

And on the Seventh Day Petals Fell in Petaluma
was recorded in 1964 in Petaluma, California,
by Mike Callahan, and in 1966 in Venice,
California, by Cecil Charles Spiller.

Original tape edited by Harry Partch & Cecil Charles Spiller. First released on LP as CRI SD 213 in 1968, and on CD as CRI CD 752 in 1997.

Original analog to digital transfer by Robert Wolff;
additional materials by Jon Szanto.

Producers: Jon Szanto and Danlee Mitchell,
The Harry Partch Foundation.

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Robert Wolff, engineer at Sony Music Studios,
New York City.

Photos: Bruce Harlow, Petaluma, 1964, unless otherwise indicated.

Front cover: Surrogate Kithara at the *Petals* recording sessions.

Booklet cover: Excerpt and cover of score to first version of *Petals*; Partch with Bamboo Marimba I (Boo).

This page: Score page with tuning and instrument notation, and two pages from the score to the first version of *Petals*.

Bastard Partchiana font courtesy of Philip
Blackburn.

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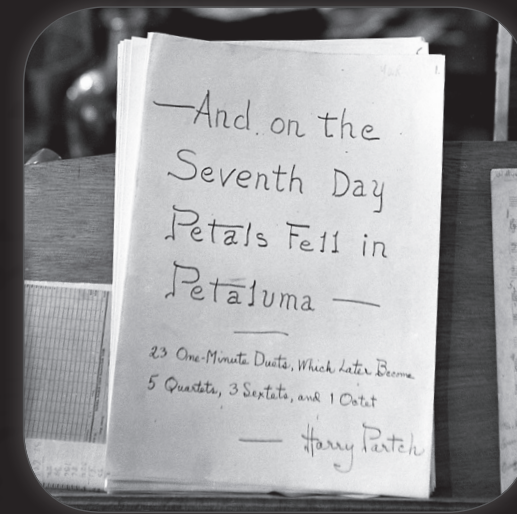
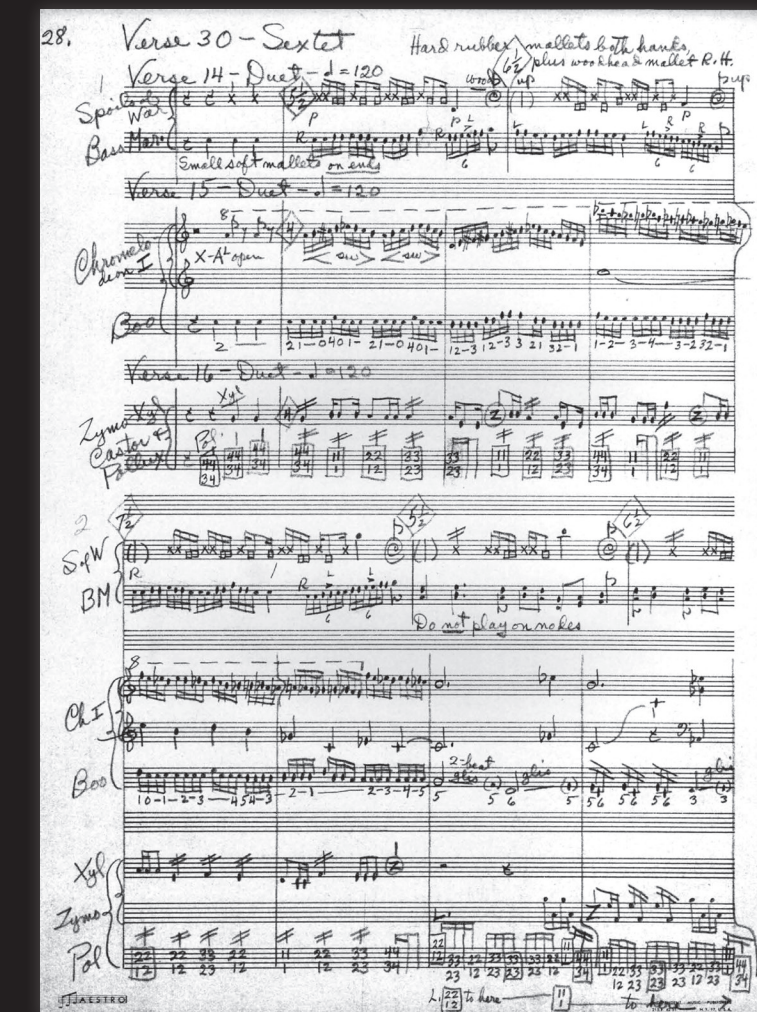
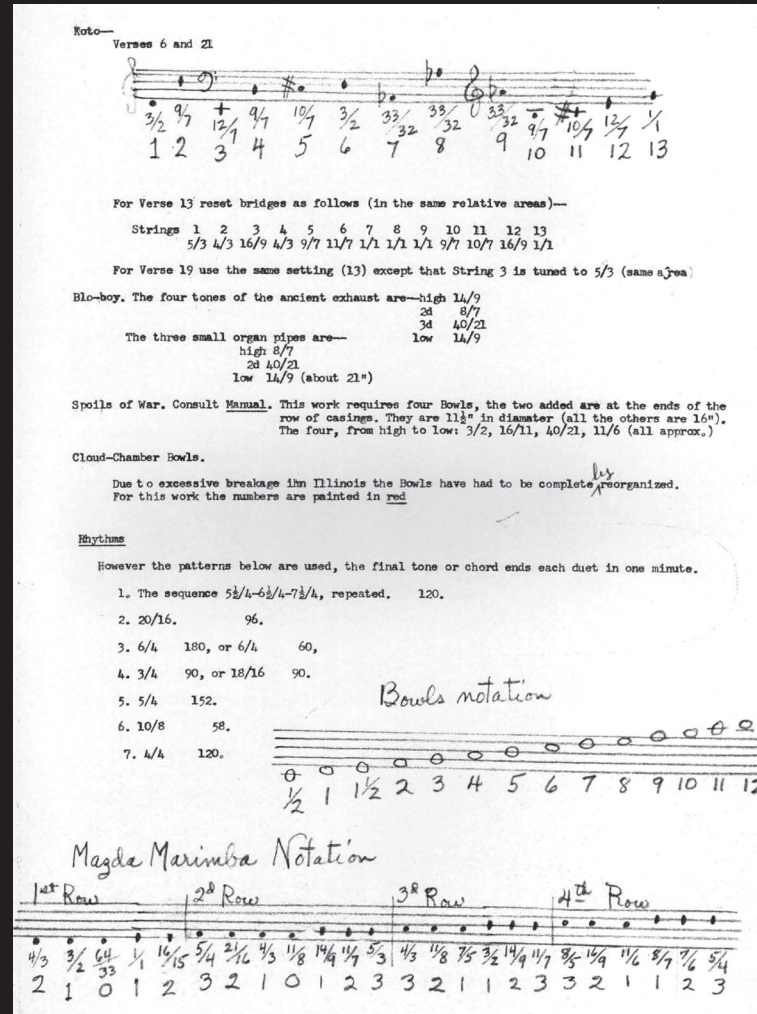
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Harry Partch lived in the real world or, as he called it, the Big World. He did so in the largest way, creatively carving his own solitary path, building his materials with his own hands.



In late 1962 Partch returned to California and began a project that would not only become the bones of a masterwork, *Delusion of the Fury*, but have a life of its own.

In a too-small space within an abandoned Petaluma chick hatchery, Partch gathered the instruments he had designed and built – new and old – eager to once again expand the boundaries of his compositional fabric. He learned each individual part as he composed, establishing that it could be played. “*I cannot feel that I am truly on top of a work unless I do know all the parts: therefore, I was determined to return to that pattern. For several years, some musicians had complained about the difficulties of the instrumental parts. This time, I would not abide such nonsense. I would exploit the instrumental resources to the full, exploring new techniques and also exploring, with a minimum of players, untried rhythms and polyrhythms.*”

And on the Seventh Day Petals Fell in Petaluma was born of his exploration and assembled with that “*minimum of players*” over a three-year period. In spite of rough conditions and meager resources Partch’s dogged persistence, along with the efforts of his dedicated assistants, eventually succeeded in realizing the 34 verses of expansional duets. With this album we revisit an important work and turning-point, guided by the original “*Statement*” Partch wrote for the first commercial release of the piece.

