

Transoniq Hacker

The Independent
Newsletter for Ensoniq Users

EMU and ENSONIQ Merge

Two of the strongest names in the music industry join forces

EMU of Scotts Valley, CA has announced that as of July 6, 1998, they have officially joined forces with ENSONIQ Corp. of Malvern, PA. The combined organizations will now be doing business as EMU-ENSONIQ — a merger between two of the strongest names in the music business. EMU-ENSONIQ's approach will be to merge both EMU and ENSONIQ's unique capabilities into one very competitive and powerful company. The ultimate objective is to offer products that leverage the unique perspectives of both EMU and ENSONIQ and to streamline operations into a single, highly effective, creative, responsive, and competitive business unit.

Dave Bristow, Vice-President of Marketing for EMU-ENSONIQ, states, "By combining forces the new company will enjoy a larger collective customer base and a broader product range." He continues, "This means that we can now apply the best of our joint technologies over more products. And with our new sales and marketing efforts we can ensure that all customers, new and old, EMU and ENSONIQ, can benefit."

EMU-ENSONIQ looks forward to building on the strong, successful relationships that both EMU and ENSONIQ enjoy with their existing customers. Because of this, EMU-ENSONIQ will continue to offer audio and music products, with different features and prices, under separate brand names. In addition, EMU-ENSONIQ's Engineering, Production, Sales, and Marketing

teams have started sharing technologies and concepts and the results of these creative collaborations will start to appear in the marketplace early next year.

Carl Bader, Vice-President of ENSONIQ Musical Products, says, "Our new Company, EMU-ENSONIQ, will be a dynamic force in the marketplace, leveraging the strengths and experience which both firms have acquired in their history as innovators in the electronic music field."



EMU — Founded in 1972, EMU is the leading developer of

innovative digital-audio products based on digital sampling technology for the music and multimedia markets. EMU audio products are used by professional musicians, sound designers, and audio engineers worldwide. The company is based in Scotts Valley, California and employs around 200 people.

ENSONIQ — Founded in 1982, ENSONIQ Corporation is a leading producer of audio and sound technology products. Well known in the professional music industry for its production of keyboards, synthesizers, effects processors, and digital recording systems, ENSONIQ's custom IC design expertise has made the company a technology and manufacturing leader in sound solutions for OEMs. ENSONIQ is located in Malvern, PA, and employs about 200 people.

Both EMU and ENSONIQ are wholly owned

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Front Panel

RND (🎵)

Interesting Times — Part II

As you might imagine, 1998 has been a "holding-our-breath" kinda year here at the *Hacker*. After Creative Technology's acquisition of Ensoniq (TH, January, 1998), we've been wondering how all this was going to unfold. Well, some of the eggs have started to hatch — and it turns out they're Emus! (See cover story.) The integration of these two companies should be good news for both of their worlds.

Ever since Mirage users started sharing these pages with ESQ users, you folks out there in Hackerland have been pretty understanding about the *Hacker's* need to change with the times — or disappear. Well, we're going to have to ask you to expand on that a little bit 'cause we're planning on starting to cover the Emu line of instruments over the next few issues. (And we're rarely ever in a posi-

tion of not printing articles on certain instruments in favor of other instruments anyway — we're just about always out there scratching for material. The mix you see is a direct reflection of what people choose to write about.) This really should breathe some much-needed new life into the *Hacker*. The last couple years has seen this operation go from a shoestring to a half-shoestring and we really see this as a very good shot at reversing this trend and building things back up to the old glory days.

We've included a couple recent Emu New Product Releases in our Hypersoniq section so you can get a feel for what's going on with our new cousins.

And, yes, this is probably going to lead to a name change. We've got some ideas in mind but we're open to suggestions — but they better come fast. We do want to keep the "Transoniq" part of our name since that's the name that we're doing business under and it's the name of our web site. We're still pretty attached to the "*Hacker*" portion too

— but the popular media has managed to turn this into a slur instead of the point of honor it once was. (And we're getting tired of getting e-mail asking about cracking the phone system...) Whatever we end up with, we'll always answer to the *Hacker* name from those who know our history. (That's you guys.)

