a product of it. He was very much a “rugged individualist”, more so than Ives or Ruggles. He “dropped out” to the extreme of becoming a hobo. He would not compromise even to the extent of supporting himself by means of an adjunctive career.

I am not trying to make this action seem unusually heroic. I am sure that in most respects it was no act of heroism. It was an act of necessity. He wanted very much to be an artist—a composer—neither part-time nor

in a commercial context. He felt his grasp of life was at least a little different from what he found around him. Not unusually he was both fascinated and repelled by what he saw.

Whimsically but quite without guile or exaggeration Partch cites as influences Chinese, Yaqui, and ancient Greek music. As for the Greek influence, his was a far more elaborate reconstruction than that of Renaissance artists. Partch wanted to recapture that entire view of living. Many of his works use not only the tuning procedures, instrumental traditions and scales of ancient Greece, but also its myths and symbols.

This borrowing of traditions was, I think, much deeper than mere eclecticism. It is far removed from eighteenth, nineteenth, or twentieth century borrowings from classical antiquity; and it is also neither a romantic exoticism nor a Joycean culture amalgam. It resembles more the search for world-wide symbols and motifs of some contemporary anthropologists.

Partch returned even to the methods of Greek theory. Using monochords he reconstructed the scales of Greece; he adapted Greek instrumental types for his use. He studied Greek philosophical and aesthetic ideas. But all this pointed forward, as he knew very well, to a music which was no more Greek than it was Javanese. Exoticism aroused his scorn as much as conservative orthodoxy. He did not consider it piquant that his music does indeed occasionally sound like a Cantonese opera or a Balinese gamelan. He welcomed and thoroughly assimilated not only these influences but also Hebraic chant, Mussorgsky's *Boris Godunov*, and even (via recording) a Congo puberty rite. These things fed his growth far more than mainstream European and American concert music.

One of the reasons for this was his distaste for concert occasions, with their dress clothes, straight-backed seats, rustling programs, and music critics. It was a ritual he depised. Concert etiquette was far stuffier when he was young than now. White ties and tails were obligatory for male performers, and even the grand piano, the arch-symbol of genteel formality, was and is similarly dressed. He was as derisive about all this as Nam June Paik, but he would have rejected Paik's avant-gardism, as he did that of others, with equal vehemence.

His ordeal was those hobo years. He nearly starved or froze to death more than once. He was simply drifting, riding the rails as a vagrant. I would guess, from the few conversations I had with him on this subject, that returning to his work—building instruments, composing and playing music—was after those years a wrenching effort. The experience left a mark, and not just in the sense that a near fatal polar trek would mark a person, but in the more important respect that after his hobo years he just had no fear of society and its opinions. It had done its worst to him, yet he was still going; so in large part he had won his freedom.

This attitude had some unpleasant aspects. He really frightened many people. He was strong enough to impress those he met even casually with his undercurrent of enormous emotional energy. Combined with disregard for anyone's opinions and with the supremely difficult undertaking that performing his music has always been, this personal energy and drive could generate an atmosphere of alarming intensity.

Why all this rebellion and dedication to the nearly impossible?

The point of asking this about Harry Partch is no different from asking it about Beethoven. But even that rebel was better integrated into his social context than Partch, who was a radical drop-out in many senses of the term. Like Beethoven, he could not escape seeing himself as a kind of prophet. And that is why the comparison to William Blake is apt.

For example, in *Revelation in the Courthouse Park* Partch has two stories going at once: Euripides' *The Bacchae* set in ancient Greece with Dionysus one of the characters, and a contemporary story, set in a mid-west town and involving a rock idol named Dion. Most obviously he was saying that Euripides has a great deal to tell us about American culture patterns of the 1950's and 60's. Partch's *Revelation*, composed in the mid-50's, was in that respect indeed prophetic.

That kind of concern was typical of Partch. He refused to write music the main interest of which was that it was composed with pure, just-tuned ratio, and not with poisoned tempered relationships. He did indeed think them poisoned. That was symbolic, and more. If you will take Plato literally, or Confucius, that has its kickback on society, since according to both philosophers there is a causal relation between the tuning of musical modes and social and psychological behavior.

Temperament is a lie. It is not a lie if you write as Schoenberg ultimately did, though actually there is the ghost of a lie even in that: the trend cries out for "emancipation from the notes."² Temperament is a lie if you write tonal music and use its relationships. It pretends to be what it is not. It deceives you into believing that you recognize what it is. It even deceives you into thinking that certain relationships are identical when they are not, and many similar psycho-acoustical chicaneries.