Previously only excerpted, the monograph is a voicing of his beliefs that transcends one project to illuminate an entire purpose. We also reprise exquisite notes by the late Bob Gilmore, who distills and explains the story of *Petals* clearly and eloquently.

No one wants a dead reissue, so by digging into the archives, I am pleased to offer hidden gems. First, *The Petals Sessions* is an aural glance into the cramped quarters of the recording space, as composer and players labor to bring new notes to life, Harry himself giving direction. The montage ends with a “test take” by Danlee Mitchell and Michael Ranta that could have easily been a keeper! Finally, we present the original *Verse* 17. In 1964 Partch wrote two duets that used the Adapted Viola; by the time the piece was finished in 1967, he had excised them. The ending track – never before released – brings Harry back to life, playing and recording Adapted Viola for one of the last times. I was completely unaware of this recording until I examined the outtakes and it glows, fifty years on. That *Petals* ever came to be, like much of Partch’s story, stands somewhere between determination and miracle.

Jon Szanto
Archivist for the Harry Partch Foundation, performer with the Harry Partch Ensemble 1972-1987, and assistant and friend to Harry Partch.
(San Diego, February 9, 2017)



Close-up of Zymo-Xyl; listing of *Petals* verses from Partch’s notes.

Quartets and Quintets	Duets and Trios
Verse 24	Verse 1 — Zymo-Xyl Crychord
	Verse 2 — Surrogate Kithara Bass Marimba
Verse 25	Verse 3 — Harmonic Canon I Blue Rainbow
	Verse 4 — Chromelodeon II Koto
Verse 26	Verse 5 — Mazda Marimba Boo
	Verse 6 — Cloud-Chamber Bowls Diamond Marimba
Verse 27	Verse 7 — Chromelodeon II Eloboy Kithara II
	Verse 8 — Zymo-Xyl Spoils of War
Verse 28	Verse 9 — Harmonic Canon I Kithara I
	Verse 10 — Diamond Marimba Boo
Verse 29	Verse 11 — Kithara II Marimba Eroica
	Verse 12 — Koto Spoils of War
Verse 30	Verse 13 — Harmonic Canon I Cloud-Chamber Bowls
	Verse 14 — Surrogate Kithara Diamond Marimba
Verse 31	Verse 15 — Chromelodeon I Kithara I
	Verse 16 — Koto Castor & Pollux
Verse 32	Verse 17 — Adapted Guitar II Mazda Marimba
	Verse 18 — Harmonic Canon I Marimba Eroica
Verse 33	Verse 19 — Drone Devils Gubagubi Castor & Pollux
	Verse 20 — Koto Crychord
Septet	Verse 21 — Spoils of War Bass Marimba
Verse 34	Verse 22 — Chromelodeon I Boo
	Verse 23 — Zymo-Xyl Blue Rainbow Gourd Tree and Cone Gongs

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For more comprehensive information on Harry Partch, please visit the
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Petals Fell in Petaluma*. New World Records 80622-2.
*The Harry Partch Collection Vol. 3: The Dreamer That Remains, Rotate
the Body in All Its Planes, Windsong, Water! Water!* New World
Records 80623-2.
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Records 80624-2.



Danlee Mitchell performing on the Drone Devil.

should vindicate his continuing activity as an instrument builder. Six new instruments built since 1960 are used in the final version, which uses a total of twenty-two instruments (all of them his own, with no “extras”); the only major omission is the Adapted Viola, which was, however, used in the first version. Fully two-thirds of the instrumental timbres in *Petals* are percussive in nature.

