Transoniq Hacker

The Independent News Magazine for Ensoniq Users

The MR-61/76

Working with the MR keyboards

Anthony Ferrara

Yes, it's happened again. After many productive composition and tracking sessions, I've replaced my beloved and trustworthy TS-10 with the latest keyboard from Ensoniq. Since I prefer to work with only one keyboard in my home studio configuration, my TS-10 now leans forlornly against the wall, waiting to be adopted by a new, more attentive owner.

At this point, my new MR-61 is getting all of the attention! From my perspective, there's plenty there to appreciate: 64 voice polyphony, the Idea Pad, an onboard Drum Machine, Standard MIDI File format sequences, as well as the 16-track Recorder. As far as I am concerned the big whammy is the MR's ROM capacity: expandability to 84 Meg of ROM via user-installable expansion boards. You pick the expansion board or boards that best suit your own musical tastes and away you go.

Along with this new platform and its features come plenty of questions as to how it may best be integrated into each of our own systems, based on our particular needs. Since I also use several computer-based software sequencing and notation programs, a number of constructive suggestions and observations have come to mind that your ever-diligent *Hacker* editor has cajoled me into sharing with you. Here goes:

Sending your Drum Machine Patterns out via MIDI

You may have noticed that when selecting and playing a rhythm pattern from the MR keyboard's Drum Machine, the data is not automatically transmitted out via MIDI to an external target such as a sound module or a computer sequencer.

First, you'll need to select the particular Drum Machine Rhythm and Variation/Fill that you want to work with. Next, you'll press the red "Send" button in the Drum Machine section to move the rhythm data over to Rhythm Track 10 of the MR's 16 Track Recorder. If

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you then take the following steps, you will assign a MIDI-OUT instrument to the Rhythm sequencer track; this will insure that your rhythm data will now be smoothly transmitted to your external MIDI target:

1) Press the "Select Sound" button

2) Turn the Parameter knob all the way to the right until the screen says "Select performance presets?"; then turn the Parameter knob back one to the left to "Sound MIDI-OUT."

3) Use the down arrow button to underline the MIDI channel number on the screen; then select the MIDI channel (01 through 16) using the Value knob

4) Press the "Send" button in the SoundFinder section

5) Screen will say "Select Target Track>"

6) Press the sequencer track in the MR's 16-track recorder to send the information; since we are currently concerned with the Rhythm track, in this case it will be track 10. The screen will then read "Replace sound on target track?"

7) Press Enter/Yes; the selected MR sequencer track will now transmit MIDI data to an external MIDI target source on the track that you have configured in this manner.

Another major new innovation of the MR Series is the depth of the voice program architecture. Because of this depth, both the rack and the keyboard versions are best edited from a computer-based program. Ensoniq has made an arrangement to provide each MR owner with a run-time version of Unisyn by Mark of the Unicorn when they register their instrument.

As it turns out, this is often the first time that many people have worked with a computer-based patch editor/librarian; it's only natural that this new interaction between the keyboard and computer (via the software program) might require a bit of clarification in terms of basic operation.

Another point to mention is the fact that the run-time version of Unisyn does not currently support EXP-2 or EXP-3 Expansion boards. However, Ensoniq plans to work with MOTU to implement an update to the current MR Series profile to accommodate current and future expansion boards.

This procedure should help to insure successful communication between the MR-61/76 and the Unisyn program:

1. The person who has an MR-61/76 may get an error message on boot-up. It's only due to the fact that the Unisyn editor is looking for an MR-Rack. The profile was done using an MR-Rack but works fine with the keyboard.

2. Press Cancel and the Unisyn program boots anyway.

3. Go to the WINDOW menu in Unisyn.

4. Select "Modules."

5. Double-click on "Sounds" in the Modules window.

6. Select Bank 2 and any program from 0-127 on the Unisyn page. (This selects the RAM bank in the MR.)

7. Now press the Librarian button in the Disk/Global section on the MR keyboard.

8. Scroll to "Set up RAM memory?"

9. Press YES.

10. Turn the MR Value knob to select 65k for Sounds.

11. Press YES twice.

12. Now select the MR sound you'd like to edit in Unisyn. Select the Sound Bank and Sound Patch number in Unisyn.

13. Go to the MIDI menu in Unisyn and GET PATCH.

14. The sound is now in Unisyn. Switch the Sound Bank and Sound Patch # back to Bank 2(RAM) and the proper sound/patch location you like it saved to.

15. Edit the sound in Unisyn and then go to the MIDI menu and SEND PATCH.

The sound should now go to the MR sound RAM Bank location specified.

The MR Series is in a very dynamic phase at this point, with new expansion boards being released regularly, along with MR-61/76 operating system enhancements planned. Stay tuned to the *Hacker* for another exciting installment of this series focusing on the MR-61/76 — there's plenty more to follow. ▬

Special thanks to Alan Blake, Product Manager for the MR Series of instruments, for his help with the Unisyn procedure.

RND (♪♪♪)

Ensoniq Releases New DP/Pro Professional 24-Bit Effects Processor

Ensoniq Corp. has introduced the all new **DP/Pro** Professional 24-Bit Effects Processor. This new stereo effects processor is designed to provide studio-quality sound, and the features and performance required by the most demanding mixing applications.

The **DP/Pro** contains two of Ensoniq's next generation 24-bit ESP-2 Digital Signal Processors. Each processor runs 24 million instructions per second (MIPS), at internal sample rates of 44.1 or 48 kHz, and from 32 to 48 kHz synchronized to an incoming external digital audio signal.

The new algorithms in the **DP/Pro** take advantage of Ensoniq's advanced effects architecture. The 24-bit stereo reverb algorithms in the **DP/Pro** have the density and smooth decays that a great final mix demands. Full-bandwidth delays are also 24-bit stereo and the Multi-Tap Delay provides as many as 32 separate taps. The new dynamics algorithms include features such as hard or soft knee characteristics, peak or RMS detection, and a variable lookahead delay. Other algorithms include: Parametric and Graphic Equalization, Gates, De-Esser, Multi-Chorus, Flanger, Phaser, Tremolo, Panner, Chatter Box, Multi-Pitch Shift, Loop Recorder, Rotary Speaker and many more.

The user interface provides intuitive ease-of-use as well as innovative convenience features such as Tap Tempo, Tweak, and Effect Finder. The **DP/Pro** also provides a flexible and comprehensive modulation system and MIDI implementation.

The **DP/Pro** has been carefully designed to provide impeccable sonic quality. Frequency response ranges from 10 Hz to 20 kHz. THD is less than 0.003% at 90 dB below the maximum output signal. The dynamic range is greater than 100 dB. The rear panel features electronically balanced inputs with Neutrik combination XLR and 1/4" TRS input jacks. The outputs are ground compensated, with separate XLR and 1/4" TRS output jacks. A signal level switch (+4 dBu /-10 dBV) allows proper signal level matching. A dual foot switch input jack as well as MIDI In, Out and Thru connectors are also included. The **DP/Pro** is equipped with an internal universal input switching power supply.

Switchable stereo dual 6-segment LED headroom meters monitor either the analog input or the digital output. Analog signals are processed by the latest generation of Delta-Sigma 20-bit converters. When 24-bit converters become available, Ensoniq will provide an optional user-installable 24-bit converter upgrade kit, the ADC-24. Another user-installable option is the DI-Pro Digital I/O, which provides both 20-bit S/PDIF and 24-bit AES/EBU. The **DP/Pro** can mix both the analog and digital input signals.

Suggested Retail Prices (US):

DP/Pro	$1395.00
DI-Pro	$269.00
ADC-24	TBA

New MegaDisk for Ensoniq Samplers Released by Syntaur Productions

"It's kind of like a CD-ROM, only it's on a 3.5-inch floppy disk," says Sam Mims, President of the Houston-based **Syntaur Productions.** He is referring to the new *MegaDisk* that the company has just released, a double-density disk packed full of samples for the Ensoniq EPS, EPS-16 Plus, ASR, and TS-series keyboards. "What makes this disk unique," he said, "is that it contains 38 different instruments, at least six or seven times the number found on most disks." There are drum kits, percussion sounds, basses, keyboard sounds, aggressive synth sounds, pads, and more.

To create the *MegaDisk*, Syntaur programmers Todd Speer, Kyle Kee, and Mims developed instruments that were extremely memory-efficient, and that used specialized techniques to pack as much sound into as small a space as possible.

One drum kit, for instance, 174 blocks in size, offers some 70 discrete drum and percussion sounds. Some synth instruments use the mod wheel to switch between different single-cycle waveforms as the wheel is rolled forward. On one of these, for example, the user can select any of 62 different sounds to span the full keyboard — all from a single 85-block instrument! And because of the extensive programming, the sounds are very expressive, making full use of patch selects, velocity control, mod wheel, and CV pedal.

Because the resulting file sizes are tiny — averaging about 40 blocks — the instruments load in a heartbeat, another similarity to using a CD-ROM drive.

"I'm extremely proud of this disk," Mims said. "Todd and Kyle did a brilliant job of putting these sounds together, and I think this disk represents some of the best work we've done. The *MegaDisk* sells for $16.95 — that works out to about 44 cents per sound. Most CD-ROMs can't even touch that."

The *MegaDisk* is available from Syntaur Productions, 5402 W. 43rd St., Houston, TX 77092; call (713) 682-1960 or (800) 334-1288.

* * *

Long-time *Hacker* contributor, Craig Anderton, has released the second edition of *"Home Recording for Musicians."* This revised edition is a complete rewrite of the original classic text and includes new material on digital tape, hard disk recording, mixing techniques, premastering, mixdown automation, sequencing, synchronization, and much more. This must-have book is published by AMSCO, a division of Music Sales, and is available at music and book stores.

Current Ensoniq O.S. (Disk/EPROM)

EPS	2.49/2.40	SQ-2	1.2
EPS-M	2.49/2.41	SQ-2 32	2.03
EPS-16 PLUS	1.3/1.00F	SD-1/SD-1 32	4.10/4.10
MASOS	2.0	DP/4	1.15
MIRAGE	3.2	DP/4+	2.05
ESQ	3.5	DP/2	1.02
ESQ-M	1.2	KS-32	3.10
SQ-80	1.8	ASR-10	3.53/1.5
VFX	2.30	ASR-88	3.53/3.50
VFX-SD	2.1/2.00	KMX-8	2.00
SQ-1	1.11	KMX-16	1.50
SQ-1 32	2.03	TS-10/12	3.10
SQ-1 PLUS	1.15	KT-76/88	1.62
SQ-R	1.20	SDP-1	1.70
SQ-R 32	2.03	MR Rack	1.50
SQ-R PLUS	1.15	MR-61/76	1.64

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WAVEBOY INDUSTRIES

In Search of The Perfect Sample

Part Dos

Tom Shear

Okay, so last time we met here, you had gone through the mindnumbing task of getting ready to put together a great sample. If your aching brain has recovered by now, we can finally get started and discover just what that mysterious sample button does after all. Get ready... Get set...

Whatever it is you're sampling from, make sure there's a line going from its output, to your sampler's input, which is on the rear panel near the headphone jack. Cue up the source and go ahead and hit the sample button. It should ask you where you want to put this new sample. To place the sample in an entirely new instrument, press any of the instrument buttons that you don't have anything loaded into. This will automatically create a new instrument, and a new layer in which to place your sample. Your other option is to place the sample in an existing instrument. This is the technique you'd be using to put together, for instance, a drum kit, or a multi-sampled piano. In this case, you simply select the instrument and layer you want the sample to go to. Press the YES button once you're all set here. Your screen should go blank except for a funny little bunch of vertical lines and an asterisk on the left hand side. This is your own little "VU meter" that you'll use to make sure the input level is correct on your sampler's end. Go ahead and play your source and you should see the lines jump to the right, past the asterisk, which is your trigger level... more on that later. The level you are looking for ideally, is one where the bars go all the way to the right at the loudest point in the sound without the "AMP" lighting up above it. Whenever "AMP" lights, that means the source is too loud and will cause distortion if you don't lower its volume.

Your sampler can trigger the start of recording in two ways. The usual way is that it begins sampling as soon as the volume of your source goes above a certain level (indicated by the asterisk on the main sampling page.) You can change this level by pressing the up or down arrow key... the asterisk should move accordingly, indicating the new level at which the sampler will do its thing. This allows you to hit the YES button to start sampling, and your machine will wait for you to run across the room and hit PLAY on your CD player before it starts sampling. However, if you're sampling something that is very quiet, you may prefer to have it start sampling as soon as you hit the YES key. To set yourself up for this, you'll hit the down arrow until the asterisk is as far right as it will go. With this set-up, as soon as you hit YES, it will start sampling. From the main sampling page, you can scroll left or right for some other options, but for the most part, you won't need to touch these unless you're recording from a microphone, in which case you should set it to mic level input.

So now we have our source cued and ready to go and our levels are set perfectly. Take a deep breath... and hit YES to begin sampling. Play your source, and when it's finished, hit YES to tell the sampler to stop sampling. Your sampler will think for a couple seconds and then it will ask you to select a ROOT KEY. This is where on the keyboard the sampler will place the sound at its original pitch. Congratulations! You just sampled, my friend!

So there you have your first sample... you've played with it a bit, and it's a little... shall we say... uninspiring. Well, a raw sample is almost never very usable, so don't despair. That's what we're going to take care of next.

The first thing you should *always* do after you take a sample is to NORMALIZE it. Normalization boosts the volume of the sample as high as it can go without distortion occurring. If you're really a pro at setting

your levels, this might not have much of an apparent difference, but generally, you should hear a boost in level after applying it. To do so, hit COMMAND-AMP. It should be the first thing you see. Hit YES and say YES to all the options it presents... you can mess with those later. Your sampler will think for a couple seconds and you'll be presented the normalized wavesample.

The next step varies depending on what type of sound you've sampled. If it is a sustaining sound that you want to be heard for as long as you hold the note down, we'll need to loop it. If it is a drum or any other type of non-repeating sound, skip to the next paragraph on truncation. But let's start with looping, shall we? As you may have heard, looping is probably the toughest part of sampling, and to be frank, at first you're probably really going to suck at it. But, as with anything worthwhile, with practice comes perfection. Looping lets you have a certain portion of a sound repeat over and over again for a sustained sound. For instance, you might want to loop the sustaining portion of a guitar after the pick attack. If we didn't have looping, we'd have to make extremely huge samples and multi sample everything just to get something usable. For this example, we'll do a simple FORWARD ONLY loop. You'll find all the looping parameters on the EDIT-WAVE page.

