

THE FLUID PIANO™ LAUNCH EVENT

Saturday 27th March 2010, Purcell Room, London

['The musical equivalent of splitting the atom' The Guardian](#)

"As soon as I heard the news that Fluid Tuning on each note of the piano might be a possibility, I immediately wanted to know more. After years of patience and tenacity by inventor Geoff Smith, a new prototype instrument now exists".

Matthew Bourne, composer and pianist.

"...here, at last, is a piano that can easily sit within any musical context in the world, and that opens up new and infinite horizons of expressive possibilities".

Pam Chowhan, pianist /composer/ Head of Planning, London's Southbank Centre.

Imagine an acoustic piano with no tuning restrictions. A piano with an immense diversity of 'bespoke' tuning layouts and 'indigenous' scales from around the world (e.g. from Middle Eastern cultures). A piano that even allows you to alter the tuning whilst playing - or simply to remain in the standard 'western' tuning should you wish. After ten years of what has been a professional and personal struggle, this instrument now exists and is called the **Fluid Piano™**. The inventor, musician and composer **Geoff Smith** will be unveiling and showcasing his historic invention at London's Purcell Room in 2010 with a special 'preview' launch on 28th November this year.

The launch events will feature world premières of compositions commissioned specifically for the **Fluid Piano™**, composed and performed by Smith and notable composers/pianists **Matthew Bourne**, **Pam Chowhan** and **Nikki Yeoh**. These works have been commissioned by the University of Surrey's Department of Music and Sound Recording.

The beauty of the **Fluid Piano™** is that it enables musicians to alter each note individually and separately by precise microtonal intervals per note, before or during performance. This liberates the instrument from the restrictions of 'western' tuning to make the **Fluid Piano™** the first 'multi-cultural' **Acoustic** piano.

The **Fluid Piano™** is one of the most positive and culturally significant developments in the International history of music in the last three hundred years and its story is being filmed for a documentary feature film by director **Rafael Lewandowski**, (Cela, A Shadowed Gaze, Hearings, Children of Solidarnosc), produced by Eureka Media (Poland).

Geoff Smith is one of the world's leading authorities on the hammered dulcimer and is widely known as the musician, composer and performer of critically acclaimed live soundtracks to silent films such as *The Cabinet of Dr Caligari*, *Faust*, *Haxan Witchcraft through the Ages* and most recently *The Adventures of Prince Achmed*.

Interview requests and media enquiries: Siân Williams at Riotsquad Publicity
020 7223 7456 or email sian@riotsquadpublicity.com



Fluid Tuning™ Organization



Notes for editors

What is the Fluid Piano™?

The invention of the **Fluid Piano™** enables musicians to alter each note individually and separately by precise microtonal intervals per note before or during performance. This is made possible by Geoff Smith's patented Fluid Tuning™ mechanism, which liberates the instrument from the restrictions of 'western' tuning. This enables the musician to explore and experiment with an immense diversity of 'bespoke' tuning layouts and 'indigenous' scales and modes from around the world (for example, from Middle Eastern cultures). Furthermore, if the musician chooses not to make use of the 'Fluid Piano's' tuning mechanisms then the instrument can also remain in the standard 'western' tuning.

In the words of **Pam Chowhan**, pianist, violinist and Head of Planning at the Southbank:

"As soon as I touched the Fluid Piano, I knew I was witnessing something very special. I've always felt the equal temperament tuning of a piano to be somehow flat and characterless, and indeed it sounds out of tune to me. Now, with the Fluid Piano, I could match the more expressive and flexible tuning of a string instrument, and as a violinist, this was immediately attractive to me. The feeling of liberty which comes from being able to manipulate the tuning, and yet still recognizably be playing a piano, was extraordinary and I could immediately see the infinite musical possibilities that such an instrument could allow. I have a particular loathing of hearing pianos or keyboards within a non-Western context because there's always some kind of mismatch between the western equal temperament tuning and the more microtonally inflected tuning of non-Western musics. Even in a Western context, there's a variance of tuning between a string player and a pianist – a string player will tend to sharpen the major 7th note, or flatten the minor 3rd note of a scale, for instance, whereas no such opportunity for expressive intonation exists for the pianist. But here, at last, is a piano that can easily sit within any musical context in the world, and that opens up new and infinite horizons of expressive possibilities".

And composer and pianist **Nikki Yeoh**:

"From an early age I wondered why I couldn't bend notes on the piano and would dream that this would one day become a reality. Synthesizers arrived but even though I love to bend notes on synth sounds it never felt genuine or natural with a piano 'sound'. The Fluid Piano has not only given me my dream but also opened my mind to the fact that anything is possible both musically and beyond!"

And composer and musician **Matthew Bourne**:

"As soon as I heard the news that Fluid Tuning on each note of the piano might be a possibility, I immediately want to know more. After years of patience and tenacity by inventor Geoff Smith, a new prototype instrument now exists. I believe that this is a vital evolutionary step in the history of the instrument where, at last, it is now able to embrace non-western sensibilities and new temperaments with one easy move of the finger. It is an honour to have been involved in this incredible project".

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Features and capabilities of THE FLUID PIANO™

1. Fluid Tuning™ is available on each note of the Fluid Piano™.
2. The Fluid Piano™ is a totally Acoustic instrument.
3. The Fluid Piano™ is a grand piano.
4. The maximum interval change that can be achieved by the use of each Fluid Tuning™ mechanism per note is a whole tone.
5. The Fluid Tuning™ mechanisms operate separately and independently per note.
6. The initial 'default' or central position of each Fluid Tuning™ mechanism, in order to provide equal temperament, will provide a semitone interval change in either direction (flat or sharp) or any desired microtonal interval of less than a semi tone in either direction (flat or sharp).
7. The musician can slide each mechanism, individually and separately, to new positions in order to change the tuning during performance or in between compositions.
8. The sliding action can also be used as an effect.
9. The range of the instrument is five octaves plus a third (i.e. minus the highest and lowest octaves present on an eighty-eight-note piano).
10. The Fluid Piano™ also incorporates an additional instrument comprising totally separate strings to those of the Fluid Piano™. This is a horizontal harp hybrid. It can be reached by the pianist whilst sitting at the keyboard, or by a harpist from the right hand curved side of the Fluid Piano™.
11. The harp hybrid also incorporates Fluid Tuning™ mechanisms per note and separate pedals that can be accessed on the right hand curved side of the Fluid Piano™.
12. An additional 'stop' is included to enable the harp to be dampened from the pianist's playing position.

LINKS

['Composer reinvents the piano' The Guardian](#)

www.dulcimer.co.uk

www.matthewbourne.com

www.myspace.com/nikkiyeoh

www.myspace.com/pamchowhan

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