One of Partch's aims was to unmask that deception. Remaining close to folk and other ubiquitous musics, he distrusted all types of avant-gardism on the ground that they were contrivances of over-civilized cliques. But even more deeply he rejected European traditions from the Middle Ages and earlier. For the Renaissance he had a certain amount of sympathy, not only because its artists were interested in the Greeks, but largely because of the individualism of Renaissance men and women. The

² The expression is John Cage's. Cf. *Silence*, Wesleyan University Press, Middletown, Connecticut.

spirit of finding your own answer to things, in whatever field, was a point of view he respected.

It was that independence that deeply impressed me when I first learned of his work. He had really started all over. He did not simply turn away from prevailing styles, or abjure conventional instrumentation: he threw out theories of music and tuning systems and concert customs. As far as I can see he let go almost everything in order to begin anew, on a consciously chosen basis.

His music always aimed not to be part of that formal world of concert music. And while he could be and was on friendly terms with jazz and rock and folk musicians, he never wanted to become part of a movement, especially one that implied commercial entanglements. His stance is at least as radical as John Cage's rejection of order and prediction and intention in art; and it has some of the same roots. That is curious, because those two men could not have been more different in most respects.

One of those roots is American Indian. I suppose not many people would say that about John Cage, but I would. It has specifically to do with a conviction that we are just not intelligent enough to dominate everything with our own decisions: to be violating without regard all the things that we are. I am reminded of John Neihardt's book, *Black Elk Speaks*, in which the old Indian medicine man said that he felt he had failed because his mission in life was to save nature—the environment—from the white man. He failed.

You have in Harry Partch a man who asserted a style of life and a way of thinking about music and art that was handmade, carefully crafted in every aspect. He assumed nothing, took over nothing without thorough reexamination. And yet tightness and overspecificity were as remote from his ambience as indeterminacy. It is probable that much of his impact will be on music that he would have had little use for, and in musical situations which would not have interested him. Still, I think his greatest importance lies in his line of action, at once anomalous and paradigmatic in twentieth-century America: his actions say unequivocally, "The presumptions that lie behind the art of this culture are no good for me. I'm going to start all over again and make something I can live with."

It is interesting that the people who dislike his music most intensely are those most identified with formal concert tradition, in one role or another. These are the people who walk out, who say, "My God, what bad taste!"

The personality of the man is very much a part of the art, and if you are a purist, that can really bother you. Partch's art is self-revelatory. He has been called a Freudian because of this, but if he was one it was due to convergence of ideas, not to an interest in Freud. He was certainly no

Apollonian, to borrow Stravinsky's categories (and in fact Partch used those categories), but he never talked about Apollo, only Dionysus. He talked a lot about Dionysus, the quintessential corporealist. Sex and the drinking of wine are traditional introductory ecstasies of Dionysus, but the god signifies much more than that: he is a chthonic god, affirming a kind of truth other than that of the sunlight part of life.

Dionysus and Apollo have a secret collusion, a highly important circumstance for art. Stravinsky can be said to have subordinated Dionysus to Apollo, while Partch put Apollo in the service of Dionysus. But these are only emphases: no fully human art can do without either beneficence. Pedantic art lacks Dionysian juice and gross popular art lacks Apollonian seriousness. Neither Stravinsky nor Partch were guilty of these egregious extremes.

Oedipus was Partch's first big production. He took the trouble to go to Ireland to get W. B. Yeats's permission to use his translation of Sophocles' tragedy. He got that rarely given permission, but Yeats did not put it in writing. So when Partch set about to compose *Oedipus*, the heirs of the Yeats estate denied permission. Yeats's willingness is highly significant; he believed that music, as used in drama, ballet and opera, was destructive to theater, which must be the dominant partner in any such marriage. He wanted a much simpler music, much closer to natural speech, to underscore his legendary/mythic nationalist Irish theater idiom.

There is an equivalence between Yeats and Partch on this level, but on other levels a great contrast. Partch had little or no interest in Yeats's mystical preoccupation, theosophy; and he could not be called an American nationalist, unless in the role of gadfly. He was a typical American in two respects: his satiric impatience with such ineffables as romantic mysticism, and his self-made-man image, which was well earned.

Harry Partch had one flaw which is bad in an artist. He wanted to make his own species of *Gesamtkunstwerke* with himself as sole creator of all the artistic components, like Orson Welles. Only he was not really equipped to do that successfully.

He was a very good sculptor and a remarkable writer, within limits. The texts of *U. S. Highball* are beautiful but Partch's translation of *Oedipus*, leaning heavily on the expertise of a Bay-area Greek scholar and on Yeats's translation, leaves much to be desired.