The first thing to do is to change the looping mode from FORWARD-NO LOOP to LOOP FORWARD. If you play a key now, you'll hear the whole sound repeating over and over again. Hit the right arrow key again and you'll see the SAMPLE START parameter. You shouldn't have to touch this unless there is dead space at the beginning of your sample. Skip past the SAMPLE END parameter and you'll see the LOOP START page. What you want to do is to move the LOOP START past the attack portion of the sound (the pick of a guitar, the mallet thunk of a xylophone) to where the sound starts to sustain. Now, scroll right to the LOOP END parameter. Pull this level down so that now the sustain repeats over and over again. Go back and forth between the LOOP START and LOOP END and try to tweak them to a point where the loop is as undetectable as possible. Chances are, there are still some pops or clicks in there making the loop obvious. To help you out with these, you'll find a wide array of crossfade algorithms on the COMMAND-WAVE page to help smooth things out. If this doesn't seem to do the trick, go back and try a LOOP BI-DIRECTION and select a BIDIRECTIONAL X-FADE — this has given me excellent results on more than a few occasions. Keep in mind that some sounds are harder to loop than others. If the sounds fade out like piano notes, or if there are irregularities in the sound itself, you are going to have a bear of a time getting a decent loop. But, be assured, it *can* be done. You just need to practice.

Okay, so you've looped the sound (or are using a non-looping sample)... chances are you have some excess sound there that you don't need. To trim off this sonic "fat," we'll use the TRUNCATE command under the COMMAND-WAVE page. First, on the EDIT-WAVE page, set the SAMPLE START and SAMPLE END parameters so that you're not hearing any parts of the sound you don't want to, as well as trimming off any extra silence (which eats up just as much memory as a normal sound) that may be at the end. If the sound is looped, you can pull the SAMPLE END down as far as it will go and your sampler won't let it go past the LOOP END position, so you don't accidentally hack off any part of the sample you need for the loop. Once you are satisfied, locate the TRUNCATE WAVESAMPLE command on the EDIT-WAVE page and hit YES. The sampler will let you give the yea or nay on the newly svelte sample and you'll now have a sample that takes up less memory than it did in its raw form!

So there you have the basic ingredients to a super sample. I realize these instructions are only very basic, but as you can imagine, one could literally write a book if they covered every single base, and I imagine our fearless editrix has already fired up her trusty word counter. Next time, we'll go through some of the final steps of further improving your sample. 'Til then, practice practice practice!

Bio: Tom Shear refuses to do "The Macarena."

WAY BIG: The Chicago SCD-1 CDROM

Pat Finnigan

For: ASR, TS Variants.
Product: *SCD-1 Chicago Signature Series CDROM.*
Price: $249.95.
From: Ensoniq, 155 Great Valley Parkway, Malvern, PA 19355, 610-647-3930 (voice), 610-647-8908 (fax)

With this, the first of the *Signature Series* CDROMs, Ensoniq once again demonstrates its allegiance to the performing community, as well as its knack for offering wares nobody else has (or can get, for that matter).

The *SCD-1 Chicago CDROM* represents the latest in a set of Ensoniq coups that have resulted in some of the best and biggest pop samples set to CD. Actual performances were taken from these guys during a session to DAT and massaged into what could be one of the best CDs Ensoniq has offered. Special care was taken to capture certain processing techniques; the basses and guitars were actually recorded thru a variety of vintage Rupert Neve preamps, compressors, etc, to get more of a "studio" sound/feel (as well as great gain!) throughout this project, and the results are, well...

The Roses

You'd think this CD would be all about brass, but there's lots more that lives out here. You'll find 27k+ block fretlesses, 28k+ block B-3's, and the vocal samples are just unbelievable. A 9889 block "Oohs and Ahhs" that xfade on Mr. Modwheel has to be heard to be appreciated. Most of the killer sounds are available in a low-cal version for 8 Mb ASRs and TS-series machines, so this CD can go a long way. The guitar and bass samples, although not as numerous as the horn waves, are a real find, and definitely are looking to roost in 16 Mb machines. The B-3 samples are not the same DeFrancesco library fare: Bill Champlin's B-3 stops are captured here, and although not an everyday sample for all uses, reflects interesting drawbar use in the upper harmonic registers. Some of the organ waves (as well as the 29538-block "B3 Slow Lix") are sampled with the Leslie on: I detected little, if any, upper rotor speedup between adjacent samples, so Malvern took samples per key on most of these. Well done.

The brass samples are stupendous, from "bwee-daps" to "bad-upps," everything in the brass zone that's made Chicago horns so identifiable is here: there's even a coupla 10k-12k "Brass Lix" compilations that feature the open voicings and dynamic swells so characteristic of the band. Again, smaller versions are present that require 1/3 of their big brother's memory requirement, so actually a few of these will fit into an EPS Classic once you get them to 800k floppies. And the articulations and all the subtle nuances are captured as well, not only on the brasses, but all the waves. You get the contact noise of the B-3, you get samples of Jason Scheff's thumb cells on the bass waves; this is pretty critical stuff here, and you can hear it.

Percussion is not forgotten on *SCD-1*: you'll find 88, 95, 100 and 110 BPM loops here, as well as some ethnic wares like tablas (I don't think Ensoniq has done any tablas since the original Mirage Sitar disk, have they?), udu drums, kalimbas, clay drums, etc.. And I wanna know what a caxixi is since they've sampled it both wet and dry, as well as a Miridangum. There's even a 6/4 loop kit for you serious spin doctor types. Fender Jazz, fretless, Peavey 5-string, looped and unlooped grooves are here for bass perusal...

And then come the vocal samples: these are the sleepers you'd never expect to find on a Chicago sampling CD. Both major and minor samples, perfect loops, quality you'd never get from a vocal group and a trick Aphex engineer. The vocals are airy enough without getting too padlike or swirly, but lend themselves into just that with judicious FX programming. Ear candy like this you don't expect to find and it's as well-documented as all the Ensoniq wares. Patch select buttons control DDL times in many of these samples...

As for the brass samples, well, you know Chicago: these are legendary samples of a legendary band far above reproach...

The Thorns

Trivial error in a couple of the docs: patch 0X responds to the documentation that details patch X0, as in the B3 Three file of DM #3103. This is really no big deal, but I wanted to point it out because it represents the only real

error I've uncovered from Ensoniq docs over the past 12 years, so there. Na-Ni-Na-Ni-Boo-Boo (spelling doesn't count)...

I noticed there's a lot of air time following the end of the sound and the end of the sample: judicious truncating of a lot of the "lick" samples can bring them down in memory size. On the other hand, if you've ever heard a VCA snap shut thru an FX processor, you may wanna reconsider: maybe Ensoniq thought this one out. In either case, there's a lot of dead air at the end of many of these "lick" samples you may wanna twiddle with and conserve memory if you're driving an 8 Mb or 10Mb ASR...

The Deal

If you're looking to animate your brass library, look no further: this CD fills that bill with some ab fab performances. There's enough grist on this CD to torque the bonus things like the basses and guitars into smaller, more usable (memory efficient) instruments. The inclusions of rhythm section instruments does not go unnoticed, and is gratefully appreciated, as Chicago horns out of context would not be Chicago horns. Kudos to Ensoniq for getting these sounds to CD in both large and small format: the 8 Mb TS-types can savor this CD as well as the 16 Mb ASR vets. The inclusions of the audio track "Evangeline" on this CD point to the Toto-esque direction Chicago is heading since the loss of guitarist Terry Kath and bassist Peter Cetera (the readily identifiable "voice" of Chicago). Keep in mind this was a take of a work in progress when recorded, and you'll see what I mean. And to illustrate the accuracy of these horn samples, some of the horn lines are pulled down in such unison you'll know they're samples from this CD and not live horns. If they didn't deliberately do that, you would have sworn...

But leave the vocal samples alone, because they kill as published. I'm already using that "Oooh Ahhh" file on Celine Dion's arrangement of Arethra's *"Natural Woman"* (it'll play "Ahhh Oooh if you reverse mod wheel polarity) and behind the MR-series "TundraVox" pad for those Gary Moore-type guitar solos. SCD-1 is probably one of the most well-rounded offerings you'll find, if not THE most well rounded. As with all *Signature Series* wares, you'll pay a little more for the luxury of owning the best (and only) Chicago samples available for the Ensoniq box. But it returns it fivefold: you not only get these gorgeous, HUGE brass samples, you get basses, drums, loops, organs, vocals: there's even an audio track called *"Evangeline"* on this CD which demonstrates more than a few of the warez on this CD in operation. Makes me wish Ensoniq would trip just once in a while just to show they're human...

I remember receiving Jimi Hendrix concert tickets for my 18th birthday. When the lights went down at 7:30 that May 21st, a 10-piece front band called Chicago Transit Authority fronted Jimi. Even back then, I thought "Hey, these guys just might go somewhere with this kind of idea." 17 albums later, it looks like I wasn't alone. Ensoniq's trying to spread the same message on a more accurate medium than the vinyl we had back then for a technology not even dreamed of back then. *SCD-1* is a must have for archival purposes, a sterling set well worth the price of admission; a genuine bargain from Ensoniq who had the foresight to capture the essence of this band on CD.

This thing looks as big as a soccer ball when it floats over the plate: if you just swing in its general direction you can't miss... ▬

Bio: When not answering video-capture questions for TrueVision, Pat is a tech support person for RasterOps. He still uses a B-3 for a keyboard stand.

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Doin' the Shuffle

Shuffling Sounds in the TS-Series Keyboards — Part 1

Tom Tracy

Okay you've got a great keyboard with 120 RAM sounds, 180 ROM sounds, as well as an assortment of TSD floppies — in other words, you've got a (dare I say it?) plethora of sounds. And with so many sounds (plethorawise), it seems that one of the most confusing areas in the TS Series is how to rearrange (or manage) the sounds for optimal usage. Now you're probably saying, "Wait a minute, I can load up to two optional banks of 20 sampled sounds in any order I want," but I'm not talkin' sampled sounds here. I'm only talking internal sounds (what the TS world calls "programs").

Here're two possible scenarios for shuffling the sounds:

Internal Shuffling — All the sounds you need are right there in the TS, but they're all over the place. You know which sounds you'd like to use for your live performances, but since they're in several different Bank-Set locations, it takes too long to try and find them. You'd really like them to be located next to each other in the same bank, so that when you'd like to switch sounds in the middle of a song, they'd be right there.

External shuffling — You've created a great sequence, but you just can't seem to find the exact sound you need. Maybe the sound you really want is located elsewhere, like on a TSD floppy. How is it possible to load just that one sound into the TS without blowing away everything you've done?

Finding the ultimate sound for your sequence, or arranging the most commonly used sounds for live performances are no doubt the two most common reasons to shuffle sounds.

Before you begin, save your work!

If you've made any edits, created any sequences, or done anything that you might want to recall at a later time, I highly recommend that you save your work before you proceed (see the Storage section in your TS *Musician's Manual* for more information about saving files). I'd also recommend saving your work as a 60 SEQ/SONG file type. This way, you can save your current sounds and sequences all at once in one file.

Internal Shuffling

For the purpose of this scenario, let's say that you only need a few sounds for your live setup — an acoustic piano, a Hammond organ, a string section, and a saxophone.

Step 1 — Save Your Work

This is a very important step, one that I cannot stress enough. It is always good to backup your work, even before it's completed. Save your work right where you are now. If you shuffle things around, you may loose something that you later want to recall.

Step 2 — Choose your Final Bank Location

This step is also important. When you copy a sound to another location, it replaces the existing sound. In other words, you loose the pre-existing sound. Bummer. But remember, since you saved everything in step 1, you haven't lost any sounds forever. For this scenario, using the default factory setup, we'll shuffle all of the "live performance" sounds that we need to RAM Bank 00 (this bank is identical to ROM bank 49, so we won't loose any sounds!).

Step 3 — Locating the First Sound

Okay, the first thing that has to be done is to find the sounds we really want. You really like the BRITE-PNO piano sound, so let's move that one first.

While holding the BankSet button down, press the Bank 2 button, then release both buttons. You've just selected the ROM 2 BankSet.

Press the Bank 0 button. The display shows six different acoustic pianos.

Press the upper right button in the display. This selects the BRITE-PNO sound.

Step 4 — Copying the First Sound

Now we're gonna move it to the RAM bank 00:

Press the Copy button.

Press the lower right button on the display beneath MAKE COPY. The display momentarily shows "COPY COMPLETED" then returns to the Copy page.

Press the lower middle button in the display to select RECALL. This takes us to the WRITE EDIT PROGRAM page.

Press and hold the Bank 0 button. If the upper left area in the display shows U1-0, then press the BankSet button once. You should see U0-0, which is RAM bank 00.

With the Bank 0 button still pressed down, decide which location you'd like copy the piano sound to, and press its related button in the display.

Copying the Other Sounds

Using the above four steps, repeat the procedures for all of the sounds that you'd like to move (your Hammond organ, string section, saxophone, whatever). It's pretty easy once you get started, and soon you'll have the sounds you use most often just where you want them. In the next installment, we'll discuss "External Shuffling — finding the ultimate sound for your preset." ▬

Bio: Tom Tracy, no longer a corporate citizen, stands tall as he faces the horizon with his back to the great valley.

Jazz Guitars I and II for the SQ/KSs

Dan Rohde

Guitar sounds are notoriously tricky to simulate on keyboards, which I hope you'll remember when you program these two patches and they don't sound exactly like George Bensonor or Joe Pass. They do both sound quite different from any of the stock SQ guitar sounds, though, and work fine for the backup rhythm and lead riffs in my sequences.

The jazz guitar is a complex machine, usually an oversized acoustic model with two f-holes and electric pickups. This combination of wood, steel, plastic and lacquer results in a unique sound that initiates with the slight scratch of a pick or fingernail on the string followed by a rich, warm tone that soon fades. When the need to be heard above the horn section arises, the jazz guitarist can boost his or her treble with the twist of a knob or the flick of a toggle switch.

The task of simulating this tonal fingerprint would have been easier if the KS-32 had a sample of a jazz guitar. But, alas, this sample is not among the 168 available. So, the problem to solve was how close could I get. To cover all the possible ways that a jazz guitar could sound might require, oh, 1,392 patches or so, but I'll show you just two possible ways to skin this proverbial cat.

Jazz Guitar I

JGI is designed for background rhythm. A maximum of six strings could be played, but it's common to play chords of only three or four notes, their voicings carefully chosen. The duration of all three voices is brief since rhythm guitar emphasizes just that — the rhythm. I was shooting for an older Gretsch guitar sound, the Country Gentleman model that allows you to elevate a little sponge to come in contact with the strings.

