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To Whom It May Concern:

I am a Ph.D. candidate and Lecturer in the Media Arts and Technology program at the University of California, Santa Barbara, and the focus of my Ph.D. is on Musical Interface Technology. I studied Electronics Engineering and Music (violin performance), and I have a Masters degree from the Media Lab at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. As part of my research, I develop new musical interfaces and musical signal processing algorithms, and compose and perform with them internationally. I have also worked as a consultant in the music industry for companies such as Eventide, E-mu, and Echo Audio. For more information, see <http://www.create.ucsb.edu/~dano/>

We live in an era when digital audio synthesis algorithms are able to produce a great range of expressive sounds, but the real-time expressiveness of the music they can produce is limited in practice by the unsophisticated interfaces used to control them (such as the piano-style keyboard). As a result, many potentially expressive sounds produced by today's synthesizers (both hardware and software) are locked into pre-programmed or repetitive, non-expressive tones (driven primarily by automated internal parameters).

The Thummer is a powerful new interface that allows human gestural inputs to directly drive more detailed expressive elements in a synthesizer, and it has the ability to unlock these static sounds and let more meaningful human elements shine through (as they always have with traditional acoustic instruments such as the saxophone or the cello). The joysticks on the Thummer are powerful inputs that allow simultaneous control of four separate synthesis parameters while playing, and the built-in motion sensors are a fantastic way of capturing the movements of the performer to get more nuance and subtle human expression into the sound. In addition, the isomorphic keyboard layout and the dynamic tuning system are definite breakthroughs that do away with the compromises the western world has dealt with for so long in the vein of equal-temperament instruments, such as imperfect intonation and enharmonic pitch inconsistency.

It is exciting to think that the Thummer can inspire a new generation of people to take up music performance, due to its innovative design and sensational motion-sensitive interface for expression (much like the Nintendo Wii controller's success in the gaming community)! It is a great addition to the world of electronic music performance.

Sincerely,



Dan Overholt