In the decade before the composition of *Petals*, the increasing dominance of percussion in Partch’s ensemble had led to fundamental changes in his musical language. The complex timbres of instruments like the Cloud-Chamber Bowls and the Boo (and later the Zymo-Xyl, the Mazda Marimba, and the Gourd Tree), together with their inability to produce sustained tones, obscured the prominence and the relevance of pitch as an organizational factor in the music written for them. His percussive idiom—of which *Petals* and *Delusion of the Fury* are the culmination—thus represents the furthest point on his musical spectrum from the voice and Adapted Viola works of the early 1930s, in which subtlety of intonation was paramount.

The rhythmic language of *Petals* is highly adventurous. Verses 1–23 make use of seven different metrical patterns. These range from regular ones notated in 3/4, 4/4, or 5/4, through the less common 20/16 (four quintuplets in the measure) or 18/16 (three sextuplets in the measure), to unusual repeating patterns of lengthening measures. From Verse 24 onward, when these verses are combined, a staggering array of polymetric combinations result (only two of the later verses—25 and 26—are not polymetric, but merely polyrhythmic). Some of these polymetric verses are relatively straightforward—Verse 31, for example, has a proportional relationship of 3:5 within the measure—while others are highly complex. Verse 24 (a superimposition of Verses 1 and 2) combines a lengthening-measure sequence in Zymo-Xyl and Crychord with a constant 20/16 rhythm in Surrogate Kithara and Bass Marimba, with only the very fast sixteenth-note pulse, constant in both layers, providing a common reference. The composer whose work most readily springs to mind in connection with these radical explorations in rhythm is Conlon Nancarrow; but although Partch had met Nancarrow by this time, we have no evidence whatsoever that Partch knew any of Nancarrow’s *Studies for Player Piano*, which are concerned with similar kinds of rhythmic complexity. The connection may thus be purely coincidental.



Bamboo Marimba I.

This recording was made in three stages. Some of the verses were recorded in Partch’s studio in Petaluma in April 1964 by the composer, Danlee Mitchell, and Michael Ranta. The recording was left incomplete when Partch was forced to vacate his studio (Danlee Mitchell recalls that more than one take had to be abandoned because of the noise of the bulldozer that had come to begin the demolition of the building Partch occupied). Recordings of the remaining verses, some of which had been rewritten in the interim, were completed in Partch’s studio in Venice, California, in July 1966, with an ensemble consisting of Partch, Mitchell, Emil Richards, Wallace Snow, and Stephen Tosh. The synchronizing of tapes to realize the quartets, quintets, and septet was executed under supervision of the composer by Cecil Charles Spiller who, Partch wrote, “spent many hours, including wee small hours, with three Magnecords and some other equipment that he designed specially for this job.” The result is still imperfect, but Partch decided it was acceptable within the limits of the technical sophistication of the time. The recording was released, with help from a grant from the National Institute of Arts and Letters, by CRI in 1968. Thus *Petals* was the first of Partch’s works not to appear first as a private release, and CRI was the first “commercial” label to release his music.

It is striking that, in this first composition following his return to California in 1962, Partch should have reanimated the experimental, exploratory thrust of his earlier work. The image of the lane strewn with petals, which had stayed in his imagination since the day he had first set foot in Petaluma, is more apt than he himself perhaps realized. While on the one hand the array of fallen petals symbolizes the idea of a momentary pattern, and gives a sense of the arbitrariness of the attempt to grasp and fix those petals into an “ideal” configuration, there is also the sense that *Petals* was itself a pathway to something else—that even in the autumn of his compositional life the solitary path still held its old fascination.

—Bob Gilmore

Bob Gilmore is the author of *Harry Partch: A Biography* (Yale University Press, 1998).



Michael Ranta (Cloud-Chamber Bowls) and Partch (Harmonic Canon I); close-up of Boo tubes; Partch with Danlee Mitchell (Surrogate Kithara).

This record contains the exiguous musical notes for a large dramatic work, a ghostpiece—farcepiece—Delusion of the Fury—A Ritual of Dream and Delusion, composed almost simultaneously.

The work consists of twenty-three one-minute duets and trios, which later—through electronic synthesis—become ten quartets and quintets and one septet.

The seven different rhythmic patterns of the duets and trios result, through much of Verses 24–34, in rhythmic double-exposures.

