

Transoniq Hacker

The Independent
Newsletter for Ensoniq Users

Postcards from PARIS

Craig Anderton

Dear Jane and Eric,
As you know I'd planned to vacation in PARIS last spring, but the flight was cancelled and rescheduled for this winter. Well, it finally came through so here I am, writing from my small hotel room located right on the Rue Ensonique.
The plane ride over was painless, but the taxi ride to the hotel was something else. First the driver got lost - he kept looping around in circles - and then the car broke down completely! He found a disconnected hose and reattached it, but then there was a problem with the water pump. After we got that fixed, he ran out of gas from all that circling around. Still, he was a real nice guy and we got to see a lot of PARIS during the trip.
PARIS is a beautiful city, and the architecture is stunning. But I've only been here for a little while and haven't even scratched the surface. It's easier to get around than I thought, and not knowing the language isn't too much of a problem because the people speak both Mac and Windows. Some of their pronunciations are a little weird, and there have been a few misunderstandings, but I feel pretty comfortable here.
Well, I'll be sending you more postcards as I spend more time exploring the city. Say hi to everyone at the Hacker for me!
Yours,
Craig

Seriously,
PARIS is here — a cross-platform, hardware/software combo that consists of a choice of audio interfaces, EDS-1000 PCI card (with Mac and Windows drivers), Control 16 "human interface," and hard disk recording software.

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The hardware is a joy. The 20-bit audio interface sounds great and also offers SPDIF I/O. The Control 16 is a compact, ergonomic hardware control surface with 16 long-throw channel faders, master fader, jog/shuttle/editing/ data entry wheel, transport buttons, keypad, EQ/aux send/pan adjustments, and numerous buttons for functions such as mute, solo, punch, loop set, jump to auto-location markers, etc. Two nulling LEDs simplify automation (sliding the fader until the LEDs go out matches the fader's physical position with the programmed value). Overall, it's a joy to use.

The PCI sound card includes six 24-bit DSP chips. These are the engines behind PARIS's onboard signal processing, real time action, and smooth "feel." Using dedicated hardware is far more powerful than making the host computer processor do everything. When you move a fader, change

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EQ, pan, or whatever, the action is instantaneous. Couple this with the Control 16, and the result is a system that can please even the impatient.

Software

You'll need a big monitor running at 1024 X 768 — just fitting the mixer on screen takes a lot of space. PARIS can open Sound Designer II and WAV files, as well as the native PARIS



format. Although there is no substantial audio editing, the Mac version of PARIS comes with BIAS's Peak LE and the Windows version with Steinberg's Wavelab Lite.

Although there are several windows, you'll mostly use the Editor, Mixer, and Mini Mixer. The Editor is pretty standard, with a few nice touches like scroll bars that can also zoom, an "objects bin" that shows all bits of audio used in a project, and 32 clipboards that can store groups of audio segments (not just individual parts).

A more unusual option is a choice of "constrained" or "free form" track layouts. In constrained mode, 16 tracks tie to the 16 faders. In free form mode, each fader controls an instrument, which can consist of an almost unlimited number of virtual tracks. Free form is primarily for constructing composite tracks and saving alternate takes, as only one virtual track can play through its associated fader at any time.

Mixer

This window looks and acts like a regular hardware mixer, with faders, panning, 4-band parametric EQ, up to 8 aux sends, a master section, channel inserts, meters, and so on. What keeps it from becoming hopelessly cluttered is that you can hide/show just about anything — if you're in an EQ-adjusting mood, show all 4 stages and hide the aux sends and inserts. Faders, mutes, and panning

are automatable; EQ and DSP settings are not.

The Mini Mixer is simply a scaled-down version of the main mixer that takes up less space, but still shows most of what you need.

DSP

PARIS ships with several editable, real-time plug-ins: mono and stereo compressor/expander/gate, chorus, delay, long delay, tap delay, plate reverb, room reverb, and non-linear reverb. Dynamics and delay can insert in individual channels; all effects work with the aux busses. One PCI card supports 8 stereo or 16 mono effects.

I was particularly impressed by the reverb; the dynamics processing is also fine, although rudimentary (e.g., no multiband compression). Add all this to the EQ, and PARIS delivers some pretty potent processing.

MIDI Options

PARIS currently has no MIDI capabilities, but can sync with sequencers such as Vision, Cubase, etc. running in the background. Check with the Ensoniq web site (www.ensoniq.com) for details on compatibility with particular sequencers.

The Bottom Line

While getting acquainted with PARIS, I ran

into several minor bugs and a couple major ones. I felt the software was released prematurely, but when I brought these bugs to the attention of Intelligent Devices (the company responsible for the application; Ensoniq covers the hardware and drivers), they were extremely responsive and started working on fixes for the bugs I found. In any event, development is ongoing, and free updates are available from the PARIS web site.

Ensoniq is promising a lot for the future, and it's all very enticing — but given the nature of vaporware, can be risky for the consumer. Fortunately, with Creative Labs' recent acquisition of Ensoniq, I feel confident that not only will any shortcomings be ironed out, but Ensoniq will deliver on their promise to grow the system.

PARIS isn't a budget system, as it competes more with Pro Tools than, for example, Cubase VST. However, the hardware is rock-solid; once the software matures, PARIS is going to be a major force to contend with in the world of hard disk recording. Even in its early form, it's extremely impressive. ■

Bio: Craig Anderton wants to take these few lines to plug his site on AOL ("Craig Anderton's Sound, Studio, and Stage," keyword: SSS). It has forums, demo software, over 40 megabytes of samples, articles, calendars, and much more. Way cool.

Front Panel

RND (🎵)

Ensoniq News

The acquisition of Ensoniq by Creative Technology (announced here last month) has been

Ensoniq News

The acquisition of Ensoniq by Creative Technology (announced here last month) has been completed. Now we wait...

One good sign: Ensoniq is at NAMM this month and rumors are flying about a new keyboard announcement. We'll have more news next month.

Hypersoniq — New Products

Syntaur Productions Releases New Effects Disks for Ensoniq Samplers

In many instances, a sound can really be taken into a new dimension simply by the application of carefully crafted digital effects. Syntaur Productions now has a stellar collection of effects programs available, for both

the Ensoniq ASR series and EPS-16 Plus samplers. It is a simple procedure to copy any of the effects files from Syntaur's *Pro Effects Disk* onto a sampled instrument, to add a wah-wah pedal to a guitar sample, for instance, to apply a "telephone" filter to a vocal line, to fatten up an analog synth patch, or to "decimate" a sample tastefully into a lo-fi "street" sound.

John Gould and Sam Mims did most of the effects programming, with additional programs by Todd Speer and Kyle Kee. The *Pro Effects Disk* for the EPS-16 Plus contains 20 effects programs of a wide variety, while the ASR disk contains 38 (the 20 EPS-16 effects, plus 18 more utilizing the ASR's more powerful algorithms). The new programs go far beyond simple "tweaks" of reverb patches — they each add a unique quality to a sample or to a live processed sound. Full documentation is included, describing the program itself, the modulators used, and the effects produced at each of the three output buses.

The *Pro Effects Disks* (\$16.95 for the EPS-16 version, \$22.95 for the ASR version) are available from Syntaur Productions, 500 W. Prairie Ave., Eagle Lake, TX 77434; call (409) 234-2700 or (800) 334-1288.

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Sound Engineering announces:
Ensoniq ASR-X Drum Patterns

Sound Engineering, a leader in sound and sample design since 1991, is proud to announce the availability of 100 drum beats for Ensoniq's newest sampler, the ASR-X. The new library is available at a special introductory price of just \$29.95 (less than 30 cents per pattern).

"The ASR-X's built in drum sounds and effects, in combination with these groovy new drum beats, make an instant party," said Noam Sane, head Gizmologist. "These all-new drum beats, like most of the sample and synth patch material we've developed over

the years, really target the needs of the Urban/Dance/Electronic music writer and producer. Best of all, they're studio tested." The 100 drum beats, programmed by drum beat maven Joel B., is a fantastic tool for all ASR-X owners.

ASR-X Beats Volume 1 Overview: Ballad Beats, Dance Beats, Euro Beats, Acid Beats, Rock Beats, Funk Beats, R&B Beats, Straight Beats, Latin Beats, and many more.

Pricing: *XB-000 Drum Beats Volume 1* is

\$29.95, with Internet delivery available.

Sound Engineering has been a leading sound design firm since 1991. Offering intense support for AKAI, Kurzweil, Peavey, Roland, Oberheim, Sequential, Yamaha, and Peavey products. It offers a full line of synth patches, sampler floppies, and CD-ROMs. Online ordering and a complete catalog are available online at: <http://www.soundengine.com/>.

Sound Engineering, Box 2226, Southeastern PA 19399, 610-519-WAVE.

Home Run First Time at Bat

The AudioWrx Piano Sample Collection

Pat Finnigan

For: EPS/16+/ASR/TS/X

Product: *The AudioWrx Sampled Piano Series*

Price: \$49.95 per 7 disk set and \$3 shipping

From: AudioWrx, 508 West Texas, Iowa Park, TX 76367 (800).687.0048 (VOX), <http://www.audiowrx.com>.

Mark Twain said "Everybody talks about the weather, but nobody does anything about it." The same holds true of acoustic piano samples: everybody has an opinion on it, but few do anything about it. And with good reason: acoustic piano is *the* hardest sound to sample/edit/manage/massage into being. Even veteran loopers cringe at the prospect of editing an instrument comprised of 50+ multi-samples, tweaking loops to minimize the static decay loop after the initial attack, and then getting it small enough to fit into a 2X expander. Not for the faint of heart...

No, let's just load the factory piano samples and work with what little memory is left available. Kinda tough to do if your favorite piano is the 16 Mb "7-FT-BALDWIN" for

No, let's just load the factory piano samples and work with what little memory is left available. Kinda tough to do if your favorite piano is the 16 Mb "7-FT-BALDWIN" for the ASR, ain't it? Kinda impossible if you're using a 4X in your EPS Classic or 16+, ain't it? So you just load the 1500+ block factory Steinway into the box and deal with it...

Well, not any more, my little pretties: AudioWrx has just released a series of 7-disk sets for all Malvern loopboxes that may very well comprise the only *effective* alternative to the factory piano samples shipped with your instrument. A relatively new company (see their ad in the Booteeq), AudioWrx kicks off their entry into the Ensoniq market with these 7-disk DSD (thnx you!) sets that load into *all* the Malvern loopboxes. Appears they do

other audio stuff as well (check their website). Without further ado, let's dissect both the *Acoustic* and the *Electric Piano* sets...

The Roses

All acoustic piano samples load in under 2000 blocks. This may not seem like much unless you own an EPS Classic or 16+; it's very convenient for a 16+ with the Flash-RAM option. Why? Any of these pianos will load into Flash with enough memory headroom to install the OS. *Very* cool to boot your 16+ from Flash and load the acoustic piano without shuffling *any* disks...

