

Wenzdi 11 March 1981

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Greetings-----

Scott Hackleman was here yesterday primarily to hear the clavichord tapes and get some idea of how my instrument looked at various times. He said something about coming down this way to live later--nothing definite so far. I gave him some addresses in his vicinity--John Akre and Siemen Terpstra--mislaid the card for Stephen Smith but I guess I can find it this week sometime.

He is one of the very very few who realize that I designed the Megalyra so that it would not require special expensive materials to make, it was within the average workshop's capabilities to build, and moreover does not require special expensive tools or machinery or "jigs and fixtures" to make it. Nobody else seems to get the practical impact of this.

Indeed many of the suggestions given me by various people would end up having it cost much more and require special tools or accessories in the workshop or increase the labor (i.e. work requiring special skills that are not relevant to other instrument-making) beyond reason.

Glen finds he has a big moving job--didn't realize how much had accumulated up there on the hill--and brought over the Megalyra and Drone instrument to be here while he is away, since he is not moving back in there at the end of April. He will have to go househunting. I suppose starting about 20 April or such a matter.

That may make it easier to overhaul the green Megalyra, but not sure how much I could do in this limited time-span and with so many other things to worry about.

Let's go back to the Piano Problem for a moment: the piano factory has to have SPECIAL machinery useless for anything else, not useful for organbuilding or even harpsichord-making. If you want to repair and restore pianos, you have to have two boxes full of highly-special tools, and they are terribly expensive.

What this does is partly psychological--it sets the piano technician or piano-rebuilder or -repairman or action-specialist apart from all other artisans and craftsmen and indeed other instrument-builders and -repairmen. It walls him off even from other KEYBOARD instrument people. Otherwise stated, the harpsichord builder can use ordinary cabinetmaking tools for the most part and can get much of his equipment and supplies at hardware stores and woodworking supply-houses. So can the organbuilder. If it's electronic organs, then it is just another branch of electronics and the electronic organ builder can get almost everything--especially now--from regular electronic shops.

Ironically, the electronic organbuilder, if he elects a special keyboard, can assemble it from computer keyboard parts so does not have to patronize the musical keyboard factories!

Most of the keyboard-making industry is geared for piano keyboards. So synthesizer keyboards are often heavily influenced by piano keyboard designs. The size of keys and octave-width in particular.

There have been electronic organs with two short keyboards which were made by using the 7 $\frac{1}{2}$ octave standard piano keys by arbitrarily dividing them somewhere in the middle for 3 $\frac{1}{2}$ octaves each keyboard! That's ~~###~~ how slavishly some engineers and factory managers view things--through a tunnel-vision boss-blinder.

I had another call--Todd Brewster of LIFE magazine who said there was no special tie between them and the San Francisco Festival thing other than that their June article would mention it was happening. So I guess the SF-Oakland people presumed too much. So I don't have to attend it in order to be in the Life ~~###~~ article. They said that they would be out here on the Coast I suppose early April or something like that, the date hadn't been pinned down--to take pictures, so I guess the pictures I sent were adequate and then of course the competition with OMNI. So by that time you will ~~##~~ have some idea of what you want to be pictured with and get your publicity. They were trying to contact Lou Harrison and running into problems. I guess he is hiding away in his enclave or something. I suggested they try through U C Santa Cruz.

Back to that thing again: The piano technician or rebuilder is walled off from general cabinetmakers and home workshop woodworkers in a way that the electronic-organ builder (whether amateur or professional or in an organ factory that went electronic) is NOT walled off from the enormous electronic world of today. The synthesizer maker is perhaps even closer to the general electronic shop and other people in everything from computers to hi-fi to home appliances than the electronic-organ-maker is.

* The psychological attitude, then, of the piano-factory-personnel and piano-tuner-technician and -rebuilder and therefore this is rubbing off on the piano-dealer and piano-techers and writers of piano-related books and Pianos-As-Furniture decorators and dealers and others--the psychological attitude is much narrower-minded than the attitude of people in harpsichords or clavichords or synthesizers or pipe organs or reed organs or electronic organs.

This should explain the ~~DEAPFREEZE~~ and lack of progress in music induced by the over-longevity of the Piano Idea. It should have endured from about 1790 to 1920 or something like 6h that--and is now a sort of senile dementia or old-fogy affair.

I suspect that other parts of the world are behind the US --that piano worship in France or Italy is worse than here. This could explain Carrillo's stuff in that book quite well.

It could explain IRCAM doing that demo tape with the 12-tone tempered partials in place of real harmonics which would have been just as easy to program.

The piano as Software! The Piano Idea converted into part of the "language" of a computer program. The restrictions and

The effect is worse than it could have been because of the SUBCONSCIOUS level on which it takes place. These people who slavishly copy piano-faults into their innovations or general work, and who write piano music for violins and flutes and saxophones, do so rather innocently and unconsciously. They don't realize how brainwashed they are. Who else is aware of it?

What should have happened was the gradual, eq easy, quiet replacement of the piano by other instruments over the last 70 years without the sad situation we have now of expensive pianos as mere FURNITURE in elegant homes and public places being shamefully neglected and paly played in public while out-of-tune and with actions that won't act. There should have been thousands of arrangements for guitars and electronic organs of the te tremendous piano literature, gradually being done over the last 40 years, instead of this upheaval now happening where the rock groups have suddenly latched onto electronic keyboards and are using them in horribly sloppy carelessness and illiteracy and there is no transmitting of the organ-playing traditions (especially legato and properp phrasing) to these new players of synthesizers and electronic organs, but instead we have choppy jerky piano-playing habits taught them or they pick it up from others.

This revolution instead of evolution and general disorder, causes "polarization" and hatemongering and divisiveness among musicians so that the piano-oriented traditionalists despise and brickbat the innovators. They make themselves ridiculous by using the arguments which were proper and entirely sound in 1880. When there were no electric guitars, no electronic organs, no guitar revival, no cFartchian psalteries either.

What I am trying to do here is set this thing in the whole entire picture rather than be a specialist off in a tiny corner ignoring what is going on. The Interval Foundation has to know what kinds of people are out there before trying to recruit some of them and whom to bypass and not rouse to violent hatred.

Who is a likely candidate for non-12? Can we construct a psychological profile and then go after them with an appeal focused on them? We ~~can't~~ can't progress even an iota beyond where we are now unless we have enough shops re-fretting to new scales and enough people willing to make justly-intoned organs or psalteries or newel-posts or whatnot, and enough people willing to take metal bars and tubing and build this or that.

That's why I was so unenthusiastic about selling parts for monochords to be assembled 2000 miles away by people who had never SEEN nor HEARD a monochord and never been allowed to hear a just major third. They would misela mislead themselves and others beyond hope of curing it.

An interchangeable-fingerboard guitar will almost always end up with the 12-tone figngerboard permanently on it and the others in the closet or left behind in the last place the guitarist moved out of. The fact that 12-tone can be put on it will prevent the guitarist playing 19 or 31 in most cases, and using alibis not to. The 19-tone guitar can't be retwelvitized without equal expanse to nineteenifying it, so will remain there nagging at the musician. Yours,