the Violano project

The MIDI Interface

Basically there will be 123 midi to voltage (110 volts relay) connectors made for each of the notes of the violin and the piano. It is envisaged that direct wiring will link the midi circuit board to each of the electromagnets for the violin and the piano. Thus the entire piano Roll system will be circumnavigated and nothing inside the Violano itself will have to be rebuilt or changed in anyway... the instrument will remain in original condition and will be able to be operated either from the new midi interface or the old Roll system. Each of the 123 electromagnets will be allocated a midi number and function through simple midi note on information. Other midi notes will control dampers for both violin and piano; violin tremolo; violin mute device; the staccato coil. The software for the system will have at least three basic operating formats.

1. Omni midi... all midi info will be played (accepts any midi files 0 or midi files 1)
2. Midi channel settings that accept one midi channel for piano and one channel for violin
3. A midi channel setting that accepts 2 midi channels for the piano and 4 midi channels for the violin (one for each string, thus enabling independent 4 part counterpoint to be played on the violin).

It might be advisable to have a separate channel for the dampers, etc rather than unused midi notes (away from the normal range).

Jim Sosnin builds board (1 months work approx.), Rainer Linz and Jon Rose test the new system.

Jon and Jim spend two months working with the Violano writing new music for it and generally testing what the Violano can deal with comfortably in terms of accepting midi information (e.g. there will be a limit to the mechanical speed of the 'Bow Wheels'). We would expect to try out a whole range of midi options from all kinds of wave forms in counterpoint to simple arrangements of pop tunes. Experimentation with violin strings and their tuning would also take place at this time. A room to be provided by the PowerHouse for this purpose and work developed under the guidance of Carey Ward. All stages of the project development will be recorded.

A public concert to finish this part of the project (a video beamed colour/light show could also be run in sync from the same midi information that plays the Violano, the score of the composition could also be shown).

Stage 2.

The museum and/or the Australia Council commissions six composers to write a set of pieces specifically for the Violano under the guidance of the 'Violano team'. Audio Visual concert or performances follow.

Stage 3.

The Violano reverts to the public domain for demonstration purposes or live public participation. The Violano could be left with software and keyboard so any tune could be tapped in, arranged and/or interpolated on the spot. The machine in effect ends up demonstrating 100 years of mechanical music in terms of education and entertainment.

On the housing for the Violano Virtuoso it is written *New Music for The Violano Virtuoso*.

So let's get on with it and make some!