Well thought out: the 1960-block "Bright Grand" is truly different from the 1834-block "Traditional Grand." Above G3 the former sparkles and is guaranteed to cut through a mix without taking it over. No undamped samples above F5: a grateful implementation (IMHO), but purists may take offense: kinda like B-3 samples with heavy EQ processing to remove the 60-cycle hum in those inductive beasts (*much* better sounding, but not faithful to the original). The "Dark Grand" (IMHO), but purists may take offense: kinda like B-3 samples with heavy EQ processing to remove the 60-cycle hum in those inductive beasts (*much* better sounding, but not faithful to the original). The "Dark Grand" doesn't appear to be a velocity-edited "Bright" or "Traditional" grand: harder velocities play louder without x-switching a different sample into play. Mod wheel gratefully nonfunctional: no LFO leaking into your acoustic emulations here.

All acoustic sets avoid the "woodiness" in the midrange area of the Ensoniq Steinway; it would appear that keyrange required 400+ more blocks to eradicate (judging by the block count). Good level on all samples: no tweaking the "Boost" parameter required (EPS Classic users take note). Discernible split points but no glaring harmonic distrac-

tion between them. Very transportable instruments: sound quality was as close to identical across the board when I auditioned these instruments on an EPS Classic, a 16+ (with Flash), and an ASR-10. Given the sonic differences between the 13-bit Classic vs. 16-bit 16+/ASR playback, I discerned virtually no harmonic differences; this leads me to believe Digidesign massage has been employed here.

The "*Electric Piano Series*" is very comprehensive: Classical Rhodes, Dyno-Rhodes, DX, Roland MKS-series and SA-type pianos are represented. There're even a coupla Korg as well as D-50 piano samples as well. Well-rounded representations at memory-conservative sizes in the EP set. The MKS-20 3 (652 blocks) replaced my DX sample for Robin Ford's "*Talk to your Daughter*": well done, no editing required. The MKS-20 2 suffered from a funny amp envelope: fortunately, Ensoniq included those 19 preset envelopes, so two buttons later, life was good. The D50 EP's aliased in the top two octaves and were just too granular for my taste, but D50's are way too granular for my taste anyway. With the "Chorus & Reverb" FX algorithm selected on the 16+ and ASR, they really cleaned up and became palatable, but EPS Classic owners beware.

The Thorns

Acoustic Pianos still suffer from the "1-second static decay" loop syndrome. Not a problem for the 16+ and newer; a very slow and light chorus will enhance credibility, but veteran EPS Classic users don't have this hardware luxury. Still, it's a far sight better than the 1/2 second loop decay of most 3rd party piano samples. Minimal patch select variations. Only patch selects I caught muted velocity-switched layers: OX muted hard velocity layer, XO muted soft/normal velocity layer. Possible moot point, but glaring oversight for veteran Ensoniq tweekers like us...

Rhodes samples in the *Electric Piano Set* velocity layer. Possible moot point, but glaring oversight for veteran Ensoniq tweekers like us...

Rhodes samples in the *Electric Piano Set* have an unusual volume envelope drop about 1/4 second into the initial attack. After researching this anomaly, it's exactly in keeping with the Rhodes personality: the tine fork/tone bar/generator doesn't actually settle down into linear harmonic behavior for, yep, you got it, around 1/4 second after the hammer hits it. Dead on the money, but distracting: another case where accuracy may be counter to what you expect. Simple VCA envelope tweak will correct this if it grates your sensibilities.

As is the Wurliitzer EP: 847 blocks is a bit large for a multisampled reed piano. Then

again, if you're a "Breakfast In America" type, you wouldn't settle for anything less. But you'll need to tweak the velocity switch point: mine switched to hard reed buzz way too soon for my taste. Then again, I keep my keys set to a soft to normal touch in the global pages, so might just be me. At any rate, at least you won't break any reeds if you really get inspired.

The Deal

AudioWrX has kicked off their season, as well as 1998, with a very respectable and affordable set of acoustic pianos that would do credit to any sampler's arsenal. No hunting up a CD player to load samples into a 16+ or ASR, saving to low-D diskettes to load into

your 16+ or EPS Classic to feverishly edit to size required. Disk labels indicate these guys are pretty Mac-savvy: I'd surmise they've done some Sound Designer tweaking...

This set does *not* represent the commensurate acoustic (or electric) piano library, nor does it market itself as such. Rather, this is a robust and memory-conscious set of emulations for Ensoniq owners who don't wish to lose 75% of available memory by loading a reasonable piano facsimile into their instrument or cabling up an outboard module.

An excellent first time out: we'll be hearing more from these guys. Time to oil up that glove and play deep centerfield, 'cause that's where most of these pitches land... ■

Bio: Pat's not having much luck leading a normal life. Pat's wife recently had a baby boy. During all the hoopla she claims she vaguely recalls receiving SysEx messages from him, but that was months ago.



ASR-X versus ASR-10

Eric Montgomery

Lots of questions have been posed about the ASR-X going from sequencing to file management to sample file conversions. One question that seems to come up quite a bit in music stores is "What is the difference between the ASR-10/88 and the ASR-X?" The only way I can answer that is by pointing out the differences in capabilities and specs and just plain practical use of both units.

I suppose we can start with the simple fact that the X has 13 velocity sensitive pads. The ASR-10 has 61 keys or 88 weighted action keys. (I guess you knew that.)

In the effects section the ASR-10 has 50 ROM effects and has the ability to load additional effects algorithms from floppy or a hard drive. This is a really unique feature. Waveboy has designed additional effects to do some very neat things with an ASR-10 that it was not capable of doing before (my favorite effects algorithms from floppy or a hard drive. This is a really unique feature. Waveboy has designed additional effects to do some very neat things with an ASR-10 that it was not capable of doing before (my favorite is the RES Filter type stuff). The X has a resonant filter built in as a part of the programming architecture. They both have a bussing system that allows the user to route certain sounds through different effects buses. The 10 has 1 effects processor that has a total of 3 busses. The X has 5 effects busses consisting of 1 Insert bus, 3 reverb busses and a dry bus. On the X there are 40 insert effects. This is very, very cool. Now the user has the ability to use (for example) distortion, digital delay and tremolo as an insert effect on one or more sounds, then pan other sounds or tracks to a big reverb, medium reverb, light reverb or to a dry bus setting. With that kind of separation it will sound like you've

been to a studio!

The sequencers in the 10 and the X are completely different from each other. The ASR-10 sequencer is like that of the EPS and 16+ families with 16 tracks. The X has a 16 track linear sequencer like that of the MR family. The ASR-10 is 8 part multitimbral and the X is 16 part multitimbral. I suppose I have said something contradictory. The ASR-10, EPS and 16+ are 8 part multitimbral so how could they have 16 track sequencers? Song Mode (8 sequence and 8 song tracks, pattern based). The ASR-10 song mode is only a means of telling the ASR to play certain sequences in a certain order. Once it is in Song Mode you can overdub on top of the same sounds with new sequence data. The X song mode does not have the ability to overdub over the same tracks, but it is 16 part multitimbral. The X has 32 notes of polyphony and the 10 has 31 notes max. Polyphony in the ASR-10 depends on what the effects processor is set to. If the effects are set to 44K then you have 23 notes, 30K you have 31 notes of polyphony.

There are sequencer editing features in the 10 like quantize and event editing. Quantizing just shifts the note start times to ones that fit into a "grid" so to speak. If you are quantizing to 16th notes then the ASR will try to shift the note to the closest line on the grid that it thinks will work. The event editing is mostly used for deleting notes that you don't want or maybe inserting program changes or controllers per track.

The X has some unique quantizing features

called Humanize, Tighten and Delta quantizing. Humanize quantizing does a random shifting of notes to give the track a better or more random "feel." Tighten quantizing shifts the notes closer to perfect but not so much as to make the data sound mechanical. Delta quantizing is a method of quantizing that is exclusive to Ensoniq. It was first introduced in the MR family of workstations. This procedure actually keeps the sequence data (rhythmic value of the notes and space between each note) intact and shifts the whole track forward or backward to help make it fit the rest of the sequence. Imagine if what you played was rhythmically accurate but not in time with the rest of the sequence — Delta quantizing to the rescue.

In the X there is no event editing. To combat not having this much-needed feature the Ensoniq designers decided to put in some-up-to-date cool real-time editing called *Scoop* editing.

For example: Assume you are recording a drum track. You record the kick, snare and hi-hat, but you found that while recording the snare you made a mistake. While recording,

For example: Assume you are recording a drum track. You record the kick, snare and hi-hat, but you found that while recording the snare you made a mistake. While recording,

Call For Writers!

In spite of their current god-like status, writers for the *Hacker* were once mere mortals — just like you! If you're noodling around with Ensoniq gear, you too can join their elite ranks. We're always looking for new writers, and yes, there is actual payment involved. If you're toying with an idea for an article, how about giving Editrix Jane a call at 1-503-227-6848 and listening to her soothing words of encouragement?

hold the record button and press the snare pad, the X will start erasing that instrument out of the sequence as long as that particular pad is being held down. Cool! Let's try the same scenario + a cowbell, and that cowbell just won't do. Stop recording, press and hold record, now play the cowbell pad. The X will then ask you if you want to erase all of that note on the whole track. Answer yes and it is done. Quick and easy.

When it comes to reading file types the ASR-10/88 will read EPS, EPS-16+, Akai S-1000/1100 and Roland S-700 series formats. The X reads ASR-10, Akai S-1000/1100, Roland S-700 series, AIF (Mac) and .wav (Windows) formats. The X also has 1 EXP slot for using maybe the Urban/Dance expansion board that many people use in the MR-61/76 and MR-Rack. Keep in mind that when the ASRs read other formats, they also read the patch data too. You will not just get a sample and that's it, you'll get as close as possible to the patch data (the way pitch, key maps, amplitude, filters etc. would have been programmed on that patch). The ASRs will do conversion of other manufacturers' sounds only via SCSI. The question was raised that there was some concern that the X may not be able to read .wav's or aif's from some other SCSI source

like a CD-ROM. Why not? The X writes its sounds as aif files. To lay the thought to rest I tried it and it does work. There is also some concern that the X cannot read EPS/16+ sounds. Well, if you have a software version that is 2.05 or less than it does not. If you have access to an ASR-10 or Giebler's EDM you can load the sound into an ASR-10 or into EDM then write the sound back to a new DSHD floppy and the X will read it. In the near future there will be software that will allow you to read EPS/16+ directly from that disk! The new software will also give you a song mode and a pattern play mode. The song mode is pretty clear, you can now assemble your sequences into one big playlist. The pattern play mode now allows you to audition the patterns by playing them and just selecting the next pattern, the X will automatically play the next pattern without missing a beat.

The last thing I should mention is that the ASR family does have sample editing parameters like truncate, time compression/expansion, normalize and many others. The ASR-10/88 does have a few extra tools like bowtie crossfade and crossfade to name a few. Those extra features do allow more control over the actual sample.

As you can see, the ASR-10 is great in some areas and the X has strengths of its own. They both have excellent sound quality and are very user friendly. Obviously if you are trying to decide between them each scenario is different and has to be weighed accordingly. If you already own one or the other and are thinking about adding another sampler to your rig then maybe this article can help in the decision making process. Both ASRs are among (in my opinion) the most user-friendly and best sounding samplers in the world. ■

Bio: Eric Montgomery is a upandcoming song writer/producer who has published his work with Salt Records, Integrity Music and several local compilation CDs in Gary Ind. and in CAMS of Chicago Ill.