KS Prog:JAZZ GUITAR I

By: Dan Rohde

WAVE	1	2	3
Select Voice	On	On	On
Wave Class	String	Expans	String
Wave	GtrVarl	NlnGtr	ElecGtr
Delay Time	00	00	00
Wave Direction	Forward	Forward	Forward
Start Index	40	50	35
MODSCR	Vel	Vel	
MODAMT	-15	00	-35
Restrk Decay	20	20	20

PITCH	1	2	3
Octave	00	-1	00
Semitone	00	00	00
Fine	+01	+02	-03
ENV1	00	00	00
LFO	00	00	00
MODSCR	-	-	-
MODAMT	-	-	-
KBD Ptch Track	On	On	On
Glide	Off	Off	Off
Glide Time	-	-	-

ENV1	1	2	3
Initial	-	-	-
Peak	-	-	-
Break	-	-	-
Sustain	-	-	-
Attack	-	-	-
Decay 1	-	-	-
Decay 2	-	-	-
Release	-	-	-
Vel-Level	-	-	-
Vel-Attack	-	-	-
Vel Curve	-	-	-
Mode	-	-	-
KBD Track	-	-	-

LFO	1	2	3
LFO Speed	-	-	-
Noise Rate	-	-	-
Level	-	-	-
Delay	-	-	-
MODSRC	-	-	-
Wave	-	-	-
Restart	-	-	-

FILTER	1	2	3
Filter 1	2Lo	2Lo	2Lo
Filter 2	2Hi	2Hi	2Hi
FC1 Cutoff	30	55	35
ENV 2	+13	+02	+07
FC1 KBD	00	00	00
MODSCR	WL/TM	WL/TM	WL/TM
MODAMT	+13	+10	+13
FC2 Cutoff	00	32	27
ENV2	00	00	00
FC2 KBD	00	00	00
FC1MOD-FC2	On	On	On

ENV2	1	2	3
Initial	99	99	99
Peak	99	99	99
Break	75	75	75
Sustain	00	00	00
Attack	00	00	00
Decay 1	50	50	50
Decay 2	70	70	70
Release	30	30	30
Vel-Level	19	19	19
Vel-Attack	00	00	00
Vel Curve	Conv	Conv	Conv
Mode	Norm	Norm	Norm
KBD Track	+56	+56	+56

AMP	1	2	3
Initial	99	99	99
Peak	85	99	99
Break	70	80	80
Sustain	00	00	00
Attack	10	05	05
Decay 1	10	10	10
Decay 2	10	10	10
Release	20	20	20
Vel-Level	19	13	19
Vel-Attack	00	06	00
Vel Curve	QuikRise	Convex	Convex
Mode	Norm	Norm	Norm
KBD Track	00	00	00

OUTPUT	1	2	3
VOL	85	75	99
Boost	On	Off	Off
MODSRC	WL/TM	WL/TM	WL/TM
MODAMT	-05	00	-15
KBD Scale	+30	+28	+03
Key Range	E1-G7	E1-G7	E1-G7
Output Bus	FX1	FX1	FX1
Priority	Med	Med	Med
Pan	-14	00	+14
Vel window	00	00	00

EFFECTS — CHORUS AND REVERB

FX-1	15	FX-2	10
Decay time	15	HF Damping	99
Chorus Rate	20	Chorus Depth	20
Chorus Center	45	Feedback	-
Chorus Level	33	MOD (Dest)	-
BY (MODSRC)	-	MODAMT	-

Notes: Muted jazz guitar, filters modulated to simulate treble/bass tone control.

KS Prog: JAZZ GUITAR II

By: Dan Rohde

WAVE	1	2	3
Select Voice	On	On	On
Wave Class	Waveform	String	String
Wave	Clarinet	ActsGtr	GtrHarm
Delay Time	00	00	00
Wave Direction	-	Forward	Forward
Start Index	-	05	20
MODSCR	-	Vel	Vel
MODAMT	-	-10	-20
Restrk Decay	20	20	20

PITCH	1	2	3
Octave	-1	00	-1
Semitone	00	00	00
Fine	+03	+01	-01
ENV1	00	00	00
LFO	00	00	00
MODSCR	-	-	-
MODAMT	-	-	-
KBD Ptch Track	Pn	On	On
Glide	Off	Off	Off
Glide Time	-	-	-

ENV1	1	2	3
Initial	-	-	-
Peak	-	-	-
Break	-	-	-
Sustain	-	-	-
Attack	-	-	-
Decay 1	-	-	-
Decay 2	-	-	-
Release	-	-	-
Vel-Level	-	-	-
Vel-Attack	-	-	-
Vel Curve	-	-	-
Mode	-	-	-
KBD Track	-	-	-

LFO	1	2	3
LFO Speed	-	-	-
Noise Rate	-	-	-
Level	-	-	-
Delay	-	-	-
MODSRC	-	-	-
Wave	-	-	-
Restart	-	-	-

FILTER	1	2	3
Filter 1	2Lo	3Lo	3Lo
Filter 2	2Hi	1Hi	1Hi
FC1 Cutoff	30	40	45
ENV 2	15	+15	+10
FC1 KBD	00	00	00
MODSCR	WL/TM	WL/TM	WL/TM
MODAMT	+13	+05	+15
FC2 Cutoff	00	00	00
ENV2	00	+10	+00
FC2 KBD	00	00	00
FC1MOD-FC2	On	On	On

ENV2	1	2	3
Initial	32	32	32
Peak	99	99	99
Break	54	54	54
Sustain	99	99	99
Attack	17	17	17
Decay 1	22	22	22
Decay 2	80	80	80
Release	16	16	16
Vel-Level	19	19	19
Vel-Attack	06	06	06
Vel Curve	QuikRise	QuikRise	QuikRise
Mode	Norm	Norm	Norm
KBD Track	+28	+28	+28

AMP	1	2	3
Initial	99	99	99
Peak	99	99	99
Break	75	80	75
Sustain	00	00	00
Attack	00	00	00
Decay 1	48	30	50
Decay 2	42	35	50
Release	20	20	20
Vel-Level	19	19	19
Vel-Attack	00	00	00
Vel Curve	Quik	Quik	Quik
Mode	Norm	Norm	Norm
KBD Track	00	+28	+14

OUTPUT	1	2	3
VOL	65	70	80
Boost	On	On	On
MODSRC	WL/TM	WL/TM	WL/TM
MODAMT	-10	-05	-05
KBD Scale	-20	+30	+07
Key Range	E1-G7	E1-G7	E1-G7
Output Bus	FX1	FX1	FX1
Priority	Med	Med	Med
Pan	-14	00	+14
Vel window	00	00	00

EFFECTS — CHORUS AND REVERB

FX-1	20	FX-2	10
Decay time	10	HF Damping	99
Chorus Rate	15	Chorus Depth	40
Chorus Center	47	Feedback	+10
Chorus Level	40	MOD (Dest)	-
BY (MODSRC)	-	MODAMT	-

Notes: Filters simulate tone controls.

Voice 2 mimics the pick or fingernail attack at the front edge of this sound. Under Wave, Start Index=50 begins the Nylon Guitar sample past its brightest attack, and the ModAmount=00 keeps this constant. Pitch Fine=+02 gives it a (very) slight sharpness for the extra stretch it gets from the initial pluck. Env1 can also be used for this purpose, but it didn't seem necessary to me. Filter settings for Voice 2 — and the other two voices — let you use either Wheel or Timbre to give it a bassier or treblier tone. Env2=+02 for Voice 2 helps to modulate the Filter screens. (All Voices use Piano Decay Default in Env2.) Amp settings for all three Voices produce a brief sound. These Amp settings are meant to enable the player to produce a consistent short note duration.

Voices 1 and 3, Guitar Variation I and Electric Guitar, are used for their, oh, what words fit here, warm, full-bodiedness. Wave ModSource and ModAmounts settings for both Voices enable a faster velocity to produce a brighter attack by beginning them closer to the front of their sample. Pitch and Output Panning produce a little stereo separation. Chorus+Reverb helps fill out the sound without being too out of phase. A plain old Reverb effect also suffices. For more bite, either Distortion+Reverb or Phase Shift works, too.

Jazz Guitar II

JGII is meant to create a similar but much more sustained sound than JGI. For variety I tried using three different samples. At one time in the process of creating these patches, Sine Wave, Bubbawave, and others were part of JGII, but my ear finally settled on the three listed.

As in JGI, Voice 2 simulates the initial pick or pluck part of the sound. Wave settings again help provide some Velocity control over how much of the attack is heard. Amp settings cause Voice 2 to fade rather quickly. Wheel or Timbre modulation for all three Voices both increases the amount of higher frequencies (Filter) and decreases the volume (Output) to avoid overdoing the treble. All Voices use the Brass Filter Default for Envelope 2, which affect the Filter settings. The Amp envelope causes Voices 1 and 3 to sustain, then gradually fade.

Even though I've shown two different Jazz Guitar programs, I will candidly add that neither is exactly the epitome of, say, a vintage Guild or a Gibson ES. So, to aid you in your quest for the other 1,390 jazz guitar sounds, here are a few ways you could monkey around with these two patches.

1. To make JGI sustain, choose Piano Decay Default (Amp) for any or all of the Voices.

2. To create a cross fade between two Voices in a patch, assign a positive value to its ModAmount under under Output. This will make one Voice louder while the other gets quieter as you roll the wheel.

3. You can choose a Voice to use only Reverb by assigning it to FX2 under Output, while the other voices keep their Chorus Effect.

4. To reduce Voice hogging of polyphony or to get a leaner if not meaner sound, experiment with only two of the three Voices by selecting Off under the first Wave screen.

5. Put both JGI and II in a Preset so you can hear all six voices at once, in effect creating a patch with six Voices. A Preset allows you to easily adjust either one of the program's volume. You can also easily get that popular two-simultaneous-notes-one-octave-apart-like-Wes-Montgomery effect by transposing either patch down an octave.

6. Instead of choosing Timbre (or wheel) for all ModSources, you can assign Wheel (or Timbre) to one or two of them. When used in a Preset, you will have control over separate aspects of the sound. (With both programs in a preset, the number of permutations increases exponentially, eh?)

7. Try using JGI or II in a Preset with one of your existing guitar sounds.

Infinity times infinity equals a really lot of possibilities, eh? In any case, I hope you like the patches. Your feedback is appreciated at my e-mail address: darohde@gandalf.muscatine.k12.ia.us ▬

Bio: Dan Rohde is looking for a good bass pond and a baby blue '55 Chevy Nomad to get there in.

System Commander

Command your Destiny — Part I

Garth Hjelte

Did'ja ever wonder if Bill Gates ever personally wrote a single line of code for any of the Windows products? Or is Steven Jobs or Steve Wozniack's signature on any of the Apple systems?

Don't need to wonder about this though — you are the unsung captain of your ship, which if you are a Ensoniq sampler user, is an Original EPS, an EPS 16-Plus, an ASR-10/88, or their new sampler, the Starship Enterprise. (Jean-Luc just took over Ensoniq — his word to the engineers — "Make It So.")

You take charge of your craft using the EDIT-SYSTEM combination. Perhaps you weren't ever aware of these parameters; or perhaps you need to take another look at them. You are the SYSTEM COMMANDER.

Two notes before we begin: I feel compelled to bring a strong defense for Ensoniq's manuals. Read through them again — *they are very good*! This article in no way replaces the manual — it's just meant to help you with some applications and ramifications of the settings. Check with the manual for the basic information.

Set Them Free

Two parameters here, FREE SYSTEM BLOCKS and FREE DISK BLOCKS. Just like Bill Gates and his desk (let's not talk about his DESK, for heaven's sake), you use two parts — the desktop and the drawers. In your EPS/ASR, there is the memory installed inside your unit. That's the desktop area where you can play your sounds and program your sequences. There're also the storage devices hooked up that keep your sounds, sequences, and other files happy while the 120/220 AC isn't flowing. Those are the drawers and the file cabinets.

FREE SYSTEM BLOCKS tells you how much memory you have yet to use. The Original EPS can have a max of 4092 blocks for sound plus 1024 blocks for sequences. The 16-Plus can have the same max 4092 blocks for sounds, but the sequences don't have their separate memory area, and share the 4092 blocks. The 16-Plus also has a kinda fun option called FLASHBANK that can add 1/2 a meg or a full meg of "special" memory. FLASHBANK is a cross between a storage device and memory. The sounds play directly out of memory, and don't take up any of the normal 4092 blocks. FLASHBANK is very difficult to find these days — Ensoniq does not make it anymore, and there have been no replacements.

Remember, a "meg" is NOT 1,000 blocks nor is it 1,024 blocks. It's 2048 blocks. Why? A block is Ensoniq's term for a storage unit of 512 bytes. (Why 512? That's 2 to the 9th power.) A megabyte (not to be confused with "megaword") is 1,048,576 bytes. Divide that by 512, and you get 2048 blocks.

FREE DISK BLOCKS tells you how much room is left on your storage device (floppy, CD-ROM drive, hard drive, or Flashbank). You'll notice it sometimes says INVALID. That's because the EPS/ASR has not yet checked the device. Select the device (using CHANGE STORAGE DEVICE under COMMAND-SYSTEM), and the DISK BLOCKS FREE will show.

Tunemaster

This is easy enough. +99 almost gets you to the next higher half-step, and -99 does the opposite. It's also nice that as you change it, the pitch goes up a down accordingly (just like on analog synths!), so you can tune yourself to your B-3 as you play outside using a generator that only runs on 50 Hz. (Did you know that? Hammond B-3s use turning wheels to generate their sound, and they run off the cycling of the alternating current. If you use a gas-driven generator, often they run at 50 Hz, and not 60 Hz, and the wheels don't turn as fast, and the pitch is lower.)

World Pitch Bend

One thing that drives me crazy about Yanni (except that all of his songs are in 7/8-7/4, but I do like that) is that he always uses unnatural pitch bends to his sounds — two half-steps — a whole step. Now a guitar player can bend a whole step if he really, really tries but it is rare — generally it's more like a half-step. Same with brass and wind players. So most ears are attuned to half-step bends in most cases.

GLOBAL BEND RANGE programs a system wide pitch-shift range to the pitch wheel. It directly corresponds with the GLOBAL BEND RANGE parameter at EDIT-PITCH inside the wavesample parameters. That parameter can be set to 1 (a half-step) to 12 (an octave) or to GLOBAL, which means the range is what the GLOBAL BEND RANGE is.

Another complaint — remember Eddie Jobson? UK's keyboardist (trivia question — he's in the *"Owner of a Lonely Heart"* video with Yes.). He used a CS-80 probably better than anyone, and he employed multi-octave pitch bends (using the ribbon controller) to great effect. I really wish that modern instruments didn't restrict pitch bend (through either wheel) to just an octave or a little more. By the way, to set the mod wheel, when set to PITCH, to bend exactly an octave, set it to 76 — 99 is about an octave and a third.

So don't be like Yanni, and put the GLOBAL BEND RANGE to 1 normally. Sometimes it's fun to have it on 12. But remember, if the Instrument you have loaded is not set to GLOBAL under its own Waves parameter, it won't have any effect.

