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Jonathan Glasier 3932 Alameda Place San Diego CA 92103

Greetings %%%%

Was it this machine's or the Varityper's jealousy that caused the Selectric to quit? Something like the house where somebody brings a new dog or cat?

Chris Banta phoned yesterday after a very long time without hearing anything and can't understand why I don't just throw out half of what is in here so as to use the front room to demonstrate my instruments. After all the 40 years it took to collect enough things to be able to do anything -- if this collection is broken up then I cannot do any work with the remainder even regardless of which half I would lose. This is of course not the question of finding storage places for the duplicate instruments and the incomplete instruments.

I might have done something drastic to make this a demo room if and only if enough people had come here to see the instruments--but there is the reluctance to come to Glendale or neighboring places like Eagle Rock or Burbank. It seems to me that five years and two months is quite long enough to find out whether this is or is not the right location for a demo studio to sell and/or rent out instruments. Let me put it another way: About the time I met you, two very large music stores closed their doors here and went out of business. Twenty years ago I knew some people in the Echo Park district or nearby, who bought organs from these very stores. The stores still prospering are in other parts of Glendale.

Very likely, there is a similar situation in San Diego--there must be certain districts very good for music stores and recording studios and other places that ensure business failures. There also are certain stores which look good but nobody ever stays long in them. There was a certain store on a very very busy street in Los Angeles that seemed to change hands every month almost. Like the jewelry store three blocks from here that became a restaurant right after I moved here and changes hands every so often.

What I am driving at is finding various stores willing to display or demonstrate the Megalyra or even to keep one in the back demo room where people go to try similar instruments or to try big amplifiers. If I pick one with the wrong location or the too small a clientele, the instrument will never become known.

I have to put myself (empathize) in the customer's place. What motivation can we give anyone to rent a Megalyra? Assuming that the economy is going to pieces or all the gloom and doom stories about financial matters that are in the news right now, is why I say rent at first--then we don't have to make too many instruments at first in order to get the same amount of exposure.

Nobody will help me answer the very first question I am faced with each time a new person comes or more often merely calls: How much is it? Everybody I try to talk to, throws the problem right back in my face as though I had to use a crystal ball or something to set a price in these very uncertain times. The whole thing could bust right

right now and never never get started simply because of too low or too high a price--either mistake is just as bad as the other.

The only guide I have is the prices of doublebass, cello, pedal steel, and tuba. That is, the instruments which play orchestra parts that the Megalyra could play also, therefore those musicians are the mostly likely to buy a Megalyra as a second or third instrument to get more mileable mileage out of their music or their experience and technique. (Pedal steel as the closest instrument to the Newel Post, but also as a sort of indicator of how far one may deviate from "normal" guitars and still expect to sell an instrument or get it used by somebody.) The Megalyra is more colorful and three times the size of an electric bass so that price-tag is not as relevant even though electric-bass players could probably be "converted" or "re-programmed" easily.

Another curious thing--it is very very relevant to advertising and display such as in a store-window or display-room even though it is irrelevant to any performance on the instrument. Why does everybody who takes pictures want it vertical? Eight feet high rather than eight feet long? I have met only two people in the entire life of the Newel Post who think of it lying down on a table or floor! 6 years.

Now the Pedal Steel is never shown erect vertical even though it might be packed up that way after every gig or stowed vertical against the wall by people cramped for space. It might be because the electric guitars are hung vertical and because the double-bass is stored vertical as well as standing up to play it?

Looking through all these new magazines and actually visiting stores, I also see that with the drums and some other percussions the stand is the thing. More floor space is taken up by mere holders and fasteners and trestles than by the drums and traps themselves. Ron George took that to the impossible extreme--just like an assembly line in some aircraft or truck factory! Above and behind him.

I am thinking of special stools to hold a Megalyra off the floor at the right height. Take piano stools and artists' easels and stools and stands and even some office equipment as a norm for designing them. For Megalyra or Newel Post or the variations on that idea, simple tables or trestles, that fold up somehow. In a really permanent Megalyra installation in somebody's busy music studio or recording outfit, why not a built-in shelf? Then plenty of room for accessories and steels and wooden bars and mallets and a moveable bridge (as capo).

It's not just the instrument itself; it's the whole outfit: Megalyra, mallets, steels, wooden bars, tuning-bar, tuning-hammer or T-wrench, stools as above, connecting cords, amplifier, speaker-box. You can't play a Megalyra through a 6-inch speaker and expect zonk and clout and initial overwhelm-ment. Would you expect someone to buy a cello without a bow or bag and without estrings and the bridge not yet fitted? Oh, I'll bring those next week.

Ed Kneifel just before starting to move piecemeal in instalment from Berkeley to Venice, bought a Baldwin electronic organ from a church being torn down or something, hence no loudspeakers! Latest note from him says he is bringing it down to Venice. Now what good it is it without means for hearing the sounds? Organ transplant. And of joke, laugh now.

I don't know whether he will get around to having me pick out the new speakers or not. Some of the older models of the Baldwin organ were excellent, as far as proper organ attack and the solo stops were concerned. Lack of bass and no depth. The earlier Conn organs had that depth and solidity but no brilliance, no zing.

The recent electronic organs I hear in the Glendale Galleria are all midrange, neither depth nor brilliance, just dull cocktail-bar boozy background, and this is very very unpleasant when amplified to the necessary loudness to overcome the Galleria noise level. For middleaged ignoramuses who are addicted to tranquilizer pills. When I have heard how brilliant and powerful some electronic organs can be, this is a public disgrace! The image of the word organ has been ruined beyond all hope of ever restoring it.

That is exactly what will now happen to the image of the word piano. The imitation-pianos have not really taken hold yet in homes, but they are doing it presently. The magazines I already have alluded to, show what is about to happen.

What could ruin the future of the Megalyra: letting anybody play it through the wrong amplifiers and speakers. It could absolutely kill it off. It would be sabotage. I have heard it through the bass amplifiers of the Doobie Bros. who were renting sound equipment in Hollywood for their North Hollywood concert--this was 2 1/2 years ago or such a matter. It was too dull. I heard it through medium-power amplifiers at a certain Hollywood store, and without telling me they had a Distorter connected in between. Not that harmonic distortion would kill it, but the bass cutoff did. So that's two of the wrong amplifiers. First impressions cannot be rectified. It's too late. Better that happened in mere demos than on some important stage or outdoor concert!

Which means I have to keep more control over every Megalyra than I planned on or intended to, for the first six months of renting or selling or gaining public exposure by having other people play it in public. It have to demand that brilliance.

I am not selling sleeping pills! I've have produced the biggest waker-upper yet. Something that cannot be ignored anymore than a bagpipe. I have no intention of ha letting anybody hold it back to the whispering of acoustic instruments or subduing it into the background because instruments for that purpose already exist. I have my first, last and only chance to get anywhere and it has been thrust into my hands now and he who hesitates is lost. It wouldn't exist yet and I wouldn't have had the idea if the right persons to promote it didn't already exist somewhere else. The only reason I have not met them is transportation and in this case, I am ~~absolutely certain~~ ^{absolutely certain} ~~from the Los Angeles area~~ ^{from the Los Angeles area} ~~in their toll-free phoning area.~~ ^{in their toll-free phoning area.}

Three weeks after building the first Megalyra I learned my lesson --it cannot be demonstrated over the phone. Or through a battery operated cassette portable. That's another way some well-meaning person could kill it.

Do I end up with a bang or a whimper?

Yours