Weaving the Wave el-Cheap-o

J. D. Ryan

Sometimes I'm a bit of a technophobe when it comes to plugging this computer in to use it as a recording system. Perhaps it is the machine's Taiwanese heritage that makes it so quirky (under the "you get what you pay for" doctrine). Perhaps it is my fear that I'll end up three somersaults across the room with a blackened hand bemoaning my fried 486, detecting the faint smell of ozone as my so quirky (under the "you get what you pay for" doctrine). Perhaps it is my fear that I'll end up three somersaults across the room with a blackened hand bemoaning my fried 486, detecting the faint smell of ozone as my pupils re-dilate from the the brilliant blue crackling spark that did this to me. Nah... never happen. Bzzzz!

Since my EPS 16+ has no digital outs I don't mind a bit encoding it right through the el-cheapo 16-bit stereo soundcard aboard my board. It is called an OptiMAD 16 Pro, and if you have one of these consumer-level cards you may have never tried to push it due to its low promise for studio application. When you want to put some audio on your webpage, however, you begin to realize that your pristine all-digital-domain masterpiece is gonna get played back on ...OHMYGAWD! not a pair of \$6.95 computer speakers!?

Nor do these cheap cards wanna give up any performance ...you have to work at it. You will need:

- 1) A stereo phono plug cord from your source to the soundcard input (more on this later)
- 2) Stereo female-phono to male-miniplug. (Maybe the card will take it in mono, but I al-
1) A stereo phono plug cord from your source to the soundcard input (more on this later)
- 2) Stereo female-phono to male-miniplug. (Maybe the card will take it in mono, but I always use two-channel cabling just in case and it makes monitoring more pleasant.)
- 3) Headphones and your Ensoniq or other sound source (tape deck, etc.)
- 4) A computer w/soundcard that has mic and line inputs and speaker output.
- 5) Any software that will record and playback your new .WAV or AIFF file (CoolEdit, HQ9000, etc.) and we are ready to patch in.

If your soundcard is anything like mine, it may have these protruding plastic rings around the miniplug in/outs. It's almost as if

these are designed to make it difficult because the weight of the cords with adaptors in place wants to mess up the connection as the plug gets pulled down by the cord and gravity. You may even have to build a little support arm or wedge it with a book or such but we're gonna get digital conversion out of this thing yet!

Okay, boot up and bring your software recorder to screen (I use CoolEdit) with its VU meters switched on and run the source cable to the "mic" or "line" input as required by your card. You may wish to turn off any screensavers or other potential interrupts. I usually take signal right out of a headphone jack on a tape deck (hence the stereo feed) to the mic or line input as required by your card. You may wish to turn off any screensavers or other potential interrupts. I usually take signal right out of a headphone jack on a tape deck (hence the stereo feed) and one would expect the "line" input to render adequate signal, maybe, maybe not. The easiest way to determine this is to let your source play and put your soft recorder into "record" or "record pause" mode and watch for signal as you plug in. There may be a mixer section in your software that could require attention too. When you see signal you must stabilize the input until you are satisfied that you have a secure connection.

Now we want to get signal in our phones to monitor the "take." My soundcard does not let me monitor the digitized signal while I'm recording and it doesn't even present the signal to the speaker outs of the soundcard so I

have to monitor the source signal from somewhere else on the system (such as the headphone out on your Ensoniq keyboard or even the speakers of your analog sound/playback system.)

In preparing your segment for the web, remember that at 44.1 kHz samples per second, you're encoding about 10 megabytes per minute per stereo side. I *guarantee* you that no-one (well, maybe your mom) out there is going to bother to download anything that takes more than five minutes or so. Your source signal should have few red (0 db) peaks in it on its way to your analog/digital converter (card).

When you are satisfied that you have captured the segment you want you have to check it now in playback. I have my headphones plugged into the speaker-out on the back of the soundcard when recording digital audio so that I don't have to run over to switch anything over on the system. CAUTION: Just drape the phones around your neck for the first listen. You may be glad you did...

Your newly captured waveform file should be on the screen and your software may require you to name or save it now, or you may just be able to hit "PLAY" and hear it through the headphones. There it is! If it's intelligible and entirely intact at playback that's about as good as it's gonna get (and that can be surprisingly acceptable for uploading to your webpage). Keep it short and sweet and trim it to the max. If there is too much background hiss, crackle, or hum that wasn't there as you recorded it, you may be able to filter/enhance/normalize it some depending on the editing capabilities in your software but as the say, "You get what you play for!" Remember too, that most of these cards are MIDI MPU-401 interface equipped and will provide many hours of Ensoniq MIDI fun on your way up the learning curve to a Soundscape Elite or other studio quality soundcard.

Next: Converting your Ensoniq format samples directly to .WAV files aboard your PC. ■

Bio: With apologies to Mr. Paul Simon, J.D., t/a The Bros. Ryan, is still crazy after all these years... (If you don't believe him or if you want to check out his honest results on the el-cheapo soundcard please go to <http://home.dmv.com/~brosryan> and download one of the .WAV or .ZIP files. He answers ALL his e-mail at the address you'll find there too.)

Beating a Creative Block

Jeffrey P. Fisher

It happens. You simply run out of ideas. What should you do when you've exhausted every possible means to wrench more music from your soul? Here are a few techniques I use consistently to overcome this terrible affliction.

Too many people believe they must be in a certain mood to compose. If the mood's not there, they procrastinate. You must fight being seduced by this unfortunate behavior. You just need to start. If you let your inner voice of judgment interfere with your creative flow, you severely inhibit your work as an artist. Turn off the messages in your head and let go.

Sit down at the keyboard, call up your favorite patch, play that chord or riff you always play when you first touch the keys, and then see what happens. Often I'll just put the sequencer into record and play...and play...and play...and play. Then I'll listen back to see if anything is useful. Often nothing worthwhile happens other than I get in some practice. But sometimes a little flourish sparks my imagination and suddenly the composer in me wakes up and starts creating.

If your well of creativity really dries up, you might enlist some help from your PC. Art Song is a terrific algorithmic music composition program that helps you create original MIDI sequences. This unique program produces musical passages by tracing a path over any Windows bitmap file. Art Song converts pictures to music by turning colors into MIDI notes. I've found the program inspiring. Though you get lots of unusable material, you do get the occasional passage that is very clever. I've generated few stand-alone sequences, but I've used bass lines and wacky chord sequences as the basis for other songs. A little tweaking here and there, an overdub or two of my own, and soon I've written some new music. If you need a little help to generate an idea or two that you can transform into your own musical creation, Art Song is worth checking out.

Typically I'll load a picture bitmap into the program, select a tracing pattern, and choose a style. Another mouse click and the music flows. I'll doodle around for some time loading different pictures, changing the programs various setting, and so forth. I always save the most interesting bits as standard MIDI files. After an hour or so, I'll convert the sequences to my Ensoniq SD-1 using that infamous conversion utility from Giebler Enterprises. Next,

I'll call up the sequences in the SD-1 and make changes, add bits, fiddle with sounds...you know, all those little things we do to breathe life into our music. Soon I'll have a few complete tunes and lots of ideas for other musical passages. This is all I usually need to spark my mind during a creative block.

Digital Expressions, W6400 Firelane 8, Menasha, WI 54952, (414) 733-6863, strohbeen@aol.com.

Giebler Enterprises, 26 Crestview Dr., Phoenixville, PA 19460 (610) 933-0332.

Creative lyrics

Here are two exercises I use when faced with the blank page. First, it's very important for you to ignore your temporary writer's block. Grab a writing instrument, paper, and begin. You don't need to be structured, just start writing what comes naturally. If the sheer act of doing something ...anything ...doesn't stimulate your mind, try this next idea.

I think a useful tactic is to take wild ramblings and force them into a structure. If you first write down what comes into your mind and then whittle, twist, and squeeze the words into a specific form, you will arrive at a new thought altogether. Start writing some Haiku. You remember, don't you? Three line poems consisting of five syllables, seven syllables, and then five again. The economy of words creates a focused abstraction. And the rhythm of the words is instantly musical.

It's five seven five
That's all you really need know
As a path to use

It's five seven five
That's all you really need know
As a path to use

Creativity
Look beyond the obvious
Unleash it right now

Creativity is all around us. It is both inside and outside. Though you can name creativity (inspiration, muse, discovery, understanding) you cannot define it. You cannot grasp it, nor can you learn it. Creativity is. And you can harness it in your life. It can guide you, fulfill you, help you, and hurt you. You cannot control it and it cannot control you. It is there to be used, it denies nothing, asks for nothing and demands nothing. It just is. While the physical world has its advantage, it's often the indiscernible and invisible that becomes truly useful. You should use these principles to free

your mind and open up your true pathway to endless and boundless creativity.

To overcome your temporary impasse, look outside the boundaries. Don't stay tied to a single way of doing things. Try many different approaches. You'll find the solution if you open up your mind to all the infinite possibilities. Leaving your comfort zone is the doorway to your best work. You will find the true creativity within. Do you really want to

risk shutting out this world and stifling your musical talent? Then what are you waiting for?

Grab Jeffrey's new edition of his popular book, How To Make Money Scoring Soundtracks And Jingles, and turn your musical talents into cash. Write Fisher Creative Group, 323 Inner Circle Drive, Bolingbrook, IL 60490; e-mail fishercg@mcs.com; visit www.mcs.net/~fishercg; or call (630) 378-4109.

HACKER BASEMENT TAPES

Steve Vincent

TRANZIT — Voyage Dirk H.J. Nusink

CD: TRANZIT — Voyage (c) 1997.

Artist: Dirk H.J. Nusink.

Contact Info: Dirk Nusink, p.a.
NUSEMUSIC NL, Toldijk 28, 3209 BD,
Hekelingen, Netherlands; Phone:
0181-633387; Distributor's website
(Groove Unlimited):

<http://www.mcs.nl/groove/>.

Equipment: Ensoniq EPS-16+, ESQ-1,
Yamaha TG-55, Roland Juno 60, MC-303
Groove Box, XP-50, Korg WaveStation,
Digitech DSP-16, Ibanez DM-500 delay,
Boss RRV-10 digital reverb, D & R model
2 analog spring reverb, Alecto EQ-2400
graphic equalizer, Atari 1040STf running
Cubase v2.01, Fostex MC-102 keyboard
mixer, Sony amplifiers, Goodmans
Maxim, Beyer DT-440 and DT-811
monitoring, Aiwa XD-S260 DAT.

"TRANZIT" is Dirk Nusink, who brings us his version of "synthesizermusic" from the Netherlands on his first CD, entitled "Voyage." This CD is packed (almost 72 minutes) with trancey European electronic music in the tradition of Jean Michael Jarre and Tangerine Dream.

From the CD liner notes (with some slight editing to aid the translation from Dutch to English): "Dirk Nusink got most of his influences out of the '70s and '80s ties. Having listened to different styles of music while growing up, he started on guitar in several rock bands. A few years later he switched over to play percussion in fusion and dance music. Although satisfied playing percussion, there still was a need for expressing his own ideas and independence, so the digital domain brought the solution, and setting up a home studio was the answer to his needs. He first explored the area of New Age music and finally he came into contact with Cue

Records (Groove Unlimited). Because of the tremendous amount of electronic music that is released by Cue Records, he started with an old love, and that is synthesizermusic."

Although most of Dirk's sound sources are digital, he manages to coax wonderful analog-sounding timbres from them. The production quality on "TRANZIT — Voyage" is superb and the mix is excellent, showing Dirk's great engineering chops. Compositionally, "TRANZIT — Voyage" has that "tight" European electronic music feel, but within these boundaries floats an emotional and dreamy feeling that entrances the listener.

