

Mundy 17 Joon 1991

Buzz Kimball R 1 Bx 312 Contoocook NH 03229
Greetings -----

I was telling you some time back about what a problem you had with the rubber stamp, not enough O's and you said you had to de-tail the Q's to make more O's. My niece lives in Albuquerque NM so that would be the opposite problem there, but she doesn't use rubber stamps very much.

I thought back this morning for no reason at all to when I lived in Santa Barbara--that was 1942 to 1944--2½ years about. Not all 3. Very miserable. My mother broke her ankle. With an address on Constance Avenue, Santa Barbara California, I ran out of A's on the rubber type set. I was able to get stamp made by a mail order rubber-stamp company and thus get all those A's back. 9 of them. The Santa Barbara Library was at Anacapa and Anapama streets so that would be even more A's.

More people on my side now, indignant about the Clone. Jonathan is still not realizing how serious it was for Wilbur George to build something that close to my instruments when with just a little THOUGHT he could have made the instrument different-looking and far enough away from mine to avoid this hassle. Ervin Wilson is very angry about the Clone and has called me six times trying to figure out what to do. Brian McLaren says any more Clones are not acceptable. What all this means is I have more people offering moral support than there are members on the Interval Board left out of the original 7. There are only 4 so far as I know.

There are at least 8 of us.

Will Parsons, a who lives in La Jolla and met me back in 1979, has not attended board meetings for about a year, and so didn't know all about the current hassle, but came to see me the other day with a friend of his. So there now are more people coming to see my instruments.

If I had not been slandered before the board, and then attacked in writing by two members of the board, I might have overlooked the Clone to keep the peace. but once I was denounced before those board members and visitors, there is no peace to keep.

I suspect that two more Clones will be built. Erv Wilson is afraid that certain ideas and keyboard plans etc. that he sent or gave to Interval will be used without his permission. McBryde also is afraid that his consulting will be leaked to outsiders without his permission. Brian is in high dudgeon. But exactly what we can do to stop it is not clear.

I am at the point where I have to revive the publicity I got out of those magazines and the videotapes and the TV programs in Los Angeles and also on Cable back in 1984. Latest TV was in NY by Mitch Corber who took videotapes here just a year and a half ago. Now surely if my instruments weren't good enough to be seen, Corber would not have come across the country to televise them.

Johnny Reinhard's affair in NY must be about over as of tomorrow. So I may get some kind of report on that. It wouldn't have done me any good to be in it because I would have had only a few minutes to play, and people would be exhausted from so many days of long concerts.

I have to define just what I consider to be theft. The basic idea of a large steel guitar is public domain--anybody can do that. So I am not talking about some kind of an instrument PATENT. But I have copyright protection for the visual appearance of the Megalyra instruments--the colored-line pattern and the color-schemes as shown on TV and in museums and galleries for eleven years. I put copyright notices on the instruments beginning 1976 and 1977. There isn't any excuse for someone copying those without my permission, that closely. This of course does have a Gray Area--for instance an instrument which has no COLORED lines would not infringe the copyright. Or if the instrument had been METAL instead of wood--that would take it quite far away from the visual effect. The people who made the Metal Beams have not bothered me at all.

The allegation that my instruments were not good enough to be seen is a lie; therefore it is slander. The allegation that Wilbur had to IMPROVE the instruments

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Yesterday got out small cans of paint and put the colored lines on Drone II--i.e. the blue 6-foot drone instrument build in 1978. Time to repaint. Fortunately I had the same dark blue it was before from the same paint company so I had re-done the main color about a week ago. The endpieces on the blue drone had been broken in the move from the tiny cottage to this house in 1986. So last month I made new endpieces and early June got them on and now they are painted.

What happened to make this instrument look real old and weatherbeaten was a couple of rainstorms last year when the tarpaulin had holes in it. Now I have three brand new tarps.

So that means, in all, two of the contrabass Megalyras are already repainted--this was done last Fall. There is now no excuse for Wilbur George complaining about how they look!

Possible ironic outcome: If Wilbur George makes more clones, they will be seen by agents of the Japanese and other Oriental factories and they might copy from his Clone or Clones, in which case he won't have the market to sell his unauthorized copies. Also they would have enough sense to re-design and take their instrument much further away from my design. Another fact in the case is that he is about 70 now and so will get old soon enough and I really doubt that his experience in mail-order business will help in going out and selling musical instruments to people in a market that he never had any connection with in his life. His partner is slightly older than I and has been sickly for some time.

John Schneider, a guitarist in Venice CA suburb of L.A. on the beach, sent me some of his info about a recent concert of Lou Harrison's compositions for the interchangeable fingerboards.