And things have been awfully quiet from the East Coast Gang the last few months — we suspect things are going to start jumping there pretty soon too. So stay tuned for Part III...

* * *

Usually about this time we start our annual whining about how the whole world grinds to a halt in the middle of summer and we start making empty threats about cutting page count or special summer combo issues and the like. Well, more good news — this time around we're letting this lull manifest itself in larger (readable!) print in the Interface. Enjoy! And happy summer.

HYPERSNIQ

New Product Announcements

EMU ships Audio Production Studio
Digital sampling, wavetable synthesis, and sound design hardware for Windows®

Scotts Valley, California, July 1, 1998.
EMU is proud to announce that this month it will ship the *Audio Production Studio* — a sampling/audio system consisting of a Windows 95® PCI card (the E-Card), a unique Audio Access Bay front panel called the E-Drive, and a powerful suite of EMU and third party application software. The *Audio Production Studio* provides high-quality sampling, 64-voice/32-channel MIDI synthesizer support, digital mixing, hard disk recording, and unmatched real-time effects for audio processing. The *Audio Production Studio* also supports the *SoundFont*® file format, the most popular form of downloadable sounds in the world. Designed for musicians, sound designers, and multimedia content developers, the *Audio Production Studio* allows the user to deliver legendary EMU sound direct from their desktop. The *Audio Production Studio* will begin shipping on July 31st at a suggested retail price of \$699.

"The *Audio Production Studio* is reflective of our commitment to the development of new technology for high-quality and affordable PC audio," says Bill Snow, EMU's

Vice-President of Business Development. He continues, "Our goal is to provide our customers with a world-class product while at the same time furthering the success of computer produced audio for music and multimedia projects."

Features: The *Audio Production Studio* consists of a main PCI card with S/PDIF and balanced analog I/O, the E-Drive which brings additional S/PDIF, selectable mic/line inputs, and a headphone output to the front of the computer for easy access. Also included is a powerful software suite which was developed by EMU and third-party vendors for playback, recording, and sound design. In addition, it features 64 hardware voices supporting *SoundFont* sounds (wavetable samples/synthesis) and/or streaming audio, as well as a unique patchable effects architecture with multiple effects from the EMU library.

EMU ships EMU8710 PS

Portable studio for Windows 95 laptop computers

Scotts Valley, California, July 1, 1998.
EMU is pleased to announce that this month it will ship the *EMU8710 PS*, EMU's second generation PCMCIA card for Windows 95

laptop computers. *EMU8710 PS* differs from EMU's first generation PCMCIA card in three key areas: an added microphone input, an increase in *SoundFont* RAM from .5MB to 2MB, and an increase in wavetable ROM from 2MB to 4MB. *EMU8710 PS* consists of an Audio PC Card (PCMCIA Type II), a MABOX cable (MIDI/Audio Breakout Box) — which allows access to all the features of the *EMU8710 PS*, and a powerful suite of EMU® and third-party application software. *EMU8710 PS* provides streaming audio, high-quality wavetable synthesis, and *Creative Labs SoundFont*® compatibility to musicians and audio producers worldwide. *EMU8710 PS* is currently available direct from EMU for \$395 (www.emu.com).

Portable audio solution — *EMU8710* is for musicians and audio producers who need a portable solution for high-quality audio and MIDI production. "*EMU8710 PS* represents the latest accomplishment in EMU's line of computer products," says Alan Grattan, *EMU8710* Product Manager. He continues, "EMU's strength and experience in digital-audio technology has enabled us to create a portable, inexpensive, audio solution with a huge array of professional features. *EMU8710 PS* is truly a portable studio for your laptop."

External Sequencers and Ensoniq Keyboards

Eric Montgomery

Trying to be the "tech guru" to some friends, I seem to run into the same question each time they get a new piece of gear. "How can I make it work with my computer based sequencer?" Well, here it is. Years of experience (and tears wondering why I can't get it to work) right here for you in the *Hacker*.