It's in the Touch

Different people have different digs. Especially on aftertouch, and that's why this parameter is here. HARD 4 lets the Gold's Gym pumpster have the freedom to pound, while SOFT 1 makes it so even a mambypamby baby can enjoy the benefits of aftertouch.

The TOUCH parameter is not available on the rack version for obvious reasons — it has ALL NOTES OFF instead.

As a touch of trivia, remember back to the old Hackers where people would be playing the new Original EPS with Commodore sequencers, and they would use the ALL NOTES OFF command at the end of sequences or when you stopped a sequence to cut off any remaining notes. Well, the EPS did not (and still does not) naturally respond to the MIDI spec ALL NOTES OFF command. Ensoniq make a good case for it, saying that "that's not what the ALL NOTES OFF command was meant for, thus it's not implemented." But the pressure was great, so Ensoniq as a concession put it on all the rack versions off their samplers. Or at least I think that's why.

By the way, a simple way of getting a "ALL NOTES OFF" type of response is to change the effects in FX Select. This will temporarily cut off any sounding notes, but watch out! It doesn't mean the sounding note is still in the system. Sometimes hanging notes linger a bit. The only sure ways are the ALL NOTES OFF, or just turning the unit off.

Pedal To The Metal

This usually is set to 7-VOL, so when you plug a CV (Control Voltage) pedal into the back of the EPS/ASR, it will act as a global volume pedal. But that's no fun.

Try setting it to MOD4. What this does is make the EPS/ASR respond to controller message #4, and routes it to whatever is set to PEDAL. This can be handy. Take this problem for instance — what if you want to turn down certain Instruments on the EPS/ASR, but not others? Do this:

1) Set the PEDAL in SYSTEM-MIDI to MOD4
2) Go to each instrument you want to turn down in volume, and do this:
   a) Press EDIT
   b) Put cursor under INSTRUMENT name
   c) EDIT AMP — VOLUME MOD
   d) change source to PEDAL, AMT to 99
   e) Make the breakpoints set to 0, 127, 127, 127

One Footswitch (The Sustain One)

Although you may see one footswitch jack in the back of the EPS/ASR, there're really two. It's a stereo jack, so with a little soldering magic (or the SW-10 foot-

pedal), you can set up two pedals. The "tip" of a stereo plug works with the "right" pedal of the SW-10 or similar pedal. That way, when you plug in a single pedal, it will always work with the "sustain" pedal. The "sleeve" portion works with the "left" or "AUX" setting, so you could conceivably rewire your single pedal to work with the "other" footswitch. Or perhaps you could hook up a manual switch to switch between the two.

The Original EPS/EPS 16-Plus and the ASR's work differently as far as footswitch assignments.

EPS Land

The SUSTAIN FT SW is the "sustain pedal" most of the time, the one on the right if you have a dual pedal like the SW-10. However, with the Original EPS and EPS 16-Plus, you can shut the Sustain off and have it control the right-hand Patch Select. The AUX FT SW (the left pedal) can be set to the following:

OFF — That means "OFF"
START/STOP — This starts the sequencer if it is stopped, continues it if it is set in the middle of a sequence, or stops the sequencer if it is playing
PATCH SEL — This depresses the "left" Patch Select button

ASR Heaven

On the ASR, the right pedal is always sustain. Even if another world war breaks out, it's still going to affect sustain. The LEFT FOOT SW controls the following:

OFF — Where were you in the preceding paragraph? It means "OFF"!
FX MODSRC — If you go to the Effects parameters, you notice the FSW-L value that is available under the MIX-MOD parameters. This allows you to change the setting of a particular effect parameter using the footswitch. Common uses are to turn off a delay, or to speed/slow a rotary speaker (Ever wonder why they use the term Leslie and rotary speaker? Leslie is a trademarked name, and the person writing the article doesn't remember where the r key is. At least that's what I think.)
SAMPL YES — This is a nice touch — you can start the sampling process via the footswitch. That's great if you are sampling something you are playing, and the ASR is not local to where you are.
STOP/CONT — Starts or continues the sequencer when stopped, stops the sequencer when playing.

CUL-DE-SAC

AUTO-LOOP FINDING was supposed to be the mecca for Mirage owners. That's why they called it a Mirage — if you ever got a loop right, it was probably an illusion; it happened so rarely. AUTO-LOOP FINDING "steps" the LOOP START and LOOP END parameters in EDIT-WAVE so that they are always marking a "zero-crossing." Whenever you're doing something other than a short loop, this is preferable to have on — even if you are going to crossfade the sample to get it better afterwards, it's still going to sound more consistent if the loop points are in a "safer" place.

However, in short looping, this AUTO-LOOP FINDING parameter gets in the way. In a perfect world, everything's a sine-wave, in which one cycle crosses the x-axis every cycle. Not in this world. I've noticed that if you sample a D (which I think is the best pitch at which to sample), when you try for the short loop and you have ALC on, the short loop's pitch is just a little off — it's close, but it needs some adjustment. So when short looping, I just turn ALC off.

Air Mail FX

This parameter only shows up on the 16-Plus. You can globally set BUS2 and BUS3 outputs to not have any effects by turning either of these to OFF. I guess because these were never used, that they don't show up on the ASR series. ■

Bio: Garth Hjelte is the owner of Rubber Chicken Software Co., a company specializing in exclusively supporting Ensoniq samplers. This article has been excerpted from the upcoming book, "The EPS/ASR Sampler Guide."

Kirk Slinkard
Preston Klik

Tape: *Synapse Crash* (c) 1994.
Artist: AARD (Kirk Slinkard).
Contact Info: Kirk Slinkard, 5791 So. Youngfield St, Littleton, CO 80127, Ph: 303-979-6837, Email: protist@aol.com.
Equipment: Ensoniq SQ-80, VFX-SD, Digitech GSP5, Yamaha soundfield processor, MXR EQ, Boss BF-2 flanger, Mutron Phasor II, Sony F-25 and Audio Technica ATM73 mics, Sunn SPL-2216 mixer, Panasonic Hi-Fi VCR (master tape deck), Panasonic RX-DS30 portable stereo (monitors).

Transoniq Hacker veterans will recognize Kirk Slinkard as one of the illustrious bevy of writers immortalized in the boilerplate, a contributor from the days of vintage Ensoniq gear, and patchmeister extraordinaire. I am always especially delighted to listen to the music of the alumni of Hackerdom, because I actually get to hear and experience the creative output from their dens of electronic music propellorhead technogeekism, instead of their erudite ravings about oscillators, wavetables, etc.

Kirk's virtual band, known as AARD (a mutation of the last syllable of his name), gave shape to the eight tracks on *Synapse Crash* over years of evolution from the primordial soup of mere riffs, whispers of ideas inspired by, yes, Hackerpatches, captured on Ensoniq sequencers, eventually giving rise to actual songs. Kirk states in his letter, "With this tape, I was able to 'get my feet wet' in skills like song composing, recording, engineering and producing, at least on a small scale." If this is just "getting his feet wet," I can't wait to hear him when he gets totally drenched!

Kirk asked for a critique, and a classification, so let's give it to him... but first a fly-by of *Synapse Crash:*

"Subatomic Reaction" — Terminology from the nuclear age dominates this robotic celebration (oxymoron intended) of infatuation. Techno-rock awash in a plethora of effects.

"Resistance Is Useless" — This sci-fi rocker reminds me of a cross between *"The Monster Mash"* and soundtracks from *"Lost In Space."* Darth Vader rapping. Kirk's home-brewed SQ-80 Theremin patch is dead-on, providing an eerie, scary vibe that raises goose-bumps better than *"Outer Limits"* reruns (quoted at the end of the tune!).

"Ceremonial March" — Described accurately by Kirk as "an optional rock album non-sequitur," this track is a Renaissance-style march written for a friend's wedding. Kirk crafted all of the baroque-style synth patches himself; very well done!

"G.T.R." — Apparently the initials of someone Kirk doesn't like, this is a Doors-inspired tune, hands-down. Kirk does a masterful job of imitating Jim Morrison's vocals, and the organ patch (ESQ Vox Organ) is perfect.

"Video Pirates" — Kirk's nod to making a social statement. Lyrically, this is a pretty straightforward slam on, well, video pirates. Kirk uses hyperbole hyperbolically in this one (e.g.: "These guys turn hell into a blizzard"). Borrowing heavily from the style of *"Subatomic Reaction"* (see above), this song reminds me of the ingenious work of Christian satire-rocker Steve Taylor. Great faux guitar solo!

"Minder" — Another Doors emulation, but this time updated for the synth glory-days of the Eighties. Heavy, dark, sci-fi.

"Dark Love" — Kirk describes this one as a "semi-obligatory rock album slow song." Again, Jim Morrison vocalizations create a hypnotic, moody, downer vibe. A depressing love song.

"Sporadic Permutations" — If you have a phobia for bees, skip this one. It opens with a buzzing synth patch certain to send the bee sting-allergic scrambling for their norepinephrine syringe kits. This is a three-movement instrumental in the spirit of the cyber-sci-fi soundtrack genre.

Permeating this project is something you couldn't know unless you read Kirk's letter: most of the synth patches used in this tape (and there are *many* in great variety) have been programmed by Kirk himself. He gives extensive discussion to his use of the patches, as well as documenting the source of most of the other sounds used on the album, many of them Hackerpatches and third-party sounds. And these sounds are excellent! The ESQ, SQ-80 and VFX still breathe life at the hands of a programmer like Kirk.

As a "getting his feet wet" compilation, this collection is an amazing product of what has obviously been years of work

programming, sequencing, composing, recording, programming, sequencing, composing, recording. One pictures Kirk as a tireless artist, obsessed with and committed to his music. That spirit comes through his recordings loud and clear. Some high points in his project include the wonderful synth textures he creates, even with what some might consider "yesterday's" gear. Well, Kirk also isn't afraid to cop the style of an icon or two of yesteryear, and with style. The extensive use of effects acts almost like another layer of synth textures, especially the wonderful job he did processing vocals. Kirk's keyboard solos also shine; they are very creative and passionate, although a bit rough around the edges at times. A little more care in crafting solos for a recording could result in some really outstanding performances.

For the next take, consider: Lyrics: a bit thin at times (an example from *"Subatomic Reaction"*: "Your love, it blows me away; This crazy feeling is here to stay"). But in defense, Kirk more often than not compensates for somewhat weak lyrics by the attitude and context of the vocal tracks. Drum solos: *"Subatomic Reaction"* and "Video Pirates" contain drum-machine solos which, to my ears, don't add much to the songs. Makes me think, "Oh, a drum solo on a drum machine." For this kind of thing to grab my attention, it needs to be pretty unusual or outstanding. Otherwise, it's just a drum solo on a drum machine. And speaking of which, drum tracks: Often the percussion tracks were uneven and hiccupy. There is nothing wrong with quantization if it helps; and it would help here in many cases, and may even add to the sequenced-sci-fi groove. Finally, there were times when the choice of bass patches sounded wrong to my ears. Instead of using a slap bass patch (fine for funky, percussive bass stylings), use a more ponderous, low-end-dominating sound.

"Synapse Crash" is like a history of Ensoniq synth sounds. Anyone interested in exploring the development of patches for the ESQ-1, SQ-80 and VFX really ought to get a hold of this tape, and hope that Kirk might include a copy of the letter he sent me.

Oh... classification? Definitely Vintage Ensoniq cyber-Doors. Rock. Music.

Tape: *My Scarlet Life*.
Artist: My Scarlet Life.

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Phone: 312-728-2759, Email: Kliktrax@aol.com.
Equipment: EPS Classic, guitar, fuzz bass, brushed cymbal, vocals.

Sometimes I really resist classifying the music I review because it fails to do justice to the art. In the case of *My Scarlet Life*, band member Preston Klik does a masterful job of describing their music. From the band's classy promo postcard:

"It's not an easy task. Wasn't easy with my old band Big Hat, isn't easy with My Scarlet Life. Describing music is difficult, but I think we've got it. MSL *is kinda trippy, with a little hip hop, sometimes hypnotic, with a dose of sensuality/erotica: TRYPNOTICA. It rolls pleasantly off the tongue, much like our music caresses the ear, the heart. Trypnotica, it's our thing... but we do it for you."*

And from a follow-up note from Preston...

"The whole thing is recorded in my bedroom on Adats, with vocals and percussion done in my closet. I've got one expensive mic (a Sony) for vocals, and a few '57s for everything else. The keyboard sequences go to tape 1st, as a mono track, with an 8-bar klik intro (so anyone can be creative at the top of the tune in the studio). Then anything goes next — whoever's available to record. Guitar or bass (not both) (direct), vocals, drums & percussion (since I don't have a great drum room, I'll often have to bounce the drum tracks to mono and fuck 'em up with weird eq or distortion etc.), misc. instruments, with harmony vocals and overdubs generally last.

"During a mix a lot of stuff gets run through a DP-4 and bounced to another track. I never worry about bouncing — just do it. You WILL hear my parakeets somewhere on every session. I can't shut 'em up once the music starts, and I can't kill 'em, so...

"Because My Scarlet Life is very much a live band, all my sequences and sounds are optimized for gigs, and those are the same ones we record (although the arrangement may change in the studio since the sequence no longer needs to be in the mix to keep time). One of my rules: everything for a song must fit on one floppy, sequences and samples (I do load a piano sample in 'instrument 1' that does not change). I hit 'load bank' and 'song' and that's it. I have two (classic) EPSs, so one's loading while the other is playing sequences, and while I'm playing my live parts.

"Every keyboard player I've run into after a show thinks I'm crazy for not having a hard drive to load much faster. They're wrong. The bigger picture looks like this: every bar/club/coffeehouse we play has different electricity which can give one of my EPSs fits. I've had to use electricity that was run through a dimmer control! And one time one of my EPSs would go nuts every time the bar's cooler kicked in (they were on the same circuit). Cold weather can be a problem, too. When you've a 7-hour drive to Minneapolis in January your EPS can get mighty cold stuck way in the back of the van (I've found that standing it up on end for an hour or so in a warm room seems to stop any condensation from settling in a bad spot). I've only had three serious problems, I think, but since I've got two EPSs, one is always playable, which means I've never had a problem finishing a show in over 250+ gigs (50+ with MSL, 200+ with my old band Big Hat — also sequence based)."

"Trypnotica" — the term fits like an Isotoner. I call *My Scarlet Life* "delicious." Their hypnotic music contains gentle, lilting, breathily sensuous vocal passages, but also full-bodied mondo-guitar avalanches that continue to rumble in your solar plexus many bars after the phrase ends, all woven organically and seamlessly over ingenious percussion beds with nary a cliche sound or texture to be found.