Let's take a Voyage into Dirk's music...

Lowlands — Arpeggiating harp samples create the repetitive focus that induces the trance on this tune, with a single synth note filter-sweeping over and over. Percussion finally floats in about 2:30 minutes into the song, along with a melodic line and bell-like accoutrements. Finally the track settles into its groove after 4 minutes with a flute-like melody line. A wonderful, evolving, mellow

Nostalgia — This dark, dreamy free-form track haunts with wind-noise in the background and wine glass and bell hybrid sounds weaving a nostalgic fabric over which float string lines.

Desertdust — Cool, repetitive percussion and an 8th-note octave pulse provide the transportation for this long (12:20) musical journey during which suspended fourths are resolved into major chords over and over, building then resolving the slightest tensions, propelling the entire experience in a forward direction. One could imagine this as a soundtrack to a travel documentary.

Rick's Theme — A departure from Dirk's electronic synth formula, this song uses acoustic piano as its main instrument. Digital bells add to the dreamy piano melody later in the track. Although the song never departs from the alternating two-chord progression, its repetitiveness is not boring; on the contrary, its simplicity frees the mind to wander.

Quiet Waters — Lush sweeping pads wash over a crisp analogue-ish arpeggio, with an almost subliminal vox-type "melody" hinting at ideas in the background. Toward the end of the song, synthesized chirping sounds emulate birds, insects, and other creatures coming to drink at this virtual stream.

Alexandria — Interesting percussion adds a world-music feel to this middle-eastern influenced track. Dirk apparently does not attempt at finding "real" samples of ethnic instruments, but uses analog (or digitally produced, analog-sounding) emulations of real instruments. I have always favored this "emulative" approach; one need only "suggest" the particular sound, and the human ear forgivingly compensates, and (speaking for my own ears only here) actually prefers to use its own imagination, rather than suffer the artifacts of an instrument being played outside its "real" range, or even worse, the pain of listening to the nasty aliasing that occurs when an instrument is poorly multi-sampled. Two thumbs up to emulative production!

Cryptonite — Here is crisp European electronic dance music that, perhaps due to suggestion from its title, conjures images of a busy chemical factory, but without any noxious associations.

After Age — Piccolo snare hints at a hip-hop beat, bringing synthesizermusic into the nineties. Very cool bass timbres used in this syncopated, rhythmically intriguing track. Synth chords chop out percussive lines reminiscent of Information Society.

L.F.O. — As the title suggests, Dirk animates syncopated, rhythmically intriguing track. Synth chords chop out percussive lines reminiscent of Information Society.

L.F.O. — As the title suggests, Dirk animates his synths with every filter, envelope, and L.F.O. trick in the book, leading us into a wonderful exploration of timbral complexities. Anyone who thinks that electronic sources of music are boring should listen to this track. Beautiful sounds are woven together to create another entrancing experience. There is a slightly dark edge to this track, with a very low male-sounding voice saying "aahh..." in a Darth Vader-like spirit. Haunting. We also get to hear some of Dirk's soloing chops as he breaks out of the patient, slow-building mold periodically to give us some of his lead-synth licks.

Anklung — Not to be outdone by "L.F.O.",

this track starts with a fast sample-hold or arpeggiating synth, morphing into a wash of beautiful chords which are fascinatingly molded by pitch-bend and/or detuning to move us slightly out of the surgically-clean world of synth music into a more human dimension. The CD ends with this rootless, dreamy trance fading into silence.

Dirk Nusink displays great patience in building compositional tension over long periods of time in his tracks; many of his pieces are 7 to 12 minutes long. He will often use the first one to three minutes of a track to slowly add instruments without any melody, percussion, or direction, before bringing in these anchors. Then it may sometimes be another three to five minutes before any melody even kicks in. This creates a very dreamy and relaxing mood which departs from the frantic world of pop music and its frequent attempts to hook us in the first few seconds of a song. Dirk's music is a generous, slow-building, laid-back, entrancing soundscape which helps the mind and soul to release tension, not unlike progressive muscle relaxation techniques that have you slowly tense up, then release, every muscle group in your body, until your entire being is totally relaxed (usually you fall asleep before you're finished!). "TRANZIT — Voyage" is a musical equivalent of this approach to relaxation.

Dirk included a copy of Dutch National Radio's (KRO-Ararat) response to his CD. For you Dutch speakers in the Hacker crowd, they said: "*Beste Dirk, Dank voor toezending van je CD "Tranzit-voyage". Met je typering "kosmische synthesizermuziek" heb je geen woord teveel gezegd. Ik vind hem zeer de moeite waard in zal proberen hem in de Ararat-uitzending van 8 december a.s. onder de aandacht te brengen, en wellicht daarna ook nog eens. Ik wens je veel succes met deze CD en eventuele toekomstige plannen. Met vriendelijke groet, Sylvia Bodnar, samensteller KRO-Ararat.*"

I think they liked it.

You can listen to a sound clip of track 7, "Cryptonite," (39 sec., 269k) at Groove Unlimited's website (<http://www.mcs.nl/groove/>). Look up Dirk's music in the catalog under "TRANZIT — Voyage" (you won't find it under "Nusink"). Since soundclips from this website are in .mp3 (instead of .wav) format, you will need to download the shareware program Winamp in order to listen to it (this is a painless download at 271k, and it's a cool little program with excellent sound quality; check it out). To download Winamp, go to <http://winamp.lh.net>. You can order "TRANZIT — Voyage" directly from the Groove Unlimited website, which also has

tons of other CDs. It's a great place to browse for electronic music. Lots of sample sound clips for the listen-before-you-buy crowd.

Now I'm going to put on my headphones and trance out to "TRANZIT — Voyage"... Thanks, Dirk.■

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@harbor-net.com, or at his website at <http://www.kSPACE.com/vincent>.



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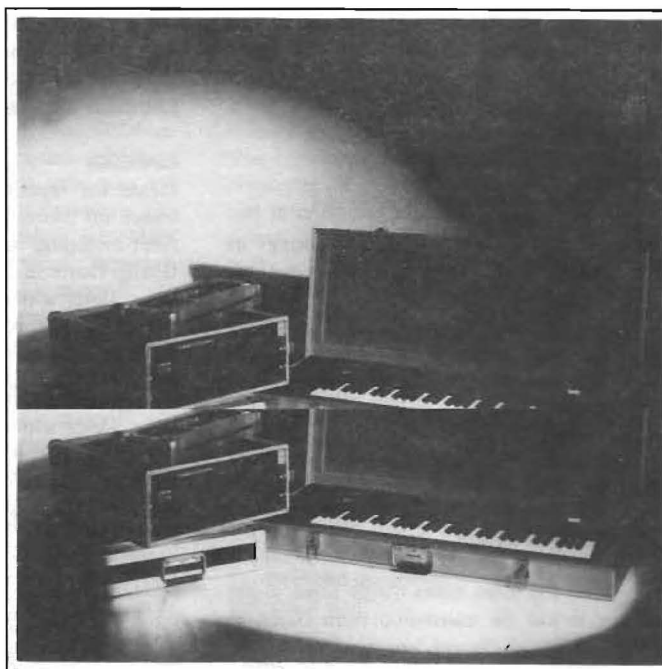
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2-space rack, Eagle-I VFX-sd case

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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 - 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/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 Pat Finnigan (PF). Letter publication in the printed version of TH is subject to space considerations.

TH -

My name is Alvaro Carrillo and I'm teaching "MIDI Production" at the La Salle University of Cuernavaca (Mexico). We use an EPS (with a 4X memory expander cartridge) as our MIDI trigger. We have a lot of stock EPS sample files (on floppy disks), and we need to get the 4x-SCSI cartridge to connect a SCSI drive to the sampler and store all of our sounds in one safe, large capacity drive. Perhaps you can help answer some questions:

1. Where can we buy, via mail (better by e-mail or web on-line service), an Ensoniq EPS 4x-SCSI cartridge?

2. What kind and models of SCSI drives work with the EPS sampler?

3. Is it possible to change the original DS-DD floppy drive (factory built in the machine) for a new DS-HD 1.4 Mb floppy drive? (Obviously if it exists, an EPS O.S. that handles that kind of formatting disks).

Ing. Alvaro Carrillo
acarrill@lyonnet.cvca.ulsu.mx

[PF - Alvaro: (1) The EPS SCSI interface has been out of production for years. Ensoniq doesn't make them anymore, and no other 3rd parties have continued to manufacture them. Since you have the genuine Ensoniq 4X Memory Expander, I'd post email to groups like alt.music.midi to try to locate one. Hen's teeth come to mind here...

(2) Just about all Macintosh-compatible SCSI hard drives work fine with the EPS, as long as the EPS is running O.S. V. 2.49 and ROM Version 2.40. See the "List of Approved Drives" in the Hacker for details. Garth Hjelte of RCS (<http://www.soundcentral.com/~chickeneps>) has a listing as well.

(3) No, only the 800k drives will operate correctly in the EPS. The ASR-10 and ASR-X are the only Ensoniq samplers that utilize a 1.4 Mb HD floppy.

Good luck in your search!!

[PF - Late news: Rubber Chicken Software NOW markets a SCSI interface for the EPS and 16+. It's only \$147 plus shipping, so check it out. It's the ONLY SCSI interface available for the EPS and 16+ anymore.]
Good luck in your search!!

[PF - Late news: Rubber Chicken Software NOW markets a SCSI interface for the EPS and 16+. It's only \$147 plus shipping, so check it out. It's the ONLY SCSI interface available for the EPS and 16+ anymore..]

Hello,

Is there any way to change the routing of FX via MIDI controller or xRPN numbers on the MR Series? I am having a heck of a time trying to figure this one out.

Thanks,
Terence Jones
jonest1@turn-records.com

[PF - Terence: Contact Ensoniq directly at 610.647.3930 and request the SysEx documentation for the MR. This doc demystifies what sysex codes to send to emulate button presses on the MR's front panel...]

Hello Hackers,

A while back, I had mentioned that I was unable to record

a PC .wav file with a loop. Since then, I have found out about a company called Sonic Foundry. They market a program called Sound Forge 4.0. There is a free demo available at their website: <http://www.sfoundry.com/pages/products/demos.html>. The full version is not exactly cheap, but if it does what it says it does, I'll waste no time in getting it. Finally, I'll be able to put *looping* .wavs into my MR-76's Flash Sample Board, and maybe have an organ patch or two that doesn't sound like a Casio when played above C4. By the way, if you're using AOL, the browser won't let you login to the ftp server to DL the demo. I had to use Netscape to get it. The demo won't record, or save a file, but will let you check out all the editing tools on .wavs you already have.

Tim Roche
Erie, PA.
TRWEBBS@aol.com

[PF - Tim: Sound Forge 4.0 is THE app for PC digital audio. I think Roy Elkins (the ex "schoolmaster" for Ensoniq) is working there now. Yeah, it's \$495 MSRP, but it does wave manipulation SOOO fast it's unbelievable. Any readers out there know of a cheaper shareware/freeware alternative for Tim here?]

