

THE MARS PAPERS, #1

"Just as all the planets are moving in a great ocean of energy, and are kept at a certain distance from the Sun by a balancing of attraction and repulsion summed up as the centrifugal and the centripetal forces, so is man living in a cloud of his own magnetism. He is drawn both outward and inward, -outward to the objective world, and inward to his own subjective sphere. MARS is the force that is ever impelling him outward towards objects of the senses, while the power which is called SATURN is ever drawing him inward for the purpose of reasoning on, or rationalising, his senses."

Music is a ritual through which we cross the boundary separating the objective from the subjective world. Sound is the medium of music, and all that is meaningful, magical, transdistinctive, and unifying about music is revealed in the pervasive quality of sound.

We live in an ocean of air; it presses on our bodies and fills our lungs, oral and nasal cavities. The matter which comprises air is always in motion. When the motion is random we call it heat; when more organized we call it sound. In order to sound the horn I press my lips together so that no air can pass, and as I begin to blow the air pressure inside my body increases to the point where the lips are forced open, which in turn allows the air to pass, the pressure to reduce, the lips to reclose due to the continued tension, the pressure to build up, and so on. This process repeats at a frequency in the audible range, and a sound wave is generated which propagates both through the horn and into the surrounding atmosphere as well as back through my oral cavity and into my lungs and nasal cavities. This propagation is sufficiently fast (the speed of sound) that we may consider the wave to be instantaneously present in the space and in my body, compared to the airstream, which moves relatively slowly. The wave is reflected (or absorbed) in varying amounts by all of the surfaces forming the space in which the sound occurs. These surfaces include the walls of the room, objects and people in the room, and the cavities of my body. Through this standing wave, then, I am physically connected to the space around me: the walls of the room are literally reflected upon the inside surfaces of my body, and vice versa. This is an acoustical equivalent to the phenomenological description of perception, wherein the mind is reflected in the universe, and vice versa.

"Mars...represents the cerebellum or the base of the brain, which is the storehouse of all the animal forces, and supplies all the material both for ideas and actions. Mercury represents the cerebrum, the front and upper part of the brain, which finishes and polishes the materials brought by Mars. It is the mingling of the joint influence of Mars and Mercury which causes a constant interweaving of mind and sense, and the earth, or the physical body, is the battleground between the two, the place of struggle..."² We declare ourselves to be distinct from the universe in order to study it. What we learn, finally, is that we are connected. "The rising influence of the planet Mars governs science, or the acquisition of knowledge in all the various branches in the concrete and material world...a well-controlled Martial influence gains knowledge through

science; while Art, which is under the influence of Mercury combined with Mars, is skill in using it."³

If the vibrations are right, sound can also free us from the material world, as the domain of sound is not limited to the material. Oscillating matter is energy. Modern physics recognizes that the observer affects the observed; that matter and energy are indistinguishable. "We are all crucified upon the cross of matter, and until we can lift the cross from the dense plane of material existence, we are nailed to it and bound hard and fast by our desires and animal passions. We must all learn eventually to love our neighbor as ourself; and this, not because he is our neighbor, but because he is ourself."⁴

PROGRAM

HORNMONIC

harmony, the spheres. the integers tumble about one another - at once and in succession. the sounds of the planets rubbing against one another.

TWISTER

I will sing you a song.

SEA BREATHEES (based on an exercise invented by Roswell Rudd)

breathing through the horn, completely emptying and filling the lungs. gradually increasing the tension in the embouchure until tones sound. cosmic melody. wind, an aeolian harp. balancing on the boundary of tonal organization - when the wandering airstream sounds become organized harmonically (when the frequencies of the component sounds are related as 1:2:3:4, and so on) resonance occurs and the instrument is sounded. balancing, but leaning toward the unorganized side on the tape, and toward the organized side live. melody - the slide - instrumental artifice. whispering trombone.

The quotations are from Mars: the War Lord by Alan Leo, New York: Samuel Weiser Inc., 1970

- 1) pp. 53, 54
- 2) p. 7
- 3) pp. 8, 9
- 4) pp. 72, 73