



Friday November 1, 2000

Professor Charles F. Zukoski
Vice Chancellor for Research
University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign
420 Swanlund Administration Building, MC-304
601 East John Street
Champaign, Illinois 61820

Dear Professor Zukoski,

As the CEO of a music information technology company, I am pleased to write in support of Professor Stephen Downie's proposal for "Creation of Music Information Retrieval (MIR) Development and Testing Database".

As an alumnus of UIUC (D.M.A. 1995), I am very familiar with UIUC's and NCSA's technological prowess and their technology transfer efforts over the years. Our company maintained a technology development office in Urbana from 1994 – 2000 and continues to have close ties with founders of Spyglass. Our research and development work in the music technology arena originated in 1993, long before the existence of the "MIR" acronym. During this decade, we have generated significant intellectual property in this field and produced highly successful commercial products.

A colleague brought Professor Downie's groundbreaking work to my attention recently. I use the term "ground-breaking" full-heartedly. The lack of research in the Music Information Retrieval field has always amazed us! To support the development of our products, we have spent significant money and efforts conducting our own research in this domain. It has been very frustrating conducting this type of research seemingly devoid of others, and in a non-existent field. Our efforts would have been eased tremendously if there were an exchange of information supported by scholarly research. Any research effort in this community would represent a major breakthrough to the advancement of such field.

I applaud Professor Downie's efforts in spearheading and building this nascent field. The MIR field represents a huge opportunity for significant research and technology transfer. With the proliferation and commercialization of digital music, the timing and need for this type of research could not be better.

We are in full support of Professor Downie's valiant efforts. We are also prepared to assist in any way necessary to see this type of research flourish and succeed.

Sincerely,

Dr. Yaz Shehab
CEO Music Republic