[Jamie Haynes (jhaynes3@snet.net) - Hello everyone. Good as Soundforge is, I'd travel to <http://www.syntrilium.com> and download CoolEdit. It's shareware that will do a good deal of what Soundforge can do for many less dollars. The demo is fully functional (with only two of many options available at any time, choosable upon opening the program). It will certainly loop .wav files. If you like the program it can be registered for only \$50. Best of luck.]

[PF - Jamie: Duty noted and posted. The real beauty of SoundForge is in its raw SPEED. Given, it's 10 times the price of CoolEdit - it's 50 times faster at performing any number of given operations. It's sooo fast it should be downright illegal...]

TH -

I'm a new subscriber and just read the last year of issues. Great info! I felt compelled to respond to Anon letter on page 18 of Issue #147. This person was berating Ensoniq for selling him an expensive MR-61 that had some bugs in version 1.64. I have a solution. Don't buy a new key-

I'm a new subscriber and just read the last year of issues. Great info! I felt compelled to respond to Anon letter on page 18 of Issue #147. This person was berating Ensoniq for selling him an expensive MR-61 that had some bugs in version 1.64. I have a solution. Don't buy a new keyboard when it initially comes out. You'll save money and the kinks will be mostly worked out. I bought my brand new MR-61 with version 2.01 for \$1200 in October 97'. A second solution. Go back to a pencil, paper, and electric piano. Technology, or anything for that matter, will never be perfect. Deal with it and accept it or don't use it, but please don't complain about your problems to the rest of the world. Example: when Windows 95 first came out there were problems with it. I chose to stay with my 3.11 for a while and let everybody else work the bugs out so I didn't have to. Leave it to those who enjoy de-quirking technology. I think Ensoniq must have good products to have the support of a publication like TH. If they waited for it to be perfect they'd release a new keyboard every 20 years. (Maybe slight exaggeration...) If it was without flaws, they would think it was perfect and they'd stop working to improve it.

Ken Hoffman
kjhoff@execpc.com

[PF - Webers: "Never buy V. 1.0 of anything." And yes, people who rely on the technology rather than their own ability are merely fooling themselves. And yes, if engineers ran companies, they'd be so busy improving the technology and adding new features it would never get out the door...]

TH -

I have an MR-61 and a IBM PC. I do everything on the MR-61 but would like to take the disk and print my music out on the PC. My music is contemporary jazz (sax, bass, keys, guitar, drums). Is there a recommended notation software package that's easy to learn, simple to use, and generally works well with the MR-61 without too many complications?

Ken Hoffman
kjhoff@execpc.com

[PF - Ken: It's not so much what software works well with the MR, as you're talking about another box handling the data and the transcription. Avoid Finale if you're looking for something easy. Finale is the BMW of transcription programs (it's actually termed an "engraving" program), and sooner or later you'll be doing all your work in there, as all session charts for recording use or publication are done in Finale because it's the only 2400dpi transcription application out there (hence the term "engraving" program)...

But the fastest way from here to there is Encore, IMHO. It's quick and dirty, there're no EVU's (Eniga Variable Units) to contend with, you don't have to set up blank sheet music for four hours before you get busy.

But again, this is just my \$.02 worth. Programs like Musicator, Nightingale, etc., work very well, are MUCH cheaper than either Encore or Finale. Cakewalk 4.0 and above will spit out lead sheets and parts. It's more a question of what you plan to do with these charts once they're done that's the real question. If you plan to distribute them to professional musicians and studio players, anything less than the quality and finesse of Finale charts are verboten. If all you plan to do is to hand off these charts to guys in your band, MOTU's Freestyle does both sequencing and notation for both Mac and PC at a fraction of the cost of Cakewalk (FreeStyle lists for \$200, but typically sells in the \$75 range from music stores and newsgroups), so it's more a question of what you plan to do with these charts rather than a recommendation of what works best.]

TH -

Is there any way to hookup or hardwire something like a zip disk to my EPS? Also, do you have a list of back issues available with info on how to get the most out of an original EPS with 4X?

Thanx in advance for your answers,
citizen@ix21.ix.netcom.com

[PF - DC: The EPS follows the SCSI-1 protocol. As the Zip drive is a SCSI-2 device it will not work. Basically, only vacuum-sealed SCSI canisters work with the EPS, and that's only if it has the SCSI interface. If it doesn't, you may be out of luck, as the SCSI interface for the EPS went out of production years ago. And no other 3rd par-

ties manufacture them anymore as well, so unless you know of a source for the SCSI expander this journey will prove fruitless.

As for back issues, scroll to the top or bottom of this page and click on the "Back Issue Index"....]

[PF - Addendum: RCS (<http://www.soundcentral.com/~chickeneps>) has picked up the slack and has available NOW a SCSI interface for both the EPS and the 16+ for \$147 plus shipping. Alas, it won't make a Zip drive work with the EPS, but it will allow a 16+ to access a Zip drive. Just the fact that there's an interface available again should prove revitalizing for EPS owners who couldn't afford the original Ensoniq SCSI interface. Check out RCS's home page from our "Related Links" header at the top of this forum....]

[chickenEPS@willmar.com - Merry Christmas, Pat... how's the new kid? By the time this is printed I'll have mine... ahem.

Actually, the reason the Original EPS is not compatible with the ZipDrive is not because of the SCSI-1/SCSI-2 difference. All SCSI protocols are upward and downward compatible by design. Why isn't it? I don't know - the reason I give is that "SCSI as implemented by the Original EPS is simply primitive; it does not support CD-ROM Drives nor certain modern hard drives." (Note: the Syquest EZ-Flyer is compatible with the Original EPS, based on our tests, and is the same price as the Zip as of this writing.)

Also worthy of note: Be looking for the Castlewood Orb drive, due to be introduced first quarter 1998. 2.1Gig, SCSI, \$199. I really think the Zip's days, although good, are limited.]

[PF - Garth: Thanx for the heads up. The EPS is compatible with the Syquest 135? I'll have to try that - that could make for an interesting internal cart drive. How does the EPS react when you switch carts?

The way Alan Smith described the EPS SCSI expander behavior was that it used about 12 of the 19 original Apple protocols (one of which it didn't implement was Request Attention, which is why I asked my previous question). This probably explains the CDROM issue.

BTW, I notice you've got a 4-drive CD jukebox for \$150! What mechanisms are installed? VERY interested.

Keep up the good work: I see Disk Tools now xlates SMF's to Ensoniq format. Looks like it's only going to get better. Any word on the new Ensoniq board coming out in January?]

Hi.

Great magazine. I just purchased an MR-61 (great keyboard/workstation). I'm having problems changing sounds

Hi.

Great magazine. I just purchased an MR-61 (great keyboard/workstation). I'm having problems changing sounds in a SMF. They play back fine, but in GM mode. The sounds in the MR-61 (non-GM mode) are much better. I try to change the sounds, but when I hit the play button the sounds revert back to the GM mode. I am using 2.10 OS. I'm told they're now at 2.11. What's the difference?

Thanks,
ANAYV@aol.com

[PF - Ana: An SMF has the patch info, volume info, and other pertinent track info embedded. Just changing the sound of the MR track it plays does NOT change the patch info the SMF sends out when the sequence starts - hence the reversion to a GM sound on the tracks you've changed the sounds on.

What to do is to resave the song in MR format, then load it, make the necessary changes you want on the "affected" tracks, and THEN resave in MR format. Then whenever you load the song, the proper patches will be sent out.

V. 2.11 fixes some timing anomalies when punching in and punching out of a sequence, as well as punching in and out of the exact in/out points. I guess 2.1 was a little sloppy about this under some obscure or arcane situations, but Ensoniq, nonetheless, felt it was an important enough maintenance revision to christen it 2.11.]

[chickenEPS@willmar.com - Just as a note: check <http://www.ensoniq.com/binary/rhythmbuilder.zip>. It is a new little program written for Win95 (32-bit, I think) that allows you to make drum patterns complete with fills and variations for the MR. Check out the new MR Unisyn profile as well.]

TH -

I have a VFX-SD that will, whenever it decides to, play random notes at ear blasting levels. Once this happens, it refuses to listen to MIDI Note Off messages (i.e., PANIC button) sent from my 8-port SE. This problem seems to happen more when there has been a temperature change. Sometimes it can happen when the unit is hit under the display. I have heard that there is an upgrade that can be installed that will up the polyphony and sounds. If this upgrade is still available, will I still have to deal with this goofy intermittent problem??

Thanks for your time!
Kevin Newman
agrdude@mail.sage.net

[PF - Kevin: The SD-1/32 upgrade was discontinued two years ago this coming February. As for the problem at hand, I'd suggest opening the lid and reseating all the cables on the wiring harness from one end of the instrument to the other. The display connectors are suspect (since you can hit it there and the problem stops). If you're leery about popping the hood on your VFXsd, take it to an Ensoniq dealer to perform these tips for you.

Better than 90% of Ensoniq keyboard problems revolve around oxidized/intermittent connectors. Once they're cleaned and reconnected, your instrument should be as good as new....]

[Dave P (shelby@micro-net.com) - You should also check out a document I found on the web dated Jan.16, 1996... "VFX Keyboard Recalibration Errors." Visit: <http://www.cs.colorado.edu/~mccreary/vfx/> - all about the connector problem.]

TH -

Just got an EPS-16 Plus. TS-10 can't read samples I made on the EPS. Says "Disk not Formatted." Disk was formatted for EPS to make sound. TS-10 manual says I should be able to read these disks. I can read sounds made by Ensoniq for the EPS on my TS-10.

Hi, me!
on the EPS. Says "Disk not Formatted." Disk was formatted for EPS to make sound. TS-10 manual says I should be able to read these disks. I can read sounds made by Ensoniq for the EPS on my TS-10.

Help me!
YesMcKay@aol.com

[PF - Yes McKay: Use DSDD floppy - NOT DSHD. EPS and 16+ not like DSHD. Not make sound using DSHD. EPS-16+ and TS-10 not like disks with two holes in them. Feed TS-10 and EPS-16+ one hole disks. Format single hole disk on EPS or 16+, save EPS or 16+ sound to single hole disk, and feed TS-10 single hole disk. Disk will make sound... All better now...]

TH -

I subscribed to TH from 1986 to 1990 after purchasing an ESQ-I. At that time, I was using a Commodore 64 to store sequences and sounds. I now have a 486 laptop and also plan on buying a desktop PC with a soundcard among other options.

1. Can you tell me what I would need to store ESQ-I sequences and sounds to a PC without needing to spend a

lot on fancy software and interface hardware? I have 100s of soundbanks saved on disk using the C64. I figure I can transfer sounds I want to keep from my (C-64) discs back to the ESQ-I and then to my PC.

2. I want to buy a sound module. Do you see any disadvantage with using my ESQ-I as a controller due to the fact that it is 10-year-old technology?

3. I recently heard a Korg NS5R half rack that was super. Is there an Ensoniq sound module I should check out?

Thanks,
rkreid@juno.com

[PF - RK: Answers, in order -

(1) Any number of generic librarians will do this for your ESQ-I. Check out www.soundcentral.com for a shareware/freeware sysex librarian the's PC compatible. You'd need a MIDI interface card for your PC (or a soundcard whose joystick port doubles as a MIDI interface using a gameport-to-MIDI cable) to connect the ESQ to the computer to do these Sysex transfers once you get the ESQ-I info xferred from the C64. Alas, no C64-PC conversion utilities are out there that I'm aware of: readers?

