

Sept. 24, 1991

To: Jonathan Glasier
Interval Foundation
From: John "Brink" McBryde
Fuzzy Muzik

In the interim from my last letter alot has happened. I started a service business "Fuzzy Muzik" that will do system conceptualization. It's only a framework for what I've been doing for some time.

In attempt to tackle one problem at a time, the ongoing keyboard issue has taken precedence. I have abandoned the NEH route as they rejeced various packages that relate to experimentation. Their focus of historical documentation coupled with my lack of conventional credentials would only lend itself to a very long and arduous correspondence. If you know of anyone who finds it a worthwhile venture I can forward their, as well as my documents.

Back to the keyboard project. The past three months of inquiry and skimming technical manuals has brought me to the conclusion that the Gulbransen/Crystal MIDI interface unit is best suited for retrofitting non 7+5 keyboard arrays and a very good candidate for a generalized keyboard. Absolutely no soldering! Though some wirewrapping is involved (32 posts at most) it is a functioning unit. No tweaking. The MIDI functions are sophisticated enough that an intermediary MIDI processor would not be necessary. Of course, any MIDI sound module or synth capable of tuning tables can be played by it.

My first notion is to build my own atop their reconfigured interface but as I am contacting people who have their own pet keyboards I think it could be adapted to serveral existing arrays (eg. 6+6, Sohler, D. Reed).

It has been repeatedly conveyed to me by John Chalmers that the Piehl organ you rescued might be a good candidate for such a retrofit. I've brought this up with Ivor Darreg and he only alludes to the gruelling task of rewiring and cleaning it. Having not seen it myself, I cannot say. John Chalmers asserts it is a generalized keyboard whose circuitry is dedicated to 19. A quick observation would determine its suitability to map on a plethora of scales.

Enclosed is a blurb on the KS 20 interface. I have a dealership with them so there is a vested nature to my request as well as the ability to get dealer prices on all of their stuff. Presently I own two KS 20-s with 88-key interfaces and as I mentioned earlier they can be reconfigured per request (61, 73, etc.).

Enclosed are some materials that you or other board members may find interesting. The Fuzzy Muzik Jamstation, though confined, is portable and has a "live"-intensive interface; a Time Commander and Human Clock running concurrently derive MIDI (and all other time codes) from acoustic & electroacoustic signals, thus live performance sources are synced to predisposed patterns and sequences.

But that's not why I'm writing to you. I would like to request a visit to see the Piehl Organ and decide for myself if it is a likley candidate for retrofitting. John Chalmers claims it is and I suspect he regrets seeing an instrument embodying both innovation historical significance go unused.

The rumor mill has it that Hairy P.'s art collection is no longer homesteaded in San Diego. What a relief to the new avant garde;

No more differential explanations!

No more stereotpecasting!

No more bisexual alcoholic credentials!

Anyway, I'll leave my address and phone # should you wish to contact me. I understand that you may have reservations. My past letters can carry, belligerent overtones but I assert they are no where near the explicit defamations of Interval's treasurer as contained in letters addressed to Ivor as well as myself. These can be made available to the board upon request. Otherwise, I choose to not dredge up past discourse in this area. It's apparent that the microtonal community has inadvertantly inherited another bane; a treacherous combination of optimistic scholarship and ruinous enterprise. This is not aimed at the Interval Foudation. My dabbling in the music scene both in technology and marketing confirms that an industry high in volitility has no regard for anything less than strong image posturing. Unfortunately slick production is a convention. Fortunately the power shift trend is toward direct marketing via the cottage industry. But the upstarts are always going to be compared to state-of-the-art industry standards. The lay listener will interpret any shortcomings in production and fidelity as a lack of skill. Not lack of financing.

I loathe this situation. I loathe more though, being discounted as a crusader for an esoteric movement that will never take root in media enterprise. At risk of alienating grassroots operations that are high on academic optimism I've been more focused on a here-and-now approach.

There are only a handful of recordings available that exploit alt tunings and the probable directions know no stylistic boundaries. There is no time to develop pedagogical nor compositional hindsights.

I hope this does not appear to be pessimistic nor cynical in nature. My position is an attempt to be realistic enough to ween my involvement with music away from being an expensive hobby.

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Yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Brink". The signature is written in a cursive, somewhat stylized font with a prominent horizontal stroke under the "B".

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