**http://www.realmac.info/clone.gif*JEUX***

***"Send in the Clones"***

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The JEUX SoundFont started life as an adaptation of another soundfont, as a means of achieving my own musical goals. I should not have been surprised, then, to find that others have created their own clones of JEUX. Some of them have been constructed with specific musical goals, in other cases I'm not so sure what the idea was. Some of the clones give credit to the parent soundfont, a few do not. I have even found a few copies of my own web pages!

A few cherished individuals have gone well beyond cloning. Phillip Goddard and Joseph Basquin, for example, have shared their work with me, so that the JEUX SoundFont has benefitted from their experiments. This collaborative approach can only advance the development of electronic music-making.

It is my hope that the sounds of the pipe organ, and of a whole world of other instruments, can remain available to all without charge. The proliferation of free soundfonts will assure this. By making these resources available, we enable anyone with internet access and modest resources to partake of the astonishing patrimony of music we inherit from the last millenium, and to participate in the creation of the music of the new millenium. Thus, I regard the clones and adaptations of the JEUX SoundFont, so long as they are free of charge, as a very positive development.

In the 18th Century, when musical borrowing was also rampant, Johann Mattheson (1681-1764) offered his opinion (*Der Vollkommene Capellmeister*). His views on borrowing melodic material might serve as useful counsel for borrowers of soundfonts, too:

Borrowing is permissible; but one must return the thing borrowed with interest, i.e., one must so construct and develop imitations that they are prettier and better than the pieces from which they are derived.

If you want to build a clone of a free soundfont, you might consider doing so in the context of a virtual musical community. Give some thought to your goals. What can you do to improve on the soundfonts that already exist? Can you obtain better samples? Can you construct combinations that are easier to use? Can you set a new standard for quality? In the particular case of the pipe organ, there are numerous regional and historical styles that deserve to be heard. Can you do a better job in recreating the best of some particular style?

I expect the authentic JEUX will continue to evolve. Even now, version 1.4 is taking shape, with new mixtures, new reeds, livelier tutti, warmer celestes, more stately diapasons, etc. I am far from believing that music is a progressive art, but the technology that makes music accessible is making tremendous strides.

The soundfont community seems to be growing rapidly. In just a year, the diversity and quality of soundfonts has shown astonishing development, most of it created by devoted amateurs. The more soundfonts, the more people will be able to control their own music! In my opinion, this is how music should be made, by real people acting in concert, and not by giant corporations!

*—John W. McCoy*

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