In putting on these theatrical works he needed what he never found: someone with a matching talent equivalent to Yeats's. But had he found such, he would undoubtedly have alienated him by his phoenix-like personality. He had a great deal of pride, a great deal of cantankerousness. It almost amounted to a Nietzschean artist syndrome. He fought against this as a mentor, but not as a collaborator. And so frequently his productions were not well realized as theater.

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He interfered with choreographers, telling them which limb to move and how to move it. This would have been justifiable had he been a choreographic genius, but he was not; and so it had predictable results.

In attempting to compensate for that trait, I once committed a serious artistic gaff. I got Partch to work with Alwin Nikolais. There could not have been a worse combination of collaborators. Partch and Nikolais were poles apart. We were unable to obtain either of the choreographers Partch preferred: Martha Graham or Doris Humphrey. I actually approached both of those august personages for him, but without success. He did earlier have Martha Graham's interest, but then he offended her. Anna Sokolow would have been a better choice, and perhaps could have been interested. I am sorry we did not try that.

At any rate, Nikolais did choreograph the first production of *The Bewitched* for his company, and it was my unhappy task to have to hold that production together with both men struggling at times, and with Partch fighting to prevent its taking place. It was nonetheless the best theatrical production he ever had of anything—a superb piece of theater. But it was not the style Partch wanted and should have had. Twenty years earlier, Charles Weidman might have done it. As it was, Partch immediately redid it with the Juilliard Dance Theater, using Joyce Trisler as choreographer. His more successful attempt to dictate to her produced another tense relationship and a far less distinguished production.

What interested me in Partch first was his use of just-tuned ratios. I had been convinced after a year in music school that there was something wrong with the art if that was how it was being practised. Acoustics, which the first chapters in various theory texts always said was the basis of music, clearly was not. And it did not seem right to me that this was true. I had begun by then to look into “the physics of music,” using texts that were mostly vintage turn of the century. I was trying to figure out what you could do that would not leave music in that state. I spoke about this to a musicologist, who handed me a copy of the first edition of Partch's *Genesis of a Music*, saying, “Well, I haven't got any use for this book, but you certainly would like it.”

I did indeed. But what impressed me even above the accurately applied acoustic theory was the example of this man who, understanding all that physics and history and philosophy, had also lived as a hobo and written music about it.

I did not then hear *U. S. Highball*, Partch's chronicle of a cross-country hobo trip. He said of it that it was the most creative work he ever composed, which I think was very perceptive. And the word “creative” is much better than “original”, though the latter might underline most

people's estimation of it: that it is the least like anyone else of all the music he wrote.

On the surface *U. S. Highball* is a piece of Americana. It is a true adventure that Partch underwent, composed very much in the style of the music that American hoboes were listening to and playing. It's simply chanted in his way—intoned, as he called it—on pitch, with the accompaniment of a small group of instruments. Over a period of about a decade, as he added instruments to his ensemble, he changed the arrangement of this and several other pieces. Initially *U. S. Highball* and other hobo pieces were accompanied by guitar, a little percussion, and harmonium, instruments of rural America. These pieces are like folk music in many respects.

Most of the singers and many of the poets who interested Partch, especially in the early years, were folk artists or else tremendously interested in or influenced by folk music and poetry. He did become interested in much else later. One of his pieces is based on a text of Rimbaud; and "folk artist" is not descriptive of *that* poet. Obviously what interested Partch about Rimbaud was the depth of his rebellion: that he would rebel even against sanity. I doubt if Partch ever entertained *that* idea. But certainly he was impressed. He thought the point of view deserved a statement in one of the two genres that he had adopted for himself.

These amount to the comic and the tragic, which should be no surprise. But Partch returned in comedy to the Greek satyr play, with its earthy, funny, everyman themes. He juxtaposed this directly with the highly religious, supernatural elements of tragedy, in which the gods often participate as characters. The most striking such juxtaposition is in *Delusion of the Fury*, in which a tragic Japanese Nōh tale is contrasted with a comic African folk tale.

I think Partch's view of "the gods" was considerably less supernatural than even C. G. Jung's; and it was certainly not what most people think the Greeks thought. But he did refer to something of great power by that symbol.

There is in Partch's work a nineteenth-century romantic element, but it is distinctly not European. I find that important and interesting, not meaning to imply anything pejorative in being European. I am only saying that ours is an offshoot of European culture, and we still have certain colonialisms, especially in our musical attitudes. Yet here was a man who was able to transcend that. Partch said things that go against our grain in many ways but which make their own kind of sense. He assimilated traditions from worldwide sources on a number of levels, discovering and revealing some fundamental cultural interconnections. This results not seldom in the alienation of at least a segment of his audience.