In Jungan psychology, an "archetype" is a construct referring to those aspects which cannot be articulated except on the level of metaphor, e.g., "the eternal child," or "wise woman," or "male mother." My Scarlet Life does music on an archetypal level, communicating the inarticulate without a stutter. Perhaps it could be argued that all music communicates on this level, but MSL wears the title like royalty.

My only complaint is that the tape I received contained only two tracks! But they are two gems:

"Inanna" — Speaking of archetypes, Inanna is a goddess of transformation, as Preston notes in his letter. This song morphs between an almost Enya-esque vocal on the verses (but with a beat), and a pulse-pounding, adrenaline-pumping guitar tsunami on the chorus reminiscent of the best of Roxette. The percussion reminds me very much of the late genius Ideola (aka Mark Heard; you've probably never heard of him) on his *"Tribal Opera"* album. Unique samples are used in place of traditional drum sounds (with the exception of the kick drum), with an interesting effect: replacing the usual snares, toms and hi-hat with some slightly less familiar sounds presents the actual *rhythm* itself in a more "naked" space; you don't hear drums, you hear the beat. Correction: you *feel* the beat. But separating out the elements of the song may mislead: it is the song in its entirety, the way it moves in and out of the verse/chorus dance, building and releasing tension, that gives one the visceral experience.

"Myst" — Having never played the computer game of the same name, I have no idea if there is any connection intended. Airy siren-like vocals (that's Homer's Sirens, and I don't mean Simpson) weave a hypnotic spell in this dreamy trance track, dancing around the melody over a gentle hip-hop beat. Fuzz-bass dominates and moves the locus of the music much lower in the body than the heart — down to the *tan-tien*, or seat of the *chi* (about two fingers below the navel). The song fades into what sounds like a vacuum cleaner or a blender on hyper-drive, which itself fizzles into a reverb wash. I would love to know why these artists chose such an ending, but whatever the reason, it *works*. Haven't you ever fallen into a trance while vacuuming? This is musical genius.

Well, it's not enough just to attempt a description, we need to roll up our sleeves and figure out why this works. Bottom line: My Scarlet Life's music *communicates*. What does it communicate? Feelings. Resulting in what? An altered state of consciousness. How did they do it? I don't know, but this much is certain: a lot of heart and a lot of work went into crafting these songs. One gets the feeling of musical craftsmanship done in a collaboration of kindred spirits (namely, Preston on EPS for all samples and sequencing, Julie and Christy on vocals, Amy on guitar and fuzz bass, and Jason on brushed cymbal). Personally, I wish Preston would write an article, at least a letter, describing some of the techniques MSL used in sequencing percussion, processing guitars and vocals, and writing. Until then, we can only hope that My Scarlet Life will soon release at least a couple more tunes in their unique, artful style. ▬

Tapes Recently Received

South Shore Strut — Bob Yashinsky

If *you* want your tape run through the wringer, err, Hacker, just mail it off to: Basement Tapes, *Transoniq Hacker*, 1402 SW Upland Dr., Portland OR 97221. Please include your e-mail address!

Bio: Steve Vincent produces demos and CDs at his home-based Portent Music, and can be reached via email at vincents@harbornet.com, or at his website at http://www.kspace.com/vincent.

Classifieds

HARDWARE/SOFTWARE

Ensoniq EPS Performance Sampler with 4x memory, SCSI interface, softcase, dustcover, & Standtastic heavy duty stand; Rackable Syquest removable hard drive w/ 2 disks (loaded w/ sounds) & SCSI cable; all manuals. All in very good condition. $1,700. (716)683.8226 or email: AJW3@ix.netcom.com.

Wanted: A patch librarian (editor?) for the Ensoniq ESQ-1 or ESQ-M and a patch librarian (editor?) for the Yamaha TX802. Luke, 201-818-0666.

Wanted: Ensoniq SD-1/32, Version 4.10! Please call Ro, (301) 567-1420.

For Sale (reluctantly) Mirage :bought new in 1986. All owner manuals plenty of discs including Masos. Works perfect. Any offer.. I just want it to have a good home and continue to make music. Also: Oberheim Hammond organ module with drawbars and presets-killer sound. Best offer. Glenn 334-621-0234.

1976 Univox Organizer drawbar organ and Yamaha RA-50 amp with rotating speaker. Both $700. Good condition. Moog Prodigy. Mint. $600. Ed at 817-297-6831.

If you're selling your gear...

Please be sure to pass along how absolutely vital it is to have a subscription to the *Transoniq Hacker*. And — we're always happy to do a sub transfer. No charge, and it's a nice extra to help close the deal.

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OUT-OF-PRINT BACK ISSUES

M.U.G. will provide Out-of-Print issues for cost of materials and postage. Write: G-4 Productions, PO Box 615TH, Yonkers, NY 10703. Attn: TH Back Issues. * * * Folks in the New York City area can get copies of unavailable back issues of the *Hacker* – call Jordan Scott, 718- 983-2400.

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The Interface

Letters for The Interface may be sent to any of the following addresses:
U.S. Mail - The Interface, Transoniq Hacker, 1402 SW Upland Dr., Portland, OR 97221
Electronic mail - GEnie Network: TRANSONIQ, Internet: interface@transoniq.com. In many cases a quick answer can be obtained by posting to our interactive, on-line Interface at our Web site (http://www.transoniq.com/~trnsoniq/interface.html) or calling Ensoniq CS at 610-647-3930.
This is probably one of the most open forums in the music industry. Letter writers are asked to please keep the vitriol to a minimum. Readers are reminded to take everything with a grain of salt. Resident answer-man is Clark Salisbury (CS). Letter publication is subject to space considerations.

Hi fellows,

I've got those problems of freezing and crashing with my **MR-76** and I'd like to know if there is a software and/or chip update or something like that. I read something about it here in the TH and I'd like to know if somebody knows more about this.

Thanks,
Jose Roberto Landell Fehse
fehse@quattuor.com.br

[James Rosand (jrosand@olympus.net) – Dear Jose:

I've got an MR-61 and have ROM version 1.61. If you need to find out what version ROM you have, do the following: 1. Press the SoundFinder Save button and hold it down. 2. While still holding the Save button, press the System button. The display will briefly show you the version number of the operating system installed in your MR-76. This is right out of the manual (p. 354). If you need an OS upgrade, the owners manual explains how to contact Ensoniq for a chip upgrade.

While you are ordering your new chip, you might like to get a new owner's manual. It's got a nice index in the back and makes navigating the MR-61/76 a painless process.

I hope this helps.

I've gone thru a number of ROM upgrades and V. 1.61 has corrected most of the lockups and crashes. It has also fixed the display arbitrarily jumping to the pan parameter bug.]

[CS – As of this writing, the current OS version for the MR keyboards is 1.64. Other than that, I can't think of anything to add to James Rosand's response – kudos, James!]

TH –

I am the owner of an **ASR-10**. The MIDI suddenly stopped working – no In or Out. I'm hoping that it is not a serious repair job. I want to reinitialize it – maybe everything will work well again. But how is it done?

Greetings,
R.Welborn
ramsay@mailoffice.net

[CS – This isn't really the sort of thing one can diagnose long distance, but my guess is that you have some relatively simple hardware problem – a loose internal connection or some such. But I can tell you that there is no initialization for the ASR. I recommend you get in touch with Ensoniq Customer Support (610-647-3930) directly.]

[Mark Tinch (mark_tinch@quickmail.truevision.com) – R:

Either: (a) The 5-pin DIN plugs have come loose from the logic board, (b) the optoisolator b/w the DIN plug's and the logic board is defective, or (c) other intermittent/open connection has occurred in your ASR-10. Highly recommend getting in touch w/Malvern as this is above the scope of us human types. Give your local dealer a call: if he's an Authorized Ensoniq Dealer he's also an Authorized Ensoniq Repair Station and should be able to diagnose and remedy your ASR's problem at minimal cost and frustration.]

[Ensoniq – Contact Ensoniq customer service at 610-647-3930 or your local authorized Ensoniq repair station.]

Dear Clark,

I have a problem when I attempt to utilize an Ensoniq **KMX-8** MIDI patch bay in my computer-based (Cubase Score 3) software and MIDI setup.

The patch bay works fine when I use it to link up the synths without the computer. The computer and software work fine if I bypass the patch bay and go direct to the synths using MIDI thru's. The moment I put the patch bay into the loop it all goes haywire, sometimes a howl, sometimes a seizure. Not much hair left.

Equipment: 1 ASR-10 Kbd, 1 Korg T3 Kbd, 1 Korg Prophecy kbd, 1 Viscount D9e organ module, Dell Optiplex 5200 (Pentium), Sound Blaster 16 with wave blaster board, KMX-8 patch bay.

Help,
Steve B

[CS – I have no experience with the KMX-8. However, it sounds to me as though you've got some kind of MIDI loop going between the KMX and your PC. This would happen if the KMX were to route its outgoing MIDI data back to one of its own inputs, or if one of the devices connected to the KMX were echoing MIDI data received at its input back to its MIDI out – which would then be sent back to the KMX, etc.

For more detailed info, contact Ensoniq Customer Support (610-647-3930).]

TH –

I was wondering if anyone knew where to download or receive some new effects files for the **EPS-16+**. Please e-mail me a clue.

Troll@techno.ca

[brosryan@dmv.com – I assume that by the term "effects files" you refer to onboard effects selections. An infinite cyberworld of fascinating audio exploration is contained in the WAVeBoy Industries many offerings (610 251-9562). Personally, I think that the VODER and AUDIO IN EFFECTS disks are the ones to begin with but the PARALLEL EFFECTS disk puts a new effects "library" on your scroll. The oft referred to "Oakland" site probably has something too.

If you mean individual sound files for sound effects, you may explore some of these (although we tend to specialize in comedy effects so these may fail to enhance your library). Please let us know what you think of these .WAV collections.

http://www.dailywave.com/
http://www.usyd.edu.au/~swishart/looney.html
http://ally.ios.com/~midilink/

J.D Ryan]

[CS – You can download OS 1.30 for the EPS-16 plus from Ensoniq's web site. The OS includes the effect algorithms Ensoniq developed for the EPS-16 Plus after its initial release. Other than that, I know of no other online sources for effect algorithms. If you're interested in purchasing new effects, though, check out the Waveboy stuff, reviewed in TH #90 and #97.]

TH –

Can the **TS-10** read/play ASR-10 sequences? Songs? Banks? If so, will it call up the correct instruments on the TS-10?? Any suggestions or comments will be greatly appreciated.

Thank you much!
Chris
cedwards@shvp.sc.ti.com

[CS – Sorry. The TS can load ASR sound files and bank files, but its sequencer is quite different from that in the ASR, and therefore can't access ASR sequences or songs.]

TH –

I have an **ASR-10** and am trying to do some general MIDI music. The only thing I am having trouble with is the drums. How do I change my drum sets to fit general MIDI drum so that it would match up with general MIDI drum sets?

Chris Johnson
uflift@getonthe.net

[CS – Instructions for re-mapping drum sound can be found in your owner's manual. Also, I believe Ensoniq has made available a more detailed set of instructions for those who are having difficulty with the manual. You may be able to find these at their web site, or through their fax-back system (800-257-1439). Or just give them a call – (610-647-3930).]

[Ensoniq – Check out document number 1601 on our fax retrieval system (800-257-1439). This document is entitled: Creating Custom ASR Drum and Percussion Maps.]

TH –

I have a MIDI problem between the UNISYN Editor on my PC and the **MR Rack.**

It's very strange. Everything works except I can't transfer *individual* patches from UNISYN to the MR Rack that are larger than about 680 bytes – I get the error "RCV sound Too big: 680 bytes!" on the MR Rack display. The strange thing is I am able to send/receive *entire* banks!

I have a Gateway P90 and the 1.5 firmware for the MR Rack. The problem occurs when I use my Soundblaster *and* when I use my MIDIMAN 4x4S. I have tried many combinations of sysex buffer sizes/numbers. It appears to be a UNISYN software problem since the problem occurs with both MIDI cards. I've called both Ensoniq and MOTU with each party blaming the other. My setup is not unusual... what could be going wrong?

Thanks in advance for any ideas!
Pinw@aol.com

[Mark Tinch (mark_tinch@quickmail.truevision.com) – Pinw:

Recommend the latest version O.S. ROMs for MR Rack. And I don't know for sure what the Sysex implementation for the MR-61 is, but I'll betcha it's sending a sysex header followed by a 300 ms delay immediately followed by the patch data. This is common w/Ensoniq instruments: you may have to edit the profile to reflect a wait state b/w this header and the sysex message. I know how to do it in Cakewalk, but not in Unisyn. I'd give MOTU a call for the particulars.]

[CS – The problems don't occur if you disconnect the Soundblaster or the MIDIMAN device? I'm not even sure what a MIDIMAN 4x4S is. Still, there are a couple of things that might be going on, neither of which should be related to your hardware. One is that you may be trying to send the sound to the wrong place, such as a ROM bank. Make sure you're sending the sound to RAM bank1.

The other thing is you may not have enough memory available in the MR. You can check this out by looking in the system pages to see how many free layers (if any) you have left. If you don't have enough, you may need to delete one or more sounds from the MR's RAM to free up what you need.

If neither of these solutions turns out to be correct, write again and let me know which configurations do and do not work with your setup.]

Hi Transoniq,

I have a problem with my **MR-76.** I'd like it to send out MIDI notes from the sequencer so that I can start my arrangements with the idea pad and drum machine in the MR and then arrange them further in Cubase. It seems that the only way to send out MIDI notes is when you actually play the keyboard.

I have also tried to save my sequences as MIDI files, but they won't load into my Cubase/PC. They show up as .mid files, but there is nothing in them.

I very much hope that some one can help me on that subject, because I think the MR-76 is such a good keyboard with the features it has.

Niels Kirkegaard
23159_fdb@cybernet.dk

[John Seboldt, rohrwerk@pconline.com – With my MR-61, and Performer 4.2 on my Mac, I can indeed open the .mid files the keyboard generates, but I get extra tracks with sysex added. Attempting to play them back into the MR does not result in the original sounds, despite the fact that patch and bank numbers appear to be present (though patch numbers show up before bank numbers – no wonder, Ensoniq, duhhhh!). Nice try, but some extra polishing needed in the export features. Meanwhile, it's far easier to work directly in Performer.

[CS – Neither the Idea Pad or drum machine will directly output notes via MIDI, but there's a simple work-around. Copy your parts from the Idea Pad and the drum machine into the sequencer. Once this is done, make sure that the sequence tracks you want to transfer are set to MIDI, and also make sure that the drum track is set to

MIDI channel 10. The tracks should now send to the MR's MIDI out, and you should be able to record them into Cubase.]