Yes, the fingerboards are interchangeable, but the guitar has to be retuned, and it takes TIME, and during that minute or two it takes to change, the LISTENER forgets how the previous scale sounded.

Why would I have gone to the trouble of collecting 20 guitars and refretting them if interchangeability were the real answer? I've had far too much experience with people who have SHORT ATTENTION SPAN. The TV and radio programs have new tricks to save seconds, and keep constantly jumping from one commercial to another without any pause whatever with the new switching technique, so the listener is distracted constantly and made into a scatterbrain.

The time to change fingerboards, or to change disks in the Mirage, is too long for these listeners who now have been habituated to quick snapping to another thing in a second, and so losing their ability to concentrate on anything for enough length of time to accomplish anything.

So I don't really think Mark Rankin is going to make much money persuading people to buy an expensive guitar and a set of fingerboards, when ALL the guitars in this place here cost less than he wants for ONE. (From the information leaflets that John Schneider sent me, Tom Stone from whom Mark Rankin got the agency, is back in business. I don't know how well. Also a fellow in Germany is making his kind of fingerboards and I have the brochure. Jonathan got it recently.)

To get publicity I did not have to, and do not at present have to, make instruments in quantity, since the product is RECORDINGS. If I am getting too old to run a factory, there are other people with small shops who can make the instruments if customers start ordering a Megalyra or Newel Post or whatever.

Wilbur George spent more money on his one Clone (\$850) than ALL my Megalyra instruments cost! You can imagine how cheaply the Orientals could make them. So I don't see how he can compete. Of course no point telling him that.

Yesterday was the longest day of the year I believe.

Yours,

Enclosing Xeroxes

Toozdi 25 Joon 1991

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Greetings *****

Sunny day slightly warmer (it has been cloudy and overcast, but no rain in June this far south).

Just got your latest letter and hasten to answer--you end by saying that you don't seem to be making Converts to microtonality. Small town of Contoocook not enough people to provide a enough vernturesome souls who might start something new.

My first suggestion is to de-emphasize the obvious attempt to convert which really means, De-program AND Re-program, conventional musicians or those who went to conventional music schools or private lessons too long.

Go after technicians and engineers who do not have such a heavy crippling mental investment in the 12-tone scale. but who have some skill or interest in the building of instruments or electronic circuits or practical crafts such as those involved in making Tubulongs.

You don't have to de-program them from 12-tone piano lore and the like. But you CAN take advantage of their mechanical or electrical or electronic skills. There is another group, the craftsmen of various kinds--especially woodworking. They can build acoustic instruments--xylophones, marimbas, etc.; they can build soundboxes to put stings on strings onto; a few of them have made whistles and flutes.

In some cases, mathematicians can be induced to get into music via theory and you can tell them about extracting roots of two. Maybe they had to go to the dentist to get roots extracted? That's what happened to me as a boy.

To so sume up, it is easier to Program somebody into non-twelvular music from some trade or craft or even intellectual skill, than to Detwelve a Piano Addict who must first be DEprogrammed before installing a scales like 22, 31, or 19 in him/her.

Another possibility is to interest a metalworker, who is used to cutting and grinding bars and rods, in making nontwelve sets of metal bars. Perhaps get a plumber to use remnants of pipes and make them into tubulongs (high pitched first) and Tub oforks. Maybe even flutes. If he is into cutting and installing plastic pipe such as PVC, then flutes and things of that kind.

Why have to DEprogram conventional indoctrinated musicians when you don't have to? Publicize non-12 among people who have not been spoilt yet! Oh sure; no such people in tiny Contoocook, but surely in your general region there will be enough worthy candidates for detwelveulation.

***you were visiting scenes of your past. I might mention, I lived in San Diego back in 1937-38. Sometimes I see the district where I lived then--most of the people from then are gone now. I was at the downtown post office building when they had open house just before transferring into the new place--we were shown through--now I see it once in a while, a 53-year-old building and they hope to remove it to a larger place and build a new one someday. I see the bumps in certain streets where there used to be streetcar tracks--the old rails still there. Covered over. But now new streetcar lines have been built in San Diego while I live here now, and they go down entirely different streets.

But going back much further like 60, 65, even 70 years ago--my niece in Albuquerque wrote me asking for reminiscences--so I had to ransack long ago memories--what did I do seventy years ago when I was four? sixty years ago when I was fourteen? So I wrote a couple of pages for her. My conclusion is there were NO good old days--it was very oppressive and repressive, and I had all kinds of pains as a boy that I do not have now. Indeed less pain today than when you saw me in Glendale. Certainly less allergy.

yours