On occasion performances of his works have been painful to me. I have often felt that his productions were not good, only to realize that I was badly outnumbered. A great many people evidently loved what I winced at. It is a resistible temptation to fall back on a snobbish position and relegate the audience along with the performance and possibly even the composition to anathema. It takes real perception to differentiate between immediacy of communication to large groups and the pseudo-communication of saying only what most people already wanted to hear. That distinction finally impressed me, but it took many years, especially with the hindrance of badly flawed productions.

Partch's influence, notwithstanding this divergence of taste, was a basic one for me. Early on in our association I felt I had a role to fulfill in repayment. I was not encouraged to feel this. He told me that if I or anyone else ever claimed to have been a student of his, he'd cheerfully strangle us; and I think he meant that very literally. Partch refused the master-pupil and all but denied even the master-apprentice relationship. "Apprentice" is better, because it means something like "I need this done, and if you'll stick around and do it, you can pick up whatever you can pick up," or "If you can learn something, fine. And if you want to ask me questions, I might answer them." Actually he frequently did supply answers.

He was living in Gualala, on California's north coast, in 1949–50. Gualala is isolated and primitive, a lumbering village. He was living on a ranch loaned to him by Gunnar Johansen, in a converted nineteenth-century blacksmithy which he himself had renovated. With the owner's permission he turned over to me and my wife an old herdsman's cottage which we then had to make livable. This involved, among many lesser jobs, patching the shake roof and running in some water from a spring up the mountainside. I was totally out of my depth. Nothing he asked me to do in music was as hard as those things.

Partch did not do this in any pedagogic way. It was simply, "If you want to do it, I'm living here. Here it is—here's this house . . . roof's going to leak on you—it's going to rain . . . we'll have to fix it. I'll help you. I'll show you what to do, but you'll have to do it." He was just that direct. And I am—or was then—the sort of person who could not pick up a hammer without dropping it on my foot.

So the first thing I got from him was a fundamental attitude of "doing it yourself." He applied that to artistic problems equally.

Rather soon I felt that my eventual task would be to alter attitudes, especially theoretic currents *within* the mainstream, *from* the mainstream, *to* the mainstream. It would be my role to bring his work into relation with accepted traditions and recognized challenges to tradition, and to

whatever extent necessary and possible to bring these enormous trends into relation to some of his most important achievements.

Here is a quote from Partch's *Genesis*: "Few composers will regard the total virtues of equal temperament and those of monophony,"—this is what he called his way of tuning music—"as equal in value. Whichever of the two sets is accepted as superior, it can be stated unequivocally that they cannot coexist in the same musical system given the present ideas behind musical instruments or the present conception of musical values; and that, short of a mechanical revolution in the construction of musical instruments and a psychic evolution in musical conceptions, they will not coexist in the same musical system in the future. Such xenogamy is conceivable but not yet practical."

It seemed to me, if this whole quixotic effort were possibly going to survive, that there would have to be a relationship between musical systems. Furthermore I recognized my own roots as European, and felt no need to apologize for that, so long as I was willing to transcend it and ultimately to merge it into a more global identification. I will say emphatically that I have *no* intention of leaving that tradition the way I found it if I can possibly do anything about it.

It was the lie about pitch that drew me to Partch's ideas in the first place. I felt that if I could devote my career, at least the innovative central thrust of it, to making a dent in the establishment about that, it would be enough. If I could achieve that it would repay my debt to Partch in some degree. To help his immediate artistic heritage to survive it is additionally necessary to make sense to many people who can see no reason for going about making music in the way that he did, and who feel his life-work is simply an incompetent effort to do something that they wish he had not tried to do where they could hear it.

To start making that kind of sense it is necessary to create a music that bridges the gulf between Partch's immensely sophisticated theoretical ideas and the whole arsenal of knowledge with which we have fortified our art music. That is in large degree what I am trying to do. It entails transcending the idiosyncratic specificity of Partch's applied theory on the one hand; and on the other, weeding out the acoustical malpractice of several hundred years in such a way as to leave the lineage of many fruitful traditions intact. Consequently it is not only divergences in personality, taste, and background that cause my music to differ so widely from Partch's, but more importantly a contrast of intentions. The connection lies in two areas: tuning procedure and mythic purpose. But our myths are dissimilar; our means are not alike; and above all our styles are different.