In most cases people want to set their keyboard up to be a "controller" and "multitimbral sound module" to their external sequencers. Once the settings we are going to discuss are complete, you can send from your computer software (or external hardware sequencer a la the ASR-X or Akai MPC series etc) MIDI bank (controller 32) and program changes to get to all of the sounds in the unit. You can also send pan (controller #10) and volume (controller #7) messages to adjust the mix of your sequence. Refer to the owner's manual and/or the manufacturer of the software for details on how to accomplish this.

Different companies call them different names, but I will stick with the *Cakewalk* name for now — Instrument Definition List. This list contains the names of all of the sounds in the unit. Those names are needed to be able to put the correct bank and program changes with them to get to the right sound. Ensoniq does not provide these lists in the format of your computer-based sequencer. It is the responsibility of the software manufacturer. Ensoniq does have some of the instrument/program change lists posted on their website at www.ensoniq.com. Let's do the ZR/MR family first and work backwards to other products.

ZR/MR Family

To set the ZR/MR up is as simple as pressing the Select button in the SoundFinder section, then turning the Parameter knob to get to the MIDI OUT instrument. You are done. This simple setting throws the ZR/MR into multi mode and turns keyboard local control off.

ASR-X

The X is always in multi mode. There are only a few necessary settings. Press System, then go to Edit MIDI Settings and set Pads Play Local to the OFF setting. Go to Track Edit and set Track MIDI Out = to Enable on each track. I would also suggest saving that

sequence to a disk or hard drive as a template setup for future use. You see, effortless!

TS-10/12

The first step is to go to MIDI Control and be sure that Mode = Multi. The next step is to create a sequence location. Maybe name it "computer" so that you can save it to disk and load it later as a setup template. If you press the Track MIDI button you will see "STAT" short for status on the upper left of your screen (if it is not displayed on your screen, continue pressing the track MIDI button until it is on your screen). Set the MIDI status of tracks 2 through 12 to SEND/RECV. Track 1's status should be set to LOCAL OFF. Select track 1 and you are set.

ASR-10/88/EPS/16+

First, press the Edit button. Second, press the System/MIDI button. Use the left or right arrow buttons to get to the page that displays "MIDI IN MODE =" and set OMNI to MULTI. If you want this setting to always stay this way, save it to disk or your hard drive. Press the Command button and then System/MIDI. Go to "SAVE GLOBAL PARAMETERS" and press Enter. By the way, it must be saved to the disk or hard drive that has the operating system on it. Remember, you have to load an instrument into the ASR to be able to edit its MIDI status.

SQ Family

Press the Edit button above the Select Sounds button. Press the top row #9 button. Use your arrow buttons to go to MIDI Mode = and set it to MULTI. Now we have to do the same thing as with the KS/KT family and create a sequence/preset location. Press the Select Sequences/Preset button. Now use the top and bottom row 0-9 buttons to choose a blank location between 00 to 69. If it is empty it will display "EMPTY SEQ/PSET*" on your screen. Press Enter 4 times. You will then see New Name =. Change the name to Computer so you can keep track of this setup. At this point we need to set the track MIDI status of each track to BOTH. To do this, press the Edit/Copy Sound button. Press the Track/Param (top row #6) button. If you use your left and right arrow buttons, you can go to Status =, then set the track status to Both. It

is important to make this setting for tracks 2-8. Track 1's status should be set to MIDI. Stay on track 1.

KS/KT Family

Press the System/MIDI button and use your arrow buttons to get to Mode = and set it for Multi. Just like in the SQ family, create a sequence location and name it "computer" to keep track of this setup. Set the MIDI status of each track the same as with the SQ family. To get to MIDI status, press the Edit Track button. Now press the bottom row number 5 button. Use your arrow buttons to move around on the screen.

VFX/SD and SD-1

First we have to go to MIDI Control and be sure that "Mode =" Multi. Next, create a sequence location. Name it "computer" so that you can keep track of the setup. It would be good to save it to disk so it can later be used as a setup template. If you press the MIDI button that is located just above the Track 1-6 button, (if it is not displayed on your screen, continue pressing the MIDI button until it is on your screen) you will see "STAT," short for status, in the upper left of your screen. Set the MIDI status of tracks 2 through 12 to Both. Track 1's status should be set to MIDI. Select track 1 and you are ready to work.