STATEMENT

I want, I try, to live in the Big World. The Big World is simple in rules, complex in excitement. The little world is complex in rules, simple in excitement. The Big World has All Tones, All Ideas. The little world has twelve tones, one idea, and a plenitude of libraries stacked with books to apologize for, and to glorify, those twelve tones and that one idea.

It is altogether too easy to focus on one small technical fact and to ignore a veritable whirlwind of creation beyond that fact. In the descriptions of my work in public print much is made of the phrase, “43 tones to the octave.”

That precise 43 is the one-half truth of the one-fourth factor. The emphasis has never been mine, because the number applies only to my instruments of fixed pitch, and my scores for thirty-six years past are eloquent testimony to the fact that—beyond the fixed-pitch idea—I limit myself in no way whatever.

I believe in many things: in an intonation as just as I am capable of making it, in musical instruments on stage, dynamic in form, visually exciting. I believe in dramatic lighting, replete with gels, to enhance them. I believe in musicians who are total constituents of the moment, irreplaceable, who may sing, shout, whistle, stamp their feet. I believe in players in costume, or perhaps half-naked, and I do not care which half; perhaps only with headpieces, but something, just something, that will remove them from the pedestrian, the city-street, the beloved-and-dutiful-son or daughter, the white-shirt-and-tie or evening-gown syndrome.

I believe in Bass Marimbists with footwork as beautiful as that of skilled boxers, in Kitharists who move the trunks of their bodies like athletes. I believe in all sounds of the human voice, free from the bel-canto straitjacket. Finally, I believe in a total integration of factors, not as separate and sealed specialties in the artificially divorced departments of universities, but of sound and sight, the visually dynamic and dramatic, all channeled into a single, wholly fused, and purposeful direction. All.

The notion that there must be a standard pattern of tonal belief, of behavioral belief, even of dress belief, without which music would cease to exist, is a crag so monstrous that it blots out the vision. The Monolith of Music inheres, in essence, in the piano keyboard, and in the multiple usages evolving from it. The allegedly multifarious forms of Western musical thought—jazz, the twelve-tone raw, neo-classicism, even electronics—are all either incubated within that piano keyboard, or branded by it, or both.

Monoliths belong in stone—one stone, one monolith at a time—all innocent of conspiracy. The truly creative art must break out of the monolith, especially an art so egregiously and repetitively commercial as that of music. And the act of breaking out is both an anguish and an anodyne. Such is my testimony.

The instruments used in this work were incubated in a world of their own, almost totally. And the sounds which enliven the audio aspect of their being have become the musical sinews of a larger concept, a full-blown integration—Delusion of the Fury—A Ritual of Dream and Delusion—as yet unperformed, unseen, unheard. Here, in the notes to that larger work, nothing is elaborated, nothing is “developed.” An idea is stated in sparest form, and abandoned. Another idea is stated in sparest form, and abandoned.

I had been away from the part of the world I generally consider home for six years. In the seventh year I found a studio in the unused “Pioneer Hatchery” in Petaluma, California. However sentimental or Oriental the fact may sound, the fact remains: it was the time of falling petals, and this music followed.

—Harry Partch, 1968



Michael Ranta on the Bamboo Marimba I (Boo).

strange absence from California, twice, for exactly six years, the title came to me almost immediately.”

The work was conceived partly as “studies in preparation” for the dance-drama *Delusion of the Fury* (1965–66). Coming as it did after some two years of compositional inactivity, the music of *Petals* is both exploratory—the audible manifestation of a period of preparation in which new ideas were allowed to assemble themselves under the horizon—and reflective, in gathering those ideas, like falling petals, into an array. It was his intention to “exploit the instrumental resources to the full, exploring new techniques and . . . untried rhythms and polyrhythms.”