(2) The ESQ-I makes a fine MIDI controller: just because it doesn't have polyphonic aftertouch just means that it's exactly like 97% of the current keyboards out there. Plus the fact that it's capable of xmitting on any of 16 MIDI channels is a bonus...

(3) The MR-Rack comes to mind, but the real beauty of the NS5R is that it also has an expansion port internally to add a Yamaha Waveforce daughtercard, expanding it to 96 voices of polyphony. Plus you get both GM/IGS and XG compatibility in one box. As long as you can locate an Instrument Definition Table (if you plan to use Cakewalk or other professional sequencing application), either will work fine... Good Luck!]

["matt & corey" (m5012@gorilla.net) - This man needs the ESQ-I-specific editor/librarian (freeware) which can be downloaded from Aaron Rodden's excellent ESQ-I page. The URL is: www.olemiss.edu/~aaron/esq1.html.

You're welcome.
-matthew (ESQ-I fan)]

[PF - Matt, RK: Correction: URL is <http://www.olemiss.edu/~aaron/esq1.html>, and it's a little flaky when dumping a full 64k of sequence data if your ESQ-I has the SQX-70 installed. Don't know if it's a program buffer overflow or if it has the same problem Cakewalk does with the 100ms delay between the 17-byte header and the data dump, but it took six tries for me to move a full 64k sequence load into my PC successfully. Then again, it's free, so...]

TH -
data dump, but it took six tries for me to move a full 64k sequence load into my PC successfully. Then again, it's free, so...]

TH -

Just purchased an MR-76 and need a bit of guidance. There are new paradigms in this board that require some rethinking. I'm using a TS-12 with an SQ-2. The SQ will be replaced by the MR as soon as I can figure out all the changes I need to make to my sequences on the TS. It controls the SQ.

1. How/where can I obtain a version of the Steinway I sound that came with the TS that will work on the MR? It's perfect for my needs, and I haven't fallen in love with any of the MR ROM pianos.

2. My present use is heavy into church service work. I usually load 30-40 sequences into my TS-12 and take it on the road. It appears that the MR doesn't allow any more than 24 sequences compared to 60 for the TS. A workaround appears to be to make songs that can hold 24 apiece and load them up to the available memory. But does that mean that I can no longer have the sequences play one at a time? Or do I have to program a 5 second

period of silence at the end of all my sequences so I can run over to the keyboard and hit STOP?

3. How does the memory for sequences translate? I've expanded my TS to the 97,000 note/event max. Sufficient for my needs at present. I don't know how many KBytes this works out to. I see that the MR has a max sequencer memory of about 200k. How does this compare to my TS?

4. Is it my imagination/lack of knowledge or does the MR seem to play a lot quieter than the SQ and TS? My other boards seem twice as loud in real-time play. There is also an option on the SQ called BOOST to allow some (I think 12 DB) output boost that allows me to have greater playing range without pounding on the keyboard. Can I do something like that in the MR? I've already tried the various velocity sensitivities without success.

I've been digging into the manual which is well-written. It is a little shy about clearly listing some of the shortcomings of the board which would help me to decide the best way to use my rig. At present, it seems that I should continue to use the TS as a sequencer and have it control the MR to take advantage of the MR's sounds and polyphony. Any problems there?

Any thoughts/experience would be greatly appreciated. Christmas is approaching and I'm anxious to get the new gear in service.

Yours,
Greg, jolicoeu@MNSi.Net

[PF - Greg: Answers, in order:

(1) You'll need the 4 Mb Wave expansion card for the MR to do this. And you'll need some sort of computer editor (like RCS's Ensoniq Disk Tools) to massage the EPS 1900 block Steinway samples into *.wav format to load into the MR. Or you can tweak the MR's piano samples to taste. Either will require some work - it's more a question of your budget, as the MR's ROM waves are free; the expansion board is \$499...

(2) Yes, the limitation of the 8 "section" buttons times the three "variations" are the culprit here. But that's what the disk drive is for...

(3) Good question. I'm only guessing here, but I'd assume it's approximately the same as your TS (considering note-ons and note-offs are two messages for one event).

(4) Funny: I find the MR's output to be hotter than that of my SD-1, which was roughly equivalent to the output of my trusty SQ-1 (not a + model, BTW).

(5) See the July or November issues of the Hacker's Interface for the details in using the MR keyboards in conjunction with your TS (Issues 144 and 149 respectively).

And since it is the holiday season, a subscription to the

(5) See the July or November issues of the Hacker's Interface for the details in using the MR keyboards in conjunction with your TS (Issues 144 and 149 respectively).

And since it is the holiday season, a subscription to the Hacker could be considered a present to yourself...]

[Greg Jolicoeur (jolicoeu@MNSi.Net) - Thank you for your quick and considered replies. I have a MR-FLASH expansion on order. It'll be nice not to have to load waves after I get them to the point where I like them, but then I have to reload sequences - 6 of 1 half a dozen of the other. The sequences will probably take less time to load.

Oh, BTW, I have a subscription to the Hacker, for a couple of years now. Thank you very much for the monthly updates. I have gone back and started to dig into any articles that mention the MR. It's nice to have the Hacker on computer. I just string all the issues together and do a search for the info.

Sort of like music; string sequences to make a song - string issues to make a support community.

Thanks once again, Greg]

[PF - Greg: Thank for the kind words.]

TH -

Do you know of any plans to replace the keyboard lines Ensoniq just dropped? Is there going to be something new at NAMM?

Patrick Duff
psduff@MIS.Net

[PF - Patrick: Latest news is that Ensoniq plans to release a new keyboard some time in January. Stay tuned...]

TH -

Can I get more sounds for my TS-12 through you? Like a better sax, a mandolin, possibly a bag pipe??? Or am I just blowin' wind?

Thank you,
JUD
JUDLY1@aol.com

[PF - Jud: Indirectly, yes. By subscribing to the Transoniq Hacker you are boarding a ship which is solely driven by Ensoniq gear. MANY 3rd parties hang here, write articles, share tips and tricks, as well as offer patches, sounds, etc. for exchange. Most of the elite Ensoniq 3rd party people party here. Check through a couple back issues, or get that subscription going: best \$14 you'll ever spend...]

[chickenEPS@willmar.com - You'll see many people in the mag (like Pat, "PF") lusting over TS's, because it is able to load in EPS/ASR samples, whereas the newer MR doesn't. This capability makes the TS an open sound system, really. If you like your TS, hang on to it - make sure you expand the RAM to 8megs, perhaps get the SCSI option, and check out the various EPS/ASR sampled sound libraries available. Using a computer and appropriate software, you can extract any sound off a CD-ROM, and write it to a floppy or Ensoniq SCSI drive - even build your own SCSI drive full of material. Good luck!]

TH -

I have an EPS Classic. I've enjoyed it up to this point. Lately, I've had occasional problems loading my System disk into the unit. It seems to start and just "hangs" with the words "ENSONIQ EPS" on the LCD. If I need a repair (i.e., replace a disk drive) how much should that cost? Is there a reputable repair shop in Cleveland that's capable of handling this type of problem?

Thanks,
ED, erid@star21.com

[PF - Ed: If you're not getting to the "Please Insert Disk" prompt or the LED indicator doesn't blink on the

Thanks,
ED, erid@star21.com

[PF - Ed: If you're not getting to the "Please Insert Disk" prompt or the LED indicator doesn't blink on the floppy when you start it up, something is wrong in hardware/land. If it just lays there at the "Ensoniq EPS," it's still doing its hardware routines before the floppy drive even gets polled (hence the reason you wanna see if the floppy LED indicator comes on or winks)...]

I've seen this problem in two other EPSs. One had power supply problems (around a \$50 fix), the other had a loose/intermittent floppy power connector. In either case, point your browser to <http://www.ensoniq.com/mid/servlist.htm> to locate the closest dealer in your area.

It doesn't sound like a serious problem, but neither does a flat tire until you drive it til the rim fractures...]

TH -

I've reviewed your site and only came across one reference to the SQ-1 Plus (apparently it's much better than the SQ-1).... Anyway, I too am looking to connect my keyboard to my PC... and have done so... and am using:

-Turtle-Beach MultiSound sound card
-MidiSoft Studio
-Win 3.1
-DOS v6.22

And all is well.... except I'm in the dark as to how I can download MIDI sequences to the keyboard. Can I?? I can generate MIDI sequences on the PC, but I need a two-way street. What am I doing right/wrong?

Thanks,
Jim Stroeder
stroeder@ibl.bm

[PF - Jim: The SQ-1 (or SQ-1+, for that matter) does NOT multitimbral record (like the SD-1). Consequently, if you want to move sequences into the SQ-1, you have two options:

(A) You can record them to the SQ one track at a time, and (B) use Gary Giebler's sequence conversion utilities. Gary's utilities are very cool, cost \$40, and will let you sysex sequences into your SQ keyboard. You can reach him at 610.933.0332 voice. RCS also distributes his applications: check our "related links" page...]

Hello Hacker,

Great mag, I haven't gotten it in a while, but since I still use Ensoniq, I will sub again. Two questions:

My LCD display went out on my EPS-16+ Rackmount. Is this a hard fix? First and only problem I've ever had with it. But I can't do squat with it without a display.

One of the notes on my KS-32, middle C to be exact, sometimes plays twice when I strike it. Is this a hard fix?

Unfortunately, the shop that sells Ensoniq boards here has a very undependable repair facility, and I am reluctant to take my stuff there.

Glad I found you again.

Thanks,
Armand
AJDNova@aol.com

[PF - Armand: Take your EPS-16+ to the dealer and have him replace the display driver xistors in the power supply. That's all that's wrong with your 16+ unless you've banged the display tube and broken it. Just have him check out the power supply - common failure in 16+ racks.

The KS-32 needs the middle C contact cleaned - something is making it double trigger, probably a speck of dust, cobweb, something minute yet maddening. Point your browser to <http://www.ensoniq.com/mid/servlist.htm> to find a dealer in your area who you're more comfortable with ...]

The KS-32 needs the middle C contact cleaned - something is making it double trigger, probably a speck of dust, cobweb, something minute yet maddening. Point your browser to <http://www.ensoniq.com/mid/servlist.htm> to find a dealer in your area who you're more comfortable with ...]

Hackers,

Does anyone out there know where I can find Cakewalk instrument definitions for expanded MR Rack? Any tips using these two products together would be appreciated.

Thanks,
Bob Henderson (cashender@aol.com)

[PF - Bob: As noted in last month's Interface column (you ARE a subscriber, aren't you?), point your browser to http://www.rain.org/~msavard/Software/MR_ins.zip. This is an IDF for the MR series with the Dance Expansion Board option installed...]

TH -

A while ago I heard of a 3rd party software that would

allow you to use the EPS-16+ effects in real time via the sample input jack in the rear of the keyboard. Have you heard of this as well? Where could I get this?

TIM,
lind0704@tc.umn.edu

[PF - Tim: The only source for alternate FX algorithms is Waveboy. Point your browser to <http://www.soundcentral.com/~chickeneps> for an explanation on the absence of 3rd party FX for Malvern boxes, and call Waveboy Industries at 610.408.8078 to see if they have an input plug-in for the 16+.]

[chickenEPS@willmar.com - I think the 610.408.8078 is their fax number. Their voice # is 610.251.9562.