[Ensoniq – The MR-61 and MR-76 can load and save Standard MIDI Files on MS-DOS diskettes. Any sequencers or software programs which conform to the Standard MIDI File Specifications can load and play SMFs created on the MR-61/76. For sequencers which don't conform to the Standard MIDI File specification, Ensoniq has provided the MRMIDI utility to convert the MR files into the format recognized by these sequencer programs. Once converted, the files can still be loaded into the MR keyboards as well. This download file is available for PC-Compatible computers only. You can download this utility from: www.ensoniq.com/mid/mrmidi.htm. There is a read-me file in MRMIDI explaining the purpose of the utility and instructions for unzipping the file.]

Hi to all TS-10/12 Owners !

I've been spending a lot of time in sound programming on the **TS-10**. I've programmed some analog and very digital sounding pads, useful Lead Sounds and some exciting Hyperwave-Pads.

If someone is interested in sharing sounds with me (samples are possible, too), don't wait to contact me! I'm also interested in sharing tips and tricks about programming sounds.

My email: pforschler@jura.uni-wuerzburg.de

Peter Forschler

[CS – We received your letter via the Internet, so I surmise it's possible you don't subscribe to the Transoniq Hacker. If not, I must tell you that this is one of the best places to finds tips and tricks for programming Ensoniq instruments – not to mention reviews, news about new products and software updates, feature articles about Ensoniq gear, and lots more. And it's dirt cheap; how could you go wrong?]

Hi from France,

Can you give me a list of Ensoniq's dealers in US who can send SCSI SP and CDR by mail?

Thanks,
Philippe LEFEVRE
bluewave@wanadoo.fr

[CS – I can't provide you with such a list. Try contacting Ensoniq directly. They certainly have such a list. Whether or not they will provide it is another question, though.]

[TH – Or maybe such a dealer is reading this...]

TH –

First, I would like to say thanks for the help on my last question – and here is another one for you. Is there any way to get an **EPS-16+** to respond to pan controller messages? I cannot control pan in any way from an external sequencer. Is it possible?

Thanks again,
Roger Moore "PjHD"
pjhd@washington.xtn.net

[Uncle Viceroy (tesjuptr@Bayou.UH.EDU) – You can always assign the mod wheel to control panning in the "EDIT AMP" page of any wavesample.

[CS – The EPS and EPS-16+ do not respond directly to MIDI pan controller (CC#10) messages, so Uncle Viceroy's workaround is probably the best way to accomplish this. Note that you can apply a modulator (such as the wheel) at the layer and instrument level in addition to the wavesample level that Uncle Viceroy mentions. This makes it easier to set controllers for groups of samples or an entire instrument all at once.]

TH –

I just picked up an **ASR-10** and have been trying to get my Iomega Jaz drive to work with it. I was told by those that sold it to me that it should work, but they haven't been much help. What makes matters worse is they forgot to include a SCSI manual with the ASR-10 so I'm rather stuck at the moment. Can anyone help? I also have a 4X CD-ROM, would it benefit me at all to try to hook that up also? I'm just a guitarist trying to update myself... (smiles) take pity.

Ryan

[Mark Tinch (mark_tinch@quickmail.truevision.com) – Ryan:

You may want to format the Jaz cart on a Macintosh before you format it for the ASR-10: I've heard of this problem before. As with most removable media devices, you may not have as many interleave options as you would with a true hard disk. (My Syquest EZ135 won't let me change interleave from 0 or 1.) Once the cart has been formatted on a Mac, reconnect to your ASR-10 and format and copy OS and default directory structures to it: you'll be good to go...]

[CS – Well, here's the unfortunate scoop.

Originally, the Jaz drives worked just fine with Ensoniq gear. As a matter of fact, a number of the guys at Ensoniq use them regularly. Recently, though, Iomega has made some small changes to the Jaz drive which render it inoperable with Ensoniq gear. Well, not exactly inoperable. The newer drives will work with ASR-formatted cartridges – they just won't format new ones.

Older drives still work fine, of course, so if

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Every month we mail out thousands of issues and every month about a dozen get "misplaced" by the Post Office. If you're ever one of the winners of this lottery, just give us a call (503-227-6848, 8 am – 8 pm Pacific Time) and we'll be happy to mail a replacement copy — no prob. (However, if you accuse us of nefarious schemes to "rip you off," you will be offered a refund and given helpful subscription info for other musician magazines.)

you have a friend with one of these, perhaps he or she would kindly consent to letting you format a few cartridges for use with your ASR-10.

Neither Ensoniq nor Iomega knows what the problem might be, but they're working together to track it down and come up with a solution. Stay tuned...

As for your CD-ROM drive, I say why not give it a try and see if it works with your ASR? Not all CD-ROM drives do (check with Ensoniq for a compatibility listing of tested drives), but since you've already got the drive it won't hurt anything to hook it up and try it out. Once you realize how convenient it is to have hundreds of sounds accessible from a single CD, you'll probably wonder how you ever got along without it.]

TH –

In the October Issue of Hacker, Robby Berman enthusiastically wrote that the **MR Rack** would be able to use the EXP-2 Wave Expander board. In another issue, Ensoniq said that the MR Rack would not support sample loading via a Flash or SRAM board. I was very disappointed by that statement. The EL-Cheapo Alesis synth has this capability and I assumed the MR Rack would also. Is it really so awful to put it in there? Even a couple of white wires at this point would be better than an outright no.

Dan James
Clarksburg, Md.
jamesd@ttc.com

[Ensoniq – Since the MR-61 and MR-76 have disk drives, they can load these samples via a floppy disk. This is not possible with the MR-Rack since it does not have a disk drive. The MR-Rack will support any Ensoniq ROM wave expansion board such as the EXP-2.]

Hello,

I have an **ASR-10** with a defective (out of alignment?) disk drive. Has anyone found a source for these other than from Ensoniq? Does anyone know what makes this $150 drive any different from a standard computer drive (~$30)?

Thanks,

Jim Hart
jrmrh@aol.com

[Hello – Trust me on this one!!!

I damaged an ASR-10 disk drive and I tried to use a standard drive. It turns out that Ensoniq takes a Panasonic 1.44 floppy and modifies the drive so that it can read and write 800k, 1440k and 1600k densities. I tried to obtain the same model of the drive but the wholesale place only sells to manufacturers.

Incidentally, the diskette drive that I tried to use would only allow me to read and write high density diskettes. I could not read or write extra high density or low density diskettes on my ASR-10. So I broke down and paid the price to have a new disk drive put into the ASR-10.

Hopes this helps,
Charles Windom Sr.
Windom@mail.dec.com

[CS – Charles Windom Sr.'s advice seems excellent to me – particularly since I've not heard of any reliable alternative in my years working on this column. I recommend going this route and taking heart in the fact that should you have problems with your new drive, you'll have Ensoniq backing you up.]

Dear sirs,

Living in Brazil, I'm interested in buying the memory cards: Ensoniq SC, or ISC series, and MC-32 RAM or other **SQ** cards. My keyboard is an SQ-1. Could you please tell me the way to do that, if it's possible?

Sincerely,
Eladio Oduber
Brasil
oduber@guarany.cpd.unb.br

[CS – I have to assume that you have no local dealer who can supply you with the items you need. Try e-mailing Ensoniq Customer Support at Ensoniq's Web Site. I'm sure they can find a way to help you out.]

Good day,

I'm not a subscriber to TH but I'm hoping someone may be able to help me anyway.

I have an **EPS** that has no audio output anymore, only a "buzzing" that sounds like it could be MIDI or fsk signal, I'm not sure. I was hoping that perhaps someone has heard of this problem before and knows a fix for it.

Any replies can be sent to: kwhitten-@heartland.bradley.edu.

Thanks much for any help,
Kevin Whittenburg

[CS – Unless you've accidently plugged your amplifier cable into the wrong jack on your EPS, I don't know what could be causing this problem. You should contact Ensoniq Customer Service, and go over this with them.]

[Hazel Colburn (hcolburn@freeway.net) – I, too have problems with buzzing on another Ensoniq instrument, the SQ-1. Mine is not as pronounced as yours but maddening nonetheless. This buzz occurs at the end of amp envelope times when the sound is low in volume. When no keys are playing, I only have the noise floor audible (and it is louder than most other instruments).

Also I have a BIG problem with interference between the SQ-1 power supply and other transformers (i.e. guitar pickups) in which huge noise is generated by my keyboard in the guitar's electronics...is this typical?

*P.S. I still love my SQ-1. *sigh*]*

[CS – The effects processor in the SQ can produce some noise, which shows up as a relatively subtle hiss at the SQ outputs. If the noise you are talking about disappears when you switch sounds or effects, then that's the source of your problem. The only workaround is to leave the effects turned off in your SQ-1, and use a quieter outboard processor for effects.

However, the noise you are talking about sounds more like the grunge that many digital systems will produce when fighting for resolution while trying to play very quiet sounds. Your best hedge against this type of noise (which is an inherent problem with digital audio) is to try to keep all your digital levels as high as possible and control monitor or recording volume at your mixer or whatever amplification system you're using. This means running not only the

volume slider on your SQ all the way up, but also staying on top of volume settings at the track level and the wave level (if you create your own sounds). Also, if you're controlling your SQ from an external MIDI device, you can have problems if you set the volume too low via MIDI. I know it's a lot of volume controls to keep track of, but if you keep all of them set to maximum, or near it (except for your amplification system level – I wouldn't want to be responsible for any hearing loss), the noise level should be acceptable – at least for most users. If it's not, try talking to Ensoniq Customer Service – it's possible that you have some sort of problem with your unit.

As for the noise emanating from electric guitar pickups, this may be normal. Guitar electronics are notoriously susceptible to stray hum and noise from just about anywhere.

There are several approaches to the problem, the main one being to re-orient the guitar. Usually you can find a sweet spot in which the guitar quiets down noticeably – just hope that the sweet spot doesn't force you to play the guitar while lying face down in your neighbor's rec room.

On the other hand, your SQ should not pose any more of a problem for you guitar's electronics than any of your other gear. If the noise only seems to occur when your SQ is powered up – and proper grounding, shielding, and so on are accounted for – then you may indeed have a problem. Again, Ensoniq Customer Support should be able to help.]

TH –

I own a **TS-12** and I need to know is it possible to get samples from a CD ROM to floppy to be loaded on TS-12? If so, please tell me where. I'm willing to pay. I need organ and piano samples.

MINST@aol.com

[James Rosand (jrosand@olympus.net) – I assume that you want to get Ensoniq's CD ROM samples onto a diskette that the TS-12 can read and load into its memory?

If this is the case, you need Giebler Enterprises "Ensoniq Diskette Manager." This software package provides an excellent way to read samples off a CD ROM via your PC and convert them to files that you can load directly, via floppy disk, into the TS-12.

You can contact Giebler Enterprises at: http://www.giebler.com/]

[CS – A TS-12 equipped with a SCSI interface can load samples from ASR-formatted CD-ROMs (of which there are quite a few, at this point). Contact your local Ensoniq dealer or Ensoniq Customer Support to get set up.

If you want to get samples from a non-Ensoniq formatted CD-ROM, things become a bit more complicated. If you have a PC-compatible computer, you should check with Giebler Enterprises (members.aol.-com/giebler); I believe they have software which will allow you to load samples onto floppy disks formatted for use with Ensoniq gear. Of course, how you get the samples into the PC is another story.

You should also be able to find helpful info in Garth Hjelte's "From Cyberspace to your Ear" *(available at the Hacker's ftp site), which originally appeared in TH Issues #122 (August '95) and #123 (September '95).]*

TH –

I have now been home from work for 5 days trying to hook up my **ASR-10** to my Gateway 2000 P560 which also has an Ensoniq soundcard. I have tried both in Soundscape's "Orchestrator" and in my music software program Opcode Vision 2.5 for Windows. I have probably spent $200 in phone bills calling Ensoniq and Opcode. Today, at Gateway 2000's suggestion, I called an "800" number which charges your VISA a fee of $25 per event to have them solve your software problems. They warned me that if they weren't able to help I would still be charged. Having invested 5 days in this project, with a looming deadline for creating music for a children's theatre production, I was desperate. After about 1/2 hour on the telephone, the gentleman told me he would have to do some research and call me back. No call back, but I've been charged the $25. Ensoniq has deserted me by swearing that it's an Opcode problem or a Gateway 2000 problem; Gateway 2000 has deserted me by saying, "Well, if your soundcard works, we're done with you;" and Opcode, after trying and trying finally said, "Sorry."

Can anyone tell me how to get my ASR-10 to communicate with my PC?

Please help!
Cynthia F. Christensen
102135.3403@CompuServe.COM

[James Rosand (jrosand@olympus.net) – Would you give me me a little more information? What are you trying to do with the ASR-10 and Gateway computer? Please stop me if I am telling you things that you already know.

What brand of MIDI interface are you using? You need three things to get the ASR-10 and the computer talking. 1. The ASR-10. 2. The computer. 3. A MIDI interface. I have an 8' universal MIDI cable that plugs into the 15-pin (joystick) female D connector on the back of the Ensoniq Soundscape sound card. (Item 33-1100, $26.95, MUSICIANS FRIEND 1-800-776-5173.) This MIDI cable gives me a MIDI in and MIDI out 5-pin din connector to plug my MIDI in and MIDI out cables into the ASR-10. Midi out coming out of the computer goes to the MIDI in jack on the ASR-10. The MIDI in coming out of the computer goes to the MIDI out of the ASR-10. I've messed this up plenty of times myself so don't feel alone. Please stop me if this is all redundant...

Somewhere in your Opcode application, you must also be sure to set your MIDI devices to "Input drivers=Soundscape MIDI in" and "Output Drivers=Soundscape MIDI out." You probably have your Output Drivers set to "Soundscape MIDI synth." The "Soundscape MIDI synth" driver allows .mid files to be played on the synth that is built onto your Soundscape audio card. You have to pick the "Soundscape MIDI out" driver before the computer can communicate with the ASR-10.

Load a sample into the ASR-10 into instrument slot #1. Provided that your ASR-10 "system" setting is set to BASE channel 1 and the instrument is set to send on instrument channel #1 and your MIDI receive mode is set to "MULTI," your ASR-10 and computer should start talking to one another.

I don't have an ASR-10 but I do have an EPS and EPS-16+. Both these Ensoniq samplers are similar to the ASR-10.

Perhaps you can tell me more about your situation and I hope these suggestions get you started in the right direction.

A $25 dollar bill is a terrible thing to waste... Good luck.]

[CS – I've been directly in touch with Cynthia, via email and analog (phone), and I must admit her problems are maddening. Together we've tried everything she or I could think of, but to no avail. Ensoniq is considering looking into this, so I hope some sort of resolution is in sight.