I would not say that all composers are myth-makers, but it is a vener-

able tradition. In that sense Partch has many forebears. He wanted to express a depth-image of the human condition, of the world, of his own experience. His very considerable adaptation of composing and performing traditions is not only ingenious and full of provocative innovations, but is also selective, carefully planned by him to match what he was trying to say.

That has served me as an example, although what I do is not much like what Partch did.

He commented upon the differences between us within the first week of my being in Gualala. He could have wished for a carpenter or for a percussionist or even simply for a fellow drop-out. But he had one thing he had not counted on: someone who understood his theory almost without explanation, and who could hear and reproduce the pitch relations accurately. He began to grasp that there might be some sort of real convergence between us. But since it took me almost fifteen years to do anything concrete with what I had learned from him, he had long since given up on me.

The design of Partch's remarkable instruments is an achievement of great scope and subtlety. Many of them call for a three-dimensional performing technique, as contrasted with the predominantly two-dimensional techniques of most common instruments. This is not a new idea. It is a basic feature of percussion technique when a mixed set of instruments is used. But Partch designed such setups into his instruments.

The *diamond marimba*, which has blocks arranged in a diamond shape set on a slant between the vertical and horizontal planes, is played largely in diagonal paths of movement. The high-pitched blocks are at the top of the diamond; the low-pitched, at the bottom. On right-to-left descending diagonals the pitches descend *otonalities* (segments of overtone series: specifically, in descending order, the 11th, 9th, 7th, 6th, 5th, and 4th partials). On left-to-right descending diagonals the pitches descend *utonalities* (segments of undertone series,³ which are the mirror inversions of overtone series: in descending order the 4th, 5th, 6th, 7th, 9th, and 11th undertone partials). Thus the pitch arrangement is in matrix form, with an emphasis on arpeggio formations easily played glissando because of the raked arrangement of the blocks. Since ascending diagonals cannot be played in this manner, Partch invented a complementary instrument, the *quadrangularis reversum*, which provides the same arpeggios in reverse direction by arranging the blocks with the high pitches at the bottom and the low pitches at the top.

Other instruments, such as the *chromelodeons* (adapted reed organs),

³ Partch had no interest in looking for "undertones" in natural acoustics.

have their adjacent pitches arranged in a stepped pitch continuum (in this case microtonal) from low to high, which is of course the keyboard convention.

Some, like the *kitharas* and certain of the adapted guitars, use plastic rods to achieve continuous glissandi (glides). Others, like the *bass marimba* and the enormous *marimba Eroica*, have only a few pitches, selected (like the bells of many carillons) because of the frequency of their occurrence in the tonal patterns used in the body of music for which they were intended. Performance on these instruments is athletic, even by a percussionist's standards, because of their large physical dimensions.

The kitharas, unlike their Greek ancestors, have parallel banks of strings tuned in alternating otonality and utonality hexachords; so because of reaching in and out to gain access to various "tonalities", the technique becomes pronouncedly three-dimensional.

In some cases found objects were collected, chosen for their interesting sound capabilities, and often having complex inharmonic timbres. In such cases Partch, with a careful ear to precise harmonic relations, used the sounds specifically where they would fit into the harmonic context rationally: for example, the *cloud chamber bowls*, which are the discarded tops and bottoms of pyrex carboys used in vapor trail experiments in the Radiation Laboratory at the University of California at Berkeley. These are carefully labeled with the principal pitch activated when they are struck like gongs.

In the case of the *harmonic canons*, which are comprised of 43 parallel monochords with movable bridges, the variable arrangement of their bridges makes possible any pattern of notes within the range delimited by the length of the strings. Thus, a single stroke across the raked table of strings provides a 43-note row or any segment thereof, and the retrograde or any of its segments. Besides, the portions of the strings on the other side of the bridges produce a complementary reversible row with interesting relationships to the "original" row.

So the instruments provide serial patterns, not only in this case, but even more complexly in the case of all of the hexachordally arranged instruments, especially those designed in matrix formations.

This procedure of reducing things to the physical, to the most obvious, to the most tangible, and the most concrete is very Greek. The whole idea of the *haptic*, the touch-oriented in the art, is very much alive in Partch's work. He was quite right to be attracted to the traditions of the Greeks. He was very perceptive: he did have something in common with them, something to add to their traditions.

A very great and original artist has died leaving a rich but fragile heritage. There is a Harry Partch Foundation, but as yet that guarantees

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perilously little. Try to imagine the expert man-hours and diverse materials it would take to duplicate his many and complex instruments, even to get one extra set. Then, maintenance problems would supervene, including housing, storage, and rehearsal space, available over a long enough time to get beyond first performances and premiere productions. The problem staggers conception.