And on the Seventh Day Petals Fell in Petaluma is one of Partch’s rare excursions into “absolute music”: a thirty-six-minute instrumental work, radical in form, apparently unrelated to text or programme. Looking beneath the surface and delving into the folio of sketches Partch kept on the work, we find that, conceptually, *Petals* is not as “absolute” as it first appears; and in fact the music had not one but two essentially different layers of extra-musical significance both during and after the period of its composition. The first is Partch’s insistence that the instrumental “verses” of *Petals* were studies for the music of *Delusion of the Fury*, which he was already planning; during the composition of *Petals*, he wrote, “the placement of these musical ideas in the larger dramatic work . . . was constantly anticipated.” The second substratum of extra-musical significance is even more specific: Partch regarded the verses as musical portraits, in miniature, of various scenes and events of his daily life in Petaluma. In his sketches the verses were given titles, “verbal concepts” reflective of such everyday matters. Although these titles were ultimately abandoned, Partch announced them in his introduction to the concert premiere of *Petals* at UCLA in May 1966. On that occasion he remarked:

A small town, and Petaluma is a small town, tends to be introspective. It retains a kind of indigenous individuality—this despite TV waves from the nearest urban center. Little irritations become fantastically exaggerated, and it seems easier and more natural to observe small things, such as a fly getting dejuiced in a spiderweb in the corner. This is a commentary on my habits as a housekeeper, but it is also a commentary on the instability of life in traps—for men and nations . . . I generally work with verbal concepts, and not unlike others at least as far back as Aristophanes my concepts are often whimsically satiric.

And on the Seventh Day Petals Fell in Petaluma was composed in Petaluma, California, in March–April 1964, and revised at various times and places until the completion of the final copy of the score in San Diego in October 1966. It marks a radical departure from the theater works Partch had written at the University of Illinois in the early 1960s (two of which, *Rotate the Body in All Its Planes* and *Water! Water!*, can be heard on CRI CD 753 [reissued as New World Records 80623-2]), and shows a renewed concentration on technical innovation and on fusing his activities as composer and instrument-builder within the context of a single composition.

The work’s less-than-metaphysical title was never intended to be mysterious: The “seventh day” is a reference to the new year dawning after a period of six years in which he had been absent from California. In September 1962 he visited a prospective new studio—a vacated chick hatchery—in the small town of Petaluma; as Partch later recalled, that very first visit gave rise to a musical concept. “On the day I looked the place over, I walked down the lane that led to the hatchery, and the way was strewn with petals—roses, camellias, and many others. Since I had these studies [which would become *Petals*] in mind for some time, and considering my

Following are the titles that Partch announced, as taken from his typescript for the UCLA lecture, with the corresponding numbers appended:

And on the Seventh Day Petals Fell in Petaluma—

(1) They had been blooming for six days; (2) On the seventh they were tired of blooming; (3) They fall on historic ground; (4) An ant slept here, a spider died there; (5) Music for our times; (6) Pure music for pure people; (7) Nude at noon; (8) Transfigured on the postoffice steps; (9) Alleyoop in A Street (it is in A major); (10) Bubbaloos in B Street; (11) Recognition Scene in the Pioneer Hatchery; (12) Pity! Pity! the white leghorn cockerel! (13) Good grief in G Street (it is in G major); (14) Delight in fright at night; (15) Sad! Sad! (16) With crickets in the hedges; (17) And mating calls of attic ghosts; (18) Andante cantabile in F Street (it is in F minor); (19) Death in Cobweb Corner;

(20) And climax—in the public library; (21) The egg is wondrous! (22) It desires only to get fertilized; (23) Stay tuned for biology.

In its final version, *Petals* is a sequence of thirty-four one-minute instrumental verses. Verses 1–23 are duets and trios: They are played through first singly, then pairs of verses (in sequence) are played simultaneously to form quartets or quintets, Verses 24–33. After ten of these “double exposures,” the final three verses of the original sequence of twenty-three are combined to form a concluding septet, Verse 34. [A complete listing of the verses is given on page 2.]

On the title page of the final score Partch described the work as “Studies in techniques, timbres, double rhythms, double tonalities.” The extremely complex nature of the instrumental textures thus created results in his most virtuosic ensemble writing, especially from Verse 24 to the end. Overall, the music is so obviously designed to make full use of all his instruments that it seems as though Partch was determined that this work



Close-up of Cloud-Chamber Bowls, Partch in background.