It seems that there should be some sort of moral to this story. One might think Ensoniq should pick up the ball on this one and get Cynthia rolling again. But look at this from their point of view: Gateway has purchased the soundcards to include in systems they sell, so that they'll be "multimedia systems." With hundreds of thousands of systems being purchased each year though, it's not to hard to see why Ensoniq can't support Gateway's customers; the sheer number of support calls could easily overwhelm a company of Ensoniq's size.

So the theory is that Ensoniq trains Gateway in the use and support of the soundcard, and it becomes Gateway's responsibility to provide support. Unfortunately, Gateway feels they must charge for this support. While irksome, I wouldn't have any real problem with this, except that Gateway seems unable to support the product – at least in this case – but charges for the support anyway. Unless I'm missing something here, this is unconscionable. And I don't mean to single out Gateway here – well, actually I do – but I've heard variations on this same story from a number of other computer users, too – almost all of them using Windows machines.

So I guess the moral of the story is this: If you need a computer with any kind of multimedia capability beyond being able to play CDs and making noises to go with your games, don't expect to get it from a mass-marketer. Instead, try to find a local dealer you can trust who has experience with the hardware and software you plan on using. Or better yet, get a Mac.]

[Ensoniq – We have already contacted Cynthia Christensen on this issue.]

TH –

In Issue #137, Brian Bernardini wrote asking for sources of Pedal Steel guitar patches or samples. I would like to contact him directly (I've got a pretty good patch for the TS) and I would like either his e-mail or regular mail address.

Please send me either...

Thanks,
Pat Magill
patman@fuse.net

[TH – Well, not only do we not have his

Transoniq-Net

HELP WITH QUESTIONS

All of the individuals listed below are *volunteers*! Please take that into consideration when calling. If you get a recording and leave a message, let 'em know if it's okay to call back collect (this will greatly increase your chances of getting a return call).

All Ensoniq Gear – Ensoniq Customer Service. 9:30 am to noon, 1:15 pm to 6:00 pm EST Monday to Friday. 610-647-3930. Ensoniq's Fax On Demand line, (1-800-257-1439) can also be used to retrieve specs, OS info, hard-drive info, and the like.

All Ensoniq Gear – Electric Factory (Ensoniq's Australia distributor). E-mail address: elfa@ozemail.com.au; their web site at http://www.ozemail.com.au/~elfa; or e-mail their resident clinician, Michael Allen, at mallen@geko.com.au. Phone calls, Business hours – Victoria. (03) 480-5988.

All Ensoniq Gear – The Electric Factory in New Zealand, phone (64) 9-443-5916, fax (64) 9-443-5893, or e-mail geoffm@elfa.co.nz (Geoff Mason).

TS Questions – Pat Esslinger, Internet: pate@execpc.com, Compuserve: 74240,1562, or AOL: ESSLIP.

TS, VFX, and SD-1 Questions – Stuart Hosking, stuh@ozemail.com.au.

MIDI users and ASR-10 Questions – Ariel and Meiri Dvorjetski, Internet: s3761921@techst02.technion.ac.il, or dvorjet@techunix.technion.ac.il. You can also call Sincopated BBS at (Israel country code: 972) 4-8776035, 24 hours, 28.8K Modem. Please Login as: ENSONIQ, Password: MIDI.

SD-1 Questions – Philip Magnotta, 401-467-4357, 4 pm – 12:30 EST.

VFX, SD32, and EPS-16+ Questions – Dara Jones, Internet: 71055.1113@compuserve.com or call 214-361-0829.

SD-1, DP/4, ASR-10 Questions – John Cox, 609-888-5519, (NJ) 5pm – 8 pm EST weekdays. Any time weekends.

SQ-80, VFX Questions – Robert Romano, 607-898-4868. Any ol' time (within reason) EST.

Hard Drives & Drive Systems, Studios, & Computers – Rob Feiner, Cinetunes. 914-963-5818. 11am–3pm EST. Compuserve: 71024,1255.

EPS, EPS-16 PLUS, & ASR-10 Questions – Garth Hjelte. Rubber Chicken Software. Call anytime. If message, 24-hour callback. (612) 235-9798. Email: chickenEPS@willmar.com.

ESQ-1 AND SQ-80 Questions – Tom McCaffrey. ESQUPA. 215-830-0241, before 11 pm Eastern Time.

EPS/MIRAGE/ESQ/SQ-80 M.U.G. 24-Hour Hotline – 212-465-3430. Leave name, number, address. 24-hr Callback. Email: G4Prod@aol.com.

MIDI Users – Eric Baragar, Canadian MIDI Users Group, (613) 392-6296 during business hours, Eastern Time (Toronto, ONT) or call MIDILINE BBS at (613) 966-6823 24 hours.

SQ-1, KS-32, SD-1, SCSI & hard drive Questions – Pat Finnigan, 317-462-8446. 8:00 am to 10:00 pm EST.

ESQ-1, MIDI & Computers – Joe Slater, (404) 925-8881. EST.

e-mail address anymore, but we generally don't give out people's addresses unless there's some indication that it's okay with them. What we will do, however, is to post your *address, so he can contact you.]*

Dear Hacker,

In TH's #138 Interface, Mr. Kincheloe from New York complained about the bad quality of his monitoring system. He wrote:

"I'm a proud owner of a **KT-76**, my very first professional keyboard. The KT is hooked up with an inexpensive Peavey MP4-Plus 4-channel, non-stereo amp and a pair of good quality Peavey 15-inch speakers. The problem: When I use my studio earphones (medium quality), I get rich, authentic sounds from the keyboard, especially brass, reeds, strings, etc. Impressive. But when I use the speakers, the sounds are tinny, non-authentic, and just down-right disappointing, especially in the upper frequencies. Any ideas? Could the amp, especially being non-stereo hooked up to a stereo keyboard, be the main problem?"

Although the TH "answer-man in residence" :-), Clark Salisbury, gave lots of good advice, he didn't mention what might be a $0.50-fix for the described "tinny" sound: If the KT's stereo-outs are *both* connected to a monophonic amplification-system, phase-cancellation may occur due to wrong soldered lines or inverted phases on the input of the amp. Phase-cancellation usually leads to the loss the "monophonic" frequencies of a sound (i.e. complete silence, in the worst case). "Tinny" could be a good description. EQ'ing can't help, as the questionable frequencies are simply non-existent.

Simple test for the provided scenario: try amplifying the KT only with a single line (... yeah I know this hurts :-). If things aren't sounding much better, Tom Kincheloe should really consider other ways of monitoring...

Dietz
http://croco.atnet.at/club/dietz/welcome.htm

[CS – Good call, Dietz. Phase cancellation can cause the problems described.

Still, I think on the whole the problems rest with the monitoring system. For phase cancellation to occur, the sound appearing at one mixer input needs to have at least some elements which are out of phase with the sound appearing at the other mixer input. In the case of the KT-76, the wave ROM is monophonic, so phase cancellation would not occur based on the wave data itself. It is possible that some cancellation might be related to the stereo effects, but I have not found this to be a problem with Ensoniq products; the stereo effects will not present any noticeable phase cancellation when monitored in mono.]

Hi,

As an owner of an **EPS**, a **16+**, and an **ASR** I have actually come to the point where I am going backwards. I sold my ASR mainly because I found it not as playable as its predecessors. The timing of the ASR was just plain lousy from my point of view. I play a piano and have for quite a while so it is not that it is slow. A piano is much slower than any of today's keyboards. But a piano is always slower by the same time variable, making it easy to adapt. Electronic synths and samplers today have variable delay. Play a couple of notes you get one delay, play a bunch and it is slower still. This can make it difficult to play well (at least for me) if the timing changes radically. The ASR I had never felt very good in this respect, so I got rid of it and will probably go back to an EPS which I felt was much more playable and responsive.

Before getting rid of it, I did sit down to test the ASR and see how slow it was and found it quite variable which confirmed what I felt. By contrast I know from previous tests that the EPS was about 1.5 to 2x faster and much less variation with different load conditions. No doubt because the processor was not called upon to do as much.

I realize this may be all meaningless to some or even all but I thought I would voice the opinion anyway. When you play a single or double line part over 8 bars on the ASR only to find that when you end it always seems off beat and late but find you can consistently nail it on a piano which is obviously slower then maybe you can at least understand some of my frustration (yes, I use a weighted controller so that is really not the issue). The timing shifts so much when the polyphony load changes that the music which was in rhythm before suddenly comes out late.

Thinking about this, I really think that Ensoniq and other manufacturers should give some thought to making their instruments more timing consistent under all load conditions. For instance, the ASR shifts abruptly when you pass the 8 voice polyphony mark. It isn't a fast or slow issue. Instead of trying to get all the notes out the door quickly it should be consistently. Take the worst case, which is usually when you get near the polyphony limit, and design it so that under all conditions the timing remains the same as the worst case by delaying the MIDI where necessary. That way the response would be smooth under all load conditions just like a piano. It does not matter how slow it is. That would be a playable instrument for me. Timing delays you can compensate for but variability you can never predict nor compensate for as a player.

The design I am proposing I think is technically quite feasible. How about it Ensoniq?

Jon

[CS – You might be interested to know of the system that Akai implemented in at least one of their samplers – the S1000. In their scheme, you could designate – on a patch-by-patch basis – whether notes would be played as soon as they were ready (often preferable for drum sounds, for example), or whether the unit would wait until all notes were ready, then fire them all at the same time – or at least as close to it as possible. Of course, the amount of time it took for all notes to be ready for firing depended on many factors, so this still wouldn't solve your problem. It does, however, seem to indicate that the process of controlling note playback timings is controllable.]

[Ensoniq – This is an interesting issue because as polyphony and voice complexity increase the microprocessor works harder making it more difficult to do everything you need to do with the available microprocessor horsepower. If we designed in a microprocessor that was capable of handling full load 100% of the time, no one would be able to afford the product. If we left out the features that can potentially bog the system down, then the product wouldn't be very popular and it wouldn't sell. With

each product, we strike a compromise between performance and price to produce a product that satisfies the majority of the users most of the time.

With our new generation of products based on OTTO-EXP, this will be less of an issue. Hardware designed into this chip minimizes the timing variation caused by processor load and, of course, microprocessor horsepower is improving. The real issue here is that the ASR is a product based on 1992 technology. You could argue that we pushed that technology too far, but the ASR is one of the most successful samplers in the world.]

Hi.

I've been reading the *Hacker* over the last few months with interest. I bought a **KT-88** and I'm having great fun getting to know it (in an slow, organic sort of way, if you know what I mean).

I've ventured into the manual but the reason I'm writing is due to a song that our band is keen to cover. We had a play with Phil Collins' song "Paradise" last week, which is a song I like a lot, but I really couldn't find the sound(s) that he uses in that song, pre-loaded into the KT. The ROM 14 sound was close and some of the ones on the "gospel" soundcard were close too, but none of them were really "it."

I'd really like to cover the keyboard parts as close as I can to the original, and I figured the time had come for me to start playing with that "creating one's own sound" thing. Could anyone take me through building the sounds for that song on the KT-88?

Thanking you in advance.
Regards,
Sue Barker
New Zealand
sdb@frynov.ird.govt.nz

[CS – I'm afraid I don't listen to Collins' work much, so I don't have any real specific advice to give you. However, you should be able to find loads of programming tips in the Hacker. In particular, you might want to try getting your hands on back issues of TH containing reprints of a series of articles I did covering various programming aspects of the SQ-1. Most of the techniques discussed therein can be applied directly to the KT-88, as the architectures of the two machines are closely related. E-mail the Hacker *for more information.]*

[TH – The articles that Clark's referring to are the ones that we've been reprinting every so often as space allows.]

Dear Transoniq,

I've been looking for an **ESQ-1** patch librarian for the Mac. There seems to be a lot of them out there for the PC, but I've come up with zilch for the Mac.

Please help if you can.
Thanks,
Geoff
eyemhear@slip.net

[CS – Both Galaxy from Opcode Systems, (www.opcode.com, 415-856-3333) and Unisyn from Mark of the Unicorn (www.motu.-com/MOTUHome.html, 617-576-3066) have profiles which will support the ESQ-1.]

TH –

I was trying to control pan on an **ASR** instrument from my computer sequencer (Logic), but I was unable to make it work. I was able to control the pan properly if I set the Pan MOD = WHEEL and recorded the pan changes live on the keyboard. However, when I made set the Pan MOD = XCNTRL, it would not respond to any panning changes I made on the sequencer. My sequencer indicates that pan is controller value #10 and so I made sure to send the panning info at controller value #10 through the proper channel. On one of the COMMAND pages, there is the XCNTRL value but setting this to 10 had no effect. I suppose if I set up my sequencer to send modulation wheel values then I'd be able to pan, but why would they reserve a controller value for pan if it's not going to work?

Another question: Do instruments on the ASR only respond to MIDI channels 1-8? Again, in Logic, I was able to record a solo but I was unable to make it play the solo back on channels 9 and above (though it played back fine on the lower channels).

Thanks for your help,
Gerry
gerry@qcworld.com

[CS – The ASR should respond to pan messages from your sequencer if everything's set up correctly, and it sounds like you've done so. Just to double-check, though, let's go through it.

*In the Edit/Amp menu, set PAN MOD=XCTRL, with a positive or negative value, depending on which direction you want the sound to travel. If you want the sound to travel from its current position to the far right, for example, set PAN MOD=XCTRL *+99. Note that if you want the sound to travel from hard left to hard right – or vice versa – you need to set the sound's initial position one way or the other. For example, if you want the sound to pan from left to right, set the PAN=XX parameter to -99.*

Also, be sure (as you have) to set MIDI XCTRL NUMBER=XX parameter (located in the Edit/System pages) to 10, the MIDI controller assigned to panning. Also, be sure that MIDI CONTROLLERS=ON, also located in the Edit/System pages.

Finally, don't forget that the pan mod parameter can be edited at the level of a wavesample, a layer, or an entire instrument. If you're having difficulty making an entire instrument pan, for example, make sure that you've edited the pan mod parameter for the entire instrument, and not just one wavesample.

As to your other question, any instrument in the ASR can be set to receive on any MIDI channel. Press Edit, then Track, and scroll until you see MULTI-IN MIDI CHANNEL=XX. Tap the Instrument/Sequence Track button for the instrument you wish to

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edit, and use the slider or up/down buttons to change its current assignment. The only constraints are that you cannot receive on more than 8 channels at one time, and that if two Instrument/Tracks are set to the same MIDI channel, only the lower-numbered Instrument/Track will respond.]

TH –

I have an **MR-76** (with ROM version 1.61) and its sounds are some of the best I've heard. However, it is not trustworthy as far as its sequences and MIDI files go. It seems to spontaneously corrupt disk files to the point where it can't load them back into itself. The screen reads that the file has "Bad MIDI data." This has happened to me a few times too many and I'm to the point where I do not trust it anymore.