The disk you are looking for is the Audio InTime Dicer (\$39.95). I like it a lot - I can bring my 16-Plus (w/ internal ZipDrive), my guitar, power cord, direct box, and two 1/4" cables to a solo gig, and I can play sequences as accompanist and play great guitar tones with my guitar running through the 16-Plus's effects, and it works great. Now if only I could sing...]

TH -

And here's something everyone might be a little interested in... "Creative To Acquire ENSONIQ." (Announcement link - See last month's front page article.)

[Kevin Cooter (kcooter@mail.lex.net) - Congratulations, Ensoniq. Not bad for a "little" private company. Let's just hope that sick feeling in my stomach isn't because you're selling out to a competing conglomerate. Perhaps your future prices WON'T be as competitive, but that's not really what's bugging me. I just hope the famous Ensoniq quality and innovation can somehow limp forward with Creative. Best of wishes to our future.]

[Eric Montgomery (Ensoniq) - I would suggest, to everyone who is concerned, to be very happy and excited about the Creative Labs scenario. It is a good thing for Ensoniq. Because of this situation we are now putting out a new keyboard at NAMM. A lot of projects are going to move forward now. Get ready for an exciting new year! We are also releasing an EXP board and new OS versions for the ASR-X and PARIS that have brand new features. I am very excited about the new products and Ensoniq's presence at NAMM this year. Everything looks very promising!]

Help,

I have an ESQ-1 from the very early years. I love it and it has given me many good years, but now I think it's trying to send me to an early grave. It has become very unstable and unreliable. It has, of course, chosen a time when I'm right in the middle of a big project to start acting up. The

I have an ESQ-1 from the very early years. I love it and it has given me many good years, but now I think it's trying to send me to an early grave. It has become very unstable and unreliable. It has, of course, chosen a time when I'm right in the middle of a big project to start acting up. The symptoms are as follows (by the way, I'm running 3.5):

1) Sometimes when I turn it on after it's been off for an extended period of time (a couple of weeks) nothing happens, but if I just leave the power switched on and go make a cup of coffee, it's on when I come back.

2) It will work fine for somewhere between 20 seconds and several hours and then it will just freeze up. Sometimes the display is blank, sometimes it looks fine but none of the buttons work.

3) Sometimes, while I'm playing along happily, the pitch starts to "wobble." If I reinitialize it at this point it will be fine again. This is true either with the internal sounds, or if I'm using it as a MIDI controller.

4) Sometimes it sends random MIDI data to external sequencers or other MIDI devices. This has led to many long hours trying to figure out why some piece of equipment is not making any sound before I realized that my darling ESQ-1 has turned the volume down, or some other

equally random and insidious bit of MIDI terrorism. (Maybe it's just jealous; it was my only keyboard for many years). Again, reinitializing will fix this for a while.

I'm not sure if this is something repairable, or if it's time to send it off to the glue factory. Can anyone help me?

David Rubinstein
grubby@ibm.net

[PF - David: I'd have a keyboard tech clean every contact point in your ESQ-1. Electronic devices with any type of clock signal running around a logic board at 8 MHz or above are prone to the least little thing toppling them off the top.

I recommend a two-step procedure - (A) using a zero residue cleaner to clean all connectors, wiring harnesses, etc., and (B) a substance called Cramolyn which is not only an antioxidant (to prevent further recurrences of this nature), but it's a conductant aid; it makes for a better physical AND electrical contact.

Earlier Ensoniq gear was VERY prone to voltage fluctuations. Ensure the power supply in your ESQ-1 is dead on the money at +5, -5, +12 and -12 V. And I don't mean -13.88 or +4.76; +12.00 is golden. A bit over is acceptable, but undervoltages simply make the instrument ill. Regulators can regulate voltages down, but they can't pump them up. Are you using any type of line conditioner (a Radio Shack spike protector doesn't count), or UPS-type box between the wall outlet and the ESQ-1? Mine was kinda noisy until I put a 60 pound Isobar line conditioner on my electronic gear.

And lastly, heat is an enemy of earlier Ensoniq gear. They claimed the heat sink protruding out of the back of the instrument met UL and CSA specs: mine got hot enough to the touch to burn things. Try a small clip-on or other type fan to circulate air around your instrument.

The combination of all these tips should keep your ESQ-1 running til Microsoft buys Creative Labs...]

Hello,

I have several questions concerning the connection of two samplers to a computer. Specifically, the samplers are a Emu Emax and an EPS. Is it possible to have them connected in such a way as to permit the computer to control sounds on both samplers? Also, how can the Ensoniq EPS assign different instruments to different channels within the MIDI sequencing software? When the Ensoniq is hooked up, one instrument works fine but multiple instruments cannot be accessed simultaneously. I appreciate your time and help.

Thanks,
Lindsay Hunt
lmhunt@erols.com
links cannot be accessed simultaneously. I appreciate your time and help.

Thanks,
Lindsay Hunt
lmhunt@erols.com

[PF - Lindsay: Of course. I scratched my head at this type of problem until I purchased a MOTU Micro Express. ANY multiport MIDI interface will allow your computer to address both instruments simultaneously while keeping MIDI information from one away from the other. The only reason I recommend the Micro Express is that it's the cheapest out there (\$299 list), and comes with all cabling and software to work on either (or both, in my case) the PC or Macintosh platform...

I don't think there are Sysex codes to emulate double-clicking instrument together (stacking), but you could save a particular "stack" of double-clicked instruments as a "preset" and select the preset via sysex. Call Malvern to order the Sysex documentation for the EPS - it was free the last time I looked...]

Dear Hackers -

I own an ASR-X, and I have a question concerning my

confusion of the ASR-X's file structure.

When I have created a drum kit by importing .wav files and then saving this kit as an ASR-X sound, the wave files are stored in the "waves" folder, and the sound name and wave parameters are stored in the "sounds" folder. This I understand.

What I don't understand is why the ASR-X asks me if I want to replace all of the wave files when all I have done is changed some of the parameters, or just renamed the drum kit. Shouldn't the file saved in the "sounds" folder be the one to be replaced, or a new one added if the kit is renamed. Is there something I'm missing here?

My main concern here is disk fragmentation. If I am using the same drum kit for different songs with different routings for each wave, this means that I would want to rename this drum kit each time without replacing the waves each time. I can't do this.

Is it possible for the ASR-X to know that the waves have not been destructively edited and that all is needed is for it to write another file into the "sounds" folder pointing to the same waves as the some of the other files? This would allow many different drum kits to be created based on a large number of waves in the "waves" folder without constantly re-writing the waves.

Can I create my own file structure that would allow this to happen?

Any help would be greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,
John Dougherty
houseman@earthlink.net

[PF - John: This is an argument that has centered around Ensoniq gear since the EPS Classic days. Unlike Roland, Akai, or other samplers, you cannot save just routing and keymap changes on an instrument WITHOUT saving the sound as well. I know this makes a single set of sample files occupy 5-6 times the disk space it normally would if you could just save the edits as pointers to the same set of samples (instrument). No can do: you gotta change the name of the instrument by one character and save it so it's a different instrument that won't overwrite its parent.

But I wouldn't worry too much about disk fragmentation unless you're running a small SCSI drive. Garth Hjelle just released ASR Disk Tools for \$60, and if you've got a PC compatible with a SCSI card in it, it'll defragment all your data if you do a simple backup and restore. Disk fragmentation used to be an issue when we only had 90 meg drives to funnel all our data in. These days, a 1 gig drive is considered too small for most uses, and the prices reflect this shift...]

[John Dougherty - Even when I change the name of the "sound" file, the ASR-X looks in the "waves" folder for the wave files. I guess I'll end up spending most of my time naming files rather than creating music.

[John Dougherty - Even when I change the name of the "sound" file, the ASR-X looks in the "waves" folder for duplicate .aif files and then asks me if I want to overwrite these files. If I say no, the ASR-X does nothing. Evidently I have no choice but to overwrite these files every time I use them in a new "sound" file. The only work-around for this is to change the name of the "wave" file as well. Or, maybe I can create sub-directories within the "sounds" folder or "waves" folder. I haven't tried this yet, so I don't know if it will work. I guess I'll end up spending most of my time naming files rather than creating music.

Garth, I'll be contacting you soon for some of that excellent software you keep putting out. Hopefully it will make things go a lot quicker.

Thanks for the help...]

[PF - John: NOW I see the flaw - you gotta change the name of every *.wav file as well to avoid overwriting a previous "instrument"? Glaring oversight on Malvern's part. Hope I'm wrong...]

[chickenEPS@willmar.com - John's right. Every time you

make a programming change in a I-SOUND or RAM-KIT, the ASR-X: 1) looks for corresponding AIF files in the WAVES directory and, 2) if it finds them, it asks you if you want to overwrite – if not, it writes them from memory, 3) if you say no, the write is aborted. (This is current to OS 2.03.)

Yeah, defrag is an issue, but I think you are exhibiting the EPS/ASR emotions. The DOS disk format (and probably the ASR-X OS file ops) are more robust, and you can defrag the disk very easily within a PC using Win95's defrag or Norton. In other words, "just say YES" to the overwrite prompt.

Going a little further, with the EPS/ASR, we were always screaming about having the ability to edit the parameters without rewriting the whole file. The EPS/ASR OS, in the way it deals with files, didn't allow that. But now, the ASR-X stores the parameters in a separate file (.SOU), but the OS still doesn't let the system simply overwrite the .SOU file. Hopefully this will be coming up in a new OS. Let's thank Ensoniq for continuing to update the ASR-X consistently. Let's also hope that they will follow through with the instrument and not stop short from making it what it could be.

Just for correction, the ASR-X will read .WAV files, but stores only AIF files. For education, the probable reason for this is because .WAV files store wave data in Intel processor file format, whereas AIF files store it in Motorola processor file format – and the ASR-X is at least a Motorola environment. But then the ASR-X uses the MS-DOS disk format. That was smart, since Mac's usually read both Mac and DOS disk formats, whereas PC's read only DOS format and not Mac. Wheww....]

[PF – Garth: Eric Montgomery explained to me that the reason the ASR-X saved in *.aif format was to allow inclusion of loop pointers and stuff. It's VERY good to know that an ASR-X hard drive is DOS formatted – Norton's Speed Disk should work famously on it. I wouldn't trust WIN95's Defrag – it leaves WAY too many orphaned bits floating around as unmovable bytes/sectors...]

[John Dougherty (houseman@earthlink.net) – I just received and installed the latest ASR-X OS (ver 2.53). Nothing has changed. The X still asks if you want to overwrite .aif files with the same names. If you choose not to do so, the X does nothing. I too am in hopes that Ensoniq will follow through with this instrument – especially concerning this issue.

I would also like to take the time to thank all who contributed to this thread. It's nice to know that the support is there for those who ask. Cheers.]

[Eric Montgomery (Ensoniq) – So far as the defrag and file structure situations I agree with all of the above. If you have 2.53 and you load a sound that has samples, then make edits to that instrument and not the samples, then attempt to save the new patch the X will ask you if you want to overwrite the samples. That is just a [Eric Montgomery (Ensoniq) – So far as the defrag and file structure situations I agree with all of the above. If you have 2.53 and you load a sound that has samples, then make edits to that instrument and not the samples, then attempt to save the new patch the X will ask you if you want to overwrite the samples. That is just a safeguard so the X does not assume that you want them overwritten.

