

Tuesday 7 July 1981

Jonathan Glasier 3932 Alameda Place San Diego CA 92103

Greetings---

The green Megalyra is back from McAuley at last and I will try, but cannot promise, to adjust the pickups on the reverse side so they don't rub against the strings. Matter of rasping the wooden supports down to increase the distance from the strings. Then less risk of breaking the fine wires in transporting.

One of the bridges now looks strange because it had to be moved at an angle. This is merely the compensation for different string diameter just as done on guitars that have adjustable bridges.

A few people to see the instruments--don't know whether it will lead anywhere, but it always could--chain-referrals have come from the most unlikely persons. After delays that seemed like total lack of interest.

Chalmers phoned me the other night very late--seems to think that the Bolzano article could have been done just as well without any Theory of Groups, just ordinary algebra and more pedestrian math, but Groups were dragged in to impress people and make him look like a Deep Scholar and all that. So I am not to be intimidated by this display of mathematical wizardry--it's a sort of dig imitation of Rothenberg et al., and might even be an unauthorized borrow from Rothenberg and some others who investigated scale-structure--Chalmers is really miffed that the previous workers on the same sort of thing were NOT cited.

Put this on top of Brian Hartzler's comments and my fears and concerns are very much lessened. But I had to solicit comments so that I can counter the inevitable arguments which will come at me in the future.

Letter from Duzz Kimball--in the throes of moving to New Hampshire in three or four months--around Xmas time--his father believes N H taxes will be less than Hartford region taxes. And probably retired also.

They tore down the first of the houses across the street and started in on the others, removing the roofs. I found some sheet music--a song-book and a collection of Italian songs of the 17th and 18th centuries. Must have been there for many years--certainly not the last tenants there!

Aftermath of Clyde Corson getting involved with computers--and having sent me the clipping about voice typewriters a while ago--I made up some leaflets and xeroxed them--the old place which I moved far far North on Brand Blvd. went back down to 40 since I guess the 50 a copy was finding resistance, thank goodness.

One for private correspondence and another as a Bulletin for general distribution to a certain kind of people.

Why do I have to end my life in poverty when the Numaudo System could be of greatest benefit to financial offices? Yours,

In the end the public rebelled, and the results are obvious. This helps explain the revival of the harpsichord and the rise of electric guitars, and now effects-boxes.

The old specialist attitude is reflected in the union jurisdictional disputes which were so popular in the 1930's and 40's. For instance a proofreader was not allowed into the printshop to correct an error in type which had been set. Result the one who pulled out the wrong line or wrote wrong piece of type and was supposed to put in the correct one, often failed to do so and the error stood no matter how disastrous it might have been. Today, of course, I can type my own stuff and correct mistakes at home and take the copy to the xerox or offset place and know exactly what it will look like when reproduced.

I am not at the mercy of a prima donna conductor of the Toscanini type, and a virtuoso performer whose refusal to perform in non-12 would have stopped it dead for what he hoped would be -ever, but now with tape machines I can fight for my rights. The piano manufacturer's desires do not now destroy my own.

I do not have to put up with things like this: Hammond Organ Company or Instrument Company as it was known, having been the Hammond Clock Company in the old days, took out numerous patents on instruments many of which never got marketed. The financial advisors ruled with a rod of iron. They prevented the better version of the Novachord from reaching production. The original Hammond Organ was a frozen design and went on to the bitter end until the competition started eating into its sales. Tightly frozen just like the piano action, for quite a while--about 30 years or so--through the 30s 40s and into the 50s approximately.

Now let's take a look at one of the patents of the 1950 ear era which I ran across during my periodic searches. They wanted to produce a cheaper organ that would play church hymns in four parts with four tone-generators only. So what did they do? They statistically investigated all the church hymn-books, to find out what notes were called for, and made that the exact compass of the keyboard. So-and-so-many % of books examined, the patent said, had notes below this one and above that one. Tenor and alto parts, however, overlapped --this was never a crossing of these parts, but it meant that a fence was built on the middle of the keyboard and certain pitches used by both tenor and alto were duplicated on this special organ. Looked like some kind of game for eighth-graders when they got through. Never were more than four notes at a time produced by a mixed quartet, or so they said anyhow.

They went to books, and books of music composed long ago, but not too long ago, not before Bach; they didn't dream of going to people, or having a heart-to-heart talk with small-church choir-directors, let alone with today's church-music composers. As far as I know, the invention was, and deserved to be, a flop, for the nonsense of making up their own imitation feedback from what they imagined music in chapels and small churches was like, instead of going to the people who might buy such an organ. The invention deserved to fail because they forgot about human beings, not because it was technically unsound.

The scheme and outward design of the Hammond Organ was forced on the public by a barrage of advertising, some of which was outright lies and some of which was extreme exaggerations. The same ruthless policy as the piano manufacturers used for a century before them.

Now we still have lots of misinformation to fight, such as the hundreds of designs for electric guitars be which have little or no effect on the c sounds because the sounds some come out of a speaker enclosed in a box and that is what needs the attention to designing for this or that preferred tone.

They don't come out of the red or gold or black paint or walnut or mahogany finish on the solid body!

If I couldn't make my own speaker boxes the Megalyra would have been stillborn.

Yours