Also, the manual (and advertisement) for this keyboard claim that the MIDI files can be transferred to PC sequencers. I have tried again and again to load the MR-76 MIDI files into both Cubase and PowerTracks Pro in every way possible but it does not work. Cubase just opens an empty file and PowerTracks Pro delivers and "Unexpected End of File" message.

Is anybody else experiencing these problems? Is there a solution?

Jerry G.

[James Rosand (jrosand@olympus.net) –

Dear Jerry:

I have an MR-61 OS v. 1.61 too. I have not experienced the disk corruption problems, but have run into the "Unexpected End of File" message with PowerTracks Pro. I've sent PG music some of my MIDI files created on the MR-61 asking them what may be the problem. So far, no response.

If you do have access to Calkwalk Pro, you can load your MR-76 MIDI files into it. It reads them just fine. I know you probably don't want to invest in yet another sequencer program. Perhaps you can find a friend that has Calkwalk Pro and see if he can load your sequences?

Once you get your sequence into Calkwalk Pro, you will find that the Drum channel #10 doesn't have anything in it (MIDI wise). In other words, the drum patterns built into the MR-61/76 play great in the MR's 16-track sequencer, but do not come across via the save "MIDI sequence to disk" process. Ensoniq explains it this way: The drum patterns are actual long transwaves that really have no MIDI data contained in them. This is why you see the "track empty" message when you call up track #10 on your MR 16-track sequencer. If you "add" drum data to your track #10 track, it will show up as MIDI data in your "saved to disk" sequence.

I really don't know if there is any way around this situation. I was hoping to play an external drum machine via MIDI using these wonderful drum patterns built into my MR-61. But alas, Channel 10 doesn't appear to be sending out any MIDI information for the same reason mentioned above.

Let me know if you have any sort of workaround that I may have overlooked. These instruments are so much like a double edged sword. Very powerful and yet very complicated.

Good luck.]

[CS – First, you should upgrade to the current OS for your MR (OS 1.64); this will probably solve your disk problems.

As to the problems with loading Standard MIDI Files from you MR, the short answer is that because some sequencers do not strictly adhere to the MIDI spec when it comes to importing SMF's, MR sequences can confuse them. The trouble is not with the sequence data itself. Rather, the MR uses a variable-length header – which is in compliance with the MIDI spec, if you were wondering – to store additional program information along with the rest of the sequence data. Unfortunately, some sequencers aren't designed to handle anything but the more common fixed-length header, and problems arise.

The solution is to obtain a copy of MRMIDI, a small utility written by Gary Giebler. MRMIDI will modify the header of your MIDI file so that it will load into programs that have trouble with variable-length MIDI file headers. MRMIDI is available online at Ensoniq's web site, or call Ensoniq Customer Service.]

Hello,

I want to transfer and/or compose my songs to the computer. I have a Gateway 2000 P5-60 and an Ensoniq **SQ-2**. I am unfamiliar with mostly everything in the way of doing this and have no MIDI interface, presumably the first thing I need to attend to for meeting this end...

Can anyone advise me how to get started here, and perhaps tell me what MIDI interface will work best with my system?

Thanks,
Alanzo
alanzo@evansville.net

[TH – None of our answer folk seemed to catch this one (ahem) – sorry about that. You're right about the MIDI interface though. That would be the way to get started. Your computer dealer or your local music stores should be able to help with this. It should come with at least some rudimentary software that'll get you going.]

TH –

By the way, on the off chance...

I own a **TS-10** and I'm desperately trying to track down some hot pop horn/brass sounds. Any clues how a little old isolated New Zealander might be able to source some???

Steve Hornblow,
steve.hornblow@telecom.co.nz

[GNormand@aol.com – Try the patch called Power Brass...location 0-6, I think. If you need any more brassy sound than that, I wish you luck.]

To whom it may concern,

I own a **TS-12** and a **KT-76** and love them both. There is one item that I and all my friends local and on the net agree upon and that is a new type of pitch bend wheel. Being a former drummer, I know that the natural stroke of the hand is through wrist movement UP and DOWN not fingered back and forth. This led me to the concept of a SIDE mounted pitch bend JOYSTICK that would allow the HAND to utilize its NATURAL up and down motion. Of course the stick would need to settle into a recessed pocket then pop out when ready to play. Also, it would be nice if the pitch

went up when the stick was pushed DOWN to allow for easier duplication of the guitar. Jan Hammer would go crazy! In fact he is going to receive a copy of this as well as all the newsgroups and IRC groups I am affiliated with. I think whoever comes up with this will give players a long sought way to implement their abilities easier.

Paul D. Yost
ektroma@isrv.com

[GNormand@aol.com – What a groovy deal that would be to control pitch.

By the way, I have a TS-10 and a '12 and am in the market for a software program. Do you use Cakewalk? Any recommendations for a sequencer/notation program? I also am selling my Mirage (bought new) and an Oberheim organ module (like a real B-3). Any ideas how to market them?

[Jay Gamblin (tjg417@gte.net) – I've tried the demo versions of Cakewalk Pro and Voyetra's Digital Orchestra Plus. They are very similar but I felt that Digital Orchestra Plus was much more user friendly. You can download a demo at http://www.voyetra.-com/filearea/filearea.htm.

By the way I have a Mirage sampler. Only mine bit the dust just the other day. How much do you want for yours?]

[CS – Cool idea, Paul. Have you checked out the pitch controller on the Nord Lead? It may not be for everybody, but as a guitar player used to bending strings, I find exceptionally easy to use and musical. And the idea is quite simple, really. It's kind of like a slider, mounted sideways and with a concave surface you can rest a finger or thumb in. The brilliant part, though, is that it has a relatively short travel, but resistance quickly increases the farther you push it, in much the same way that a guitar string's tension increases the farther you try to bend it. It's a simple idea, really, but quite brilliant in my opinion.]

TH –

I just read a letter in my latest *Keyboard Magazine* (Jan/97) that gives an explanation and solution to the problem that I've been having loading my SMF (standard MIDI files) created on my **MR-61/76** into a computer sequencer I have called PowerTracks Pro. When the SMF is loaded into PTP, I always get an "unexpected end of file" error. Here's the real scoop!

This is being quoted directly from *Keyboard Magazine*. Ensoniq explains it:

"Any sequencer or software program that conforms to the Standard MIDI File Specifications as published by the MIDI Manufacturers Association will correctly load and play standard MIDI files created on the Ensoniq MR-61 or MR-76. Many programs such as Cakewalk, Cubase and Microsoft's Media Player load and play the MR-61 or MR-76 standard MIDI files correctly."

"Standard MIDI files contain a variable length header that includes information specific to the current file. Ensoniq has taken advantage of this header to add important parameters. However, some software programs do not follow the MIDI Specification exactly, and look for a fixed-length header instead of variable length. The result is an incompatibility between the file and your PC program.

"Since we understand that these incompatibilities exist, we have developed a computer utility (called MRMIDI) that will enable these programs to load the MR-61 or MR-76 standard MIDI files. This utility is available on Ensoniq's World Wide Web site (http://www.ensoniq.com). The MR-MIDI utility can also be obtained on floppy disk by calling Ensoniq customer service at 610-647-3930.

"While this situation is not due to a bug, we are concerned and would like to help with any bugs that users might encounter. As always, Ensoniq's interim releases of the Operating System are free (there is a $9 fee to cover the S&H of the E-PROMS)."

I would like to add that I went to Ensoniq's Web site and could not find the MRMIDI utility. I was informed via E-mail from Al Blake at Ensoniq that the MRMIDI utility would be available for download within the next 2 weeks.

This solves a lot of unanswered questions and problems I've been having with my MR-61 concerning SMFs.

I hope this helps others that may be having the same problem.

James Rosand,
jrosand@olympus.net

[TH – Thanks to James, Keyboard Magazine, *and Ensoniq for straightening this out.]*

TH –

My **TS-10**, OS v. 3.05, has a problem receiving poly key pressure via the MIDI input. Poly pressure works fine within the unit, and it sends poly key info just fine, and Performer 4.2 receives it fine, but the synth will not respond to poly key pressure from Performer. Nor will it work via a direct connection via the TS-10's MIDI Out to In. (Channel pressure works fine under all circumstances.) Yes, I have checked that all is set to send/receive key pressure. Now, oddly enough, poly pressure WILL come through after recording from Performer into the TS-10's sequencer! Anyone else experienced this mystery?

John Seboldt
rohrwerk@pconline.com

[TH – You should probably give Ensoniq Customer Service a call.]

Robby,

Your **MR**-article raised more questions than it answered for me.

1) You noted that the main chip of the MR series is the DOCII used on the KT. What chips are used on the TS, SD, ASR, EPS? How are the chips different, why is it better?

1a) What obsessive handwashing? I am not being facetious, what is the reference? (BTW, I've been a subscriber since 1989, OK?) Did I miss something? Was the washing in response to the results of "doinking"? If so, that was horribly sexist and inappropriate, given my onanic interpretation of the transitive verb "to doink." Please enlighten or correct me, or apologize, especially to the female readers (this appeared in the middle of the front page for gosh sakes, which placement, I understand, was not your decision).

2) "The first large thing to note about the MR voice arch. is its CD-quality sampling rate: 44.1 kHz." I was under the impression that virtually all of the EPS, and ALL of the TS and ASR sounds were sampled at 44.1 kHz (or 48 kHz and sample rate converted

to 44.1), stored at full resolution and played back at full resolution. Again, what is different? Was my impression wrong? I hope the samples I thought I recorded at 44.1 were recorded and stored at that rate!

3) "...the mighty sound architecture": Ok, 16 layers instead of 8. Is that it? I know that's twice as much, but as far as I can tell, it's too much of a pain in the neck for most users (and programmers) to use the 8 layers we already have. Now if you were to explain how they are used in a new way, software tools that make it easier to use these new layers, etc., then your article would be helpful. Also, are you saying that each soundwave is actually a collection of up to ??? samples (wavesamples). In the ASR/EPS each layer (I think that is the correct term) can have up to 127 wavesamples. Are you saying that each soundwave is a collection of wave samples giving the MR voice arch. an additional "layer" of control?

4) "tu wit" is spelled "TO wit." It is not Latin. It is archaic English. To wit = to know. (that part you obviously got correct). Explanation: Bad proofreading?

5) Do you read what you write? At the end of para. 8 (as printed) you say "well-endowed ancestor." Immediately following that is a "little technical note for our weenie readers (boy, that doesn't sound right)." I'll say! If it doesn't sound right TAKE IT OUT! Is the Transoniq Hacker targeted exclusively at male 11-13 year olds? Again this is over my line of offense. I shall quote you, "Sheesh."!!!!

5a) In this same technical note, you are not very careful with your terminology re: sounds, waves, voices, layers and banks. None of these terms is defined, nor expressed with quotations to indicate that you are using the "official factory terms." The result is that your technical note is gibberish.

6) From my reading of Ensoniq ads, the MR series is the first to fully implement the Soundfinder software. I would think that this feature would merit more than a single use of the word.

7) Unisyn (formerly Galaxy?, formerly X-OR??) is the only way to program the MR, No? Why don't you say this. Unisyn must be on your computer (mac? PC? both?), no? There is no way to access most sound parameters, even on the keyboard models, without the computer/Unisyn connection, no? Please explain.

I have committed an egregious error in writing this message. The many ?? indicate places where I have relied on my less than perfect memory. I have not checked any sources. I'd rather not do that but this is for free and I hope that you get my points. In some, maybe quite a few, instances, my facts may be wrong and you can say, "No Mark, you don't remember correctly."

So, what the real deal on the MR family? Do they just SOUND better, or is there something else? What's new and better about the effects and compared to what? (See what I mean about more questions? Sometimes that's good, but not this time.)

Regards,
Mark Snyder
msnyder@pppl.gov

[Robby replies:

1. Oops. I'm embarrassed. The MRs use Ensoniq's OTTO chip; I spaced out when I wrote the article. My most heartfelt apologies to Hacker readers for this mistake. Good catch!

1a) "Obsessive handwashing" is a joking reference to both compulsive behavior and unjustified guilt a la Macbeth. As far as "doinking" goes, dirty is truly in the mind of the beholder. To "doink" with something is to fuss with it, to tweak something to the point of pointlessness, to "futz" (also not a dirty word) with it. I think you owe our female readers an apology.

2) Actually, Ensoniq's samples are recorded at all kinds of sample rates, and the samplers can play back at various rates, among which is 44.1 kHz. The TS synths play back waves at roughly 30 kHz, the KT plays samples at approximately 36 kHz – the MRs are Ensoniq's first synths that play at 44.1 kHz.

3) As time goes by, you'll no doubt be seeing articles in the Hacker detailing some of the interesting sounds in the MRs that take advantage of this 16-layer architecture. Have you heard the MRs yet? In regards to the second question embedded in Comment 3: Yes, you've got it: to use ASR terminology, each MR "wave" is similar to an ASR "layer."

4) Hey, we're only human, born to make mistakes.

5) Oh yes, I read what I write. It appears that my attempts to make the technical materials in my articles less forbidding through the use of humor have failed you. Obviously, not everyone's idea of a funny joke is the same. I promise to subject my writings to even greater scrutiny to ensure that nothing I say could possibly be misunderstood by someone who sees double-entendres everywhere he looks. Allow me to pass along some advice I once received from a friend: "We injure the world more when we take offense than when we give it." To wit: Get a life. BTW, I would feel worse about offending you if your letter didn't seem so deliberately mean-spirited.

5a) It may be that the way the MR uses these terms is just different enough from the way other products use them that you're finding it all a bit confusing (don't we all?). I didn't, and don't, see translating these terms into their other-Ensoniq-product equivalents as being within the purview of the little preview I wrote. Also, are you of the belief that quotation marks universally signify official terminology?

6) The MR-61/MR-76 implementation of SoundFinder is brilliant; I simply chose to write about other things. Are you saying you'd like a Hacker *article all about the many ingenious MR-61/MR-76 interface amenities?*

7) You are correct that the only way to get to the deepest sound programming capabilities of the MRs is by using the MR Unisyn software on a Mac or PC connected via MIDI to your MR. However, it's not accurate to state that there's no way to access most sound parameters, since the MRs provide many of these as SoundFinder parameters (they're also available in the MR's 16 Track Recorder). The SoundFinder parameters offer overrides of, and offsets to, the values programmed into each sound. As far as your closing comments go, I'm afraid there's no substitute for personal experience. Why not go to a convenient music store and check out and MR-61, MR-76 or MR-Rack? And yes, they sound great!]

[TH – Just for the record, we here at the Hacker *love ol' Robby's style and wit – and the editrix is hardly a thirteen-year-old boy.]*

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