Now, if you answer no to that question (answer no by pressing the Exit/No button) the X will write the new sound and continue to address the old samples. I have done it and it works fine.]

Hello.

I am trying to record a sync track on a Tascam Porta one and then trigger the EPS from this sync track. I have an Anatek Pocket Sync to translate the MIDI clock. I record the track but when I play it back and try to use it to trigger the sequencer there are invariably tempo glitches which are impossible to work with. I have tried various recording levels for the sync track. There is a red LED on the Anatek that blinks with the MIDI clock. This LED is visibly not consistent tempo-wise during recording of the sync track. Could it be that the MIDI clock from the EPS

is unstable? If so, wouldn't this make the sequences play badly when they are triggered internally too?

My hook-up is: Midi-out EPS to Midi-in Pocket sync, Midi-in EPS to Midi-out Pocket sync, Headphone-out Porta one to Audio-in Pocket sync, Channel 4 input Porta one to Audio-out Pocket sync. Interchanging Porta one Headphone-out and Tape channel 4-out doesn't seem to make a difference. The sequencer keeps running for about a second after I turn off the Porta one if I turn it off in the middle of the sequence so I know that the "Jam Sync Time Select" feature of the Pocket sync is working. Can you please offer me any suggestions or assistance?

Thank you very much.
Howard
buiefam@ac.net

[PF – Howard: The first line of your configuration points the presence of a MIDI loop: "Midi-out EPS to Midi-in Pocket sync, Midi-in EPS to Midi-out Pocket Sync." This is verboten. This is by definition a MIDI loop where the MIDI out of the EPS is directly connected to its own MIDI In through the Pocket Sync.

Imagine the pocket sync as a simple MIDI cable connecting the MIDI In to the MIDI Out. This is your configuration, which defines the term "MIDI loop."

Send the MIDI out of the Pocket Sync to the MIDI In of the EPS. Set the EPS to follow External Clock to allow it to sync to the Pocket Sync. And that should do it...]

TH –

I have a TS-10 board and would like to download sampled sounds off the internet, but I have no idea how to go about that. Could you possibly tell me? But at any rate, I'll be goin'.

Brendan
brendan@monitor.net

[PF – Brendan: The TS only reads ASR/EPS-format disks. To get a *.wav file into a TS, you need a conversion program to translate the *.wav file into a readable ASR format.

RCS's Ensoniq Disk Tools does this VERY well (look for an upcoming review), costs \$60, and runs under Windows 95/3.1 without a hitch. It even formats blank floppies into ASR/EPS format as well...]

TH –

I have a trouble when I'm in 44kHz. There is a soft delay between the first signal in (micro) and the out (ampli out) and sometimes the ASR-10 makes some noise as bad as a vinyl!!!! But no problem in 30kHz.

I have a trouble when I'm in 44kHz. There is a soft delay between the first signal in (micro) and the out (ampli out) and sometimes the ASR-10 makes some noise as bad as a vinyl!!!! But no problem in 30kHz.

SCSI present, no digital out, OS 3.5.3, ASR-10 12903, 04/10/95.

Thanxxx,
Batcha, fua_batcha@hotmail.com

[PF – Batcha: What ROM revision? Check your firmware version. Sounds as if you might be a rev or two behind the current V. 1.5.]

TH –

My SQ-80 doesn't love me anymore. :-)

Often when I'm playing it, it'll 'recalibrate' itself. Fine, but this unrequested recalibration process screws with some internal memory – I get funky readouts on the display like "TEMPO: BIL," patch names change, my pitch bend range becomes 0 to 50 (and it actually shifts it by 50, too!), and so on.

Each time it recalibrates, something new happens and I look forward with great anticipation to see what new parameter values my keyboard will offer me... not.

I can re-initialize it (Record & Top-left soft-key) and it's fine again (well, I have to reload everything from the last time I saved its internal memory to disk).

Does anyone have any experience with these types of problems, and what you went through to get them fixed?

While I have you... My disk drive is a little screwed, too. I have to tilt the keyboard back at a 90 degree angle for the thing to work. Strange, huh?

Anyone have any repair experience for the SQ-80 drives? I know there's info on Mirage disk drives, but how about the SQ-80?

Any help appreciated.

Thanks!
Alex Westner .. westner@media.mit.edu

[PF – Alex: You've got an intermittent connection in your SQ-80. Take it to your music dealer and have him clean all contact points and reseal all connectors. If your tech uses a zero residue cleaner and an antioxidant on all contact points, harnesses, and connectors (a two-step process) your SQ-80 will be golden for years to come.

The problem with your disk drive is in the power connector. It's equally intermittent. While your tech is inside your SQ-80, have him pull the right cheekblock with the drive and pitch/mod wheels and have him reseal both the data cable and power cable following the above two-step procedure. I've seen this disk drive behavior on my own EPSs. One of them started prompting me to "Please Insert Disk" but the drive light wouldn't come on...

drive and pitch/mod wheels and have him reseal both the data cable and power cable following the above two-step procedure. I've seen this disk drive behavior on my own EPSs. One of them started prompting me to "Please Insert Disk" but the drive light wouldn't come on...

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The above steps are recommended to bring your SQ-80 into spec after all these years. Even if it turns out to be something else, the above should be done as preventative maintenance anyway...]

TH -

I have an ESQ-1 which has recently started acting up a bit. The display sometimes blinks and many of the patch names become unreadable.

Is there anything I can do? Do I need to change the battery?

Please advise. Thanks.
Jim S.
JDSav@aol.com

[PF - Jim: You've got an intermittent display cable. The older Malvern keyboards contact points get oxidized after a few years and start behaving this way. Clean all contact points and wiring harness connectors with a zero residue cleaner. If you feel uncomfortable doing this, by all means have your local keyboard tech do this for you. It shouldn't take much longer than an hour on the bench...]

TH -

I have an SQ-1 and I want it to play Cakewalk tracks. What do I do? By the way my manual reads, they never thought the Ensoniq would become just a voice instead of sequencer!

Thank you for any reply you can give.

David
dapple@spectra.net

[PF - David: Convert the Cakewalk tracks from *.wrk files to *.mid files. Then purchase Gary Giebler's SQ1-SMF sequence conversion utility. It's \$40 and will let you Sysex the converted sequences into the SQ.

If all you want to do is to use Cakewalk to play your SQ-1, you simply need the SQ Instrument Definition Table for your version of Cakewalk. Check out the Twelve Tones webpage for the details.

And, of course, your computer needs a MIDI interface to do any of this...]

[PF - Gang: The SQ-1 (and SQ-2) Instrument Definition File for Windows 3.1 is available at <http://www2.netdoor.com/~rlanglmidimap.htm>: nice site with lotsa utils...]

TH -

Never had this problem in the four years I've been using my ASR-10.

I've noticed today that the the right channel is not processing through the effects.

Example: Instrument=L+2L, effect=stereo delay
Stereo delay time: L=600 R=300.

Effect is applied to L=600, but not applied to R=300. (I've tried +increment and -increment.) I tried using other effects and found the same. Right is not processed.

Please help...
John C Gaiser
ponehead@mindspring.com

[PF - John: I'd call Ensoniq directly at 610.647.3930, as I don't know the rhyme or reason behind their FX algorithms. They pretty much shun people from developing 3rd party effects to the proprietary nature of their DSP chipset, so I'd defer to Malvern for their explanation. And there might be the outside chance that something is amiss in your DSP chip. Ensure you're running the most current OS version and ROM version for your particular keyboard, as this could be suspect...]

[Von Krogh (VonKrogh@aol.com) - Have you tried different instruments? Perhaps both layers were assigned to the right channel, or the whole instrument has been set to hard right pan on the edit-track page...]

Hope this helps, Derek]

[Eric Montgomery (Ensoniq) - It is a random situation that happens on ASR-10s. Please be sure to use 3.53 OS on your ASR. If this situation is chronic your ASR probably needs service. When I run into this situation I usually power down, wait a few seconds and then power up again and the trouble is gone.]

Hello.

I use Cakewalk Pro Audio 5.0 to play my rack-mounted EPS-16+. I know I can send a patch change from my computer to the EPS so that it loads a specific file that corresponds with the patch number I send.

However, since I usually reside in my root directory which contains only full banks, I really need to kind of move around my EPS until I come to the directory that contains my individual instruments. THEN I can use the computer to load the specific instrument I'm looking for.

Alas, I haven't had luck doing this. Is it possible, or am I

limited to loading only those files that reside in whatever particular EPS-16+ directory I'm in at the start of the song?

Thanks for your ideas.
Kevin Cooter
kcooter@access.iex.net

[PF - Kevin: This can be done. What you need to do is to emulate button presses on the 16+ via Sysex. Feel free to call Ensoniq at 610.647.3930 and request a copy of the EPS-16+ External Command Specification Document. This is the Sysex document that describes what sysex codes are required to remotely navigate around the instrument. At last observation, Ensoniq offered this document free to interested individuals...]

[chickenEPS@willmar.com - Actually, the button presses (VBP, Virtual Button Presses) don't work. I wish Ensoniq would fix/alter the Sys-Ex behaviour of the VBPs, but they have not done that.

But there're several ways of doing what you want. When the 16-Plus is in Multi-In Mode you can send Program Change commands (they are not Sys-Ex messages) and load the corresponding file in the current directory to the 16-Plus memory. Also, Program Changes 100-127 will invoke Macros 1-28. So by using this information:

1) Setup a macro to go to File 1 (or any file) of each directory on your SCSI drive.

2) When you want to load a sound, a) Send the macro Program Change (100-127) to go to the appropriate directory, b) Send the Program Change for the file (1-38). Make sure the two Program Changes are spaced in time long enough for the SCSI drive to respond.

Another technique is to use Bank Files to load multiple instruments (16-Plus OS 1.3 only). Just go to the directory where the Bank Files (can be the Root directory, or better yet, the FLOPPY!), and load the Bank File with a Program Change.]

[Kevin Cooter (kcooter@mail.iex.net) - You gave me a great, quick response. Thanks for the attention and help.

P.S. I've been a subscriber since the early days (I have every Hacker you've published!) and I'm delighted you've taken the bold, necessary step of interacting with people on the net. Great job! Thanks.]

[PF - Kevin: That's the Hacker trust at work. Hope we helped to resolve your problem!]

[Kevin Cooter (kcooter@mail.iex.net) - Thanks. I tried what Garth suggested and it works great!]

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Alas, I haven't had luck doing this. Is it possible, or am I

what Garth suggested and it works great!]

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Publisher: Eric Geislinger
Editrix: Jane Talisman

Our (somewhat regular) illustrious bevy of writers includes: Craig Anderton, Robby Berman, Britton Beisenherz, Mark Clifton, Steve Curtin, Anthony Ferrara, Pat Finnigan, Jeffrey Fisher, Frank Fortunato, Duane Frybarger, Garth Hjelte, Jeff Jetton, Dara Jones, Johnny Klonaris, Ray Legnini, Bob Lang, Sam Mims, Eric Montgomery, Dan Rohde, J. D. Ryan, Tom Shear, Kirk Slinkard, Jack Tolin, Tom Tracy, Joe Travo, Steve Vincent and Garry Wasyliv.

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Subscriptions: 12 monthly issues. US: \$23/year, All others: \$32/year. Payable in US funds.

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