ESQ-1/SQ-80

Press the MIDI button. Go to "Mode =" and change it to Multi. To create a sequence (page 124 of the manual) you have to press the Create/Erase button. Press "New Seq." and answer "yes" to all of the questions. Now you have a blank sequence location. Go to the Mix/MIDI page and set the MIDI status of tracks 2-8 to Both. This is explained in more detail on pages 105-115 of the ESQ manual. Set the status of track 1 to MIDI.

I mentioned earlier that it would be a good idea to store these setups to floppy. Obvious-

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?

ly some of the fore-mentioned products do not have disk drives (SQ family, ESQ-1, VFX, KS-32, KT-76/88 do not have disk drives). They use two other means of storage, RAM cards/cartridges or Sysex. RAM cards and cartridges are becoming more and more scarce because of the age of this technology. They can still be purchased through Syntaur, 500 West Prairie Ave., Eagle Lake, TX 77434. Phone: 409-234-2700, 800-334-1288. Net: <http://www.fatsnake.com/syntaur>.

The advantage of using RAM cards is that the transfer is very fast and they allow you to access an additional bank of sounds.

It may be better to use Sysex for storage if you have to save a lot of files or very large files. There are products on the market such as the Yamaha MDF-2 which will allow you to send and receive data via Sysex and save the data to a standard floppy disk. You can also do a Sysex dump to a computer, provided you have a MIDI interface and software installed on the computer.

As you already know this, consider it a reminder. Sysex is short for System Exclusive. Before anyone asks, no, you cannot transfer Sysex info to or from two different model units, like from the SQ-80 to a SQ-1.

It does not work that way. The data is "exclusive" to that particular product. Keep in mind though that it will work between two of the same product (ESQ-1 to another ESQ).

I hope this will help when you are trying to use your keyboard with an external sequencer. In each case you can see that this is a simple procedure and does not require you to have a degree in phisimiscaboobalation. ■

Bio: Eric Montgomery's work has appeared in Ensoniq products and videos and in projects from Integrity Music and Salt Records.

A Via Musictone

Tom Tracy

This DP/4 preset, for the perspiring guitarist, pays tribute to Eric Johnson. That is not to say that Eric uses this DP/4 preset. To the best of my knowledge, Eric does not use or endorse any Ensoniq products. This was created as a way to recreate his "sound." Thanks, Eric, for the inspiration.

History

One of the benefits of being an Ensoniq employee (specifically the in-house technical writer) is that you often get to try new products before anybody else does. That was the case with the DP/4. As it was being developed, many people in-house (as well as "the chosen few" out of house) were involved in the testing, troubleshooting and critiquing of the DP/4. Not only did I get to write about how this great processor works, but I got to make suggestions (some that were implemented) in regard to the architecture, the ease of use, and I got to create many presets that were actually released in the final product! Obviously, since it was a complete departure from any other Ensoniq product, there was no other Ensoniq product to base this one on, and there were little to no presets in the alpha units (most locations said *BLANK*).

As you can imagine, knowing that the DP/4 needed 400 killer presets before it could be released, everybody involved worked diligently to create what they thought were the "ultimate" DP/4 presets. In order to create guitar-based presets for this new effects processor, I decided to first build a "generic" guitar for beta testing, and writing

presets. The in-house "code" for the DP/4 was "Quaker." Every new product needed a code-name in case there were "spies" just waiting to steal information (which is always a possibility in this industry). Therefore, the guitar was affectionately called the "Quaker-caster," and at one time, it was for sale exclusively through the pages of the *Transoniq Hacker* — but alas, nobody wanted it, so I still own it. Many presets that still existing in the DP/4 (and DP/4+) were designed using this very guitar.

Because everyone involved in the DP/4 beta program loved this product and worked hard to present it in its best light, Ensoniq's Sound Development was SWAMPED with presets — many of which were never used (there were just too many). This 4-unit preset falls into that category. Fortunately, I found that I had archived it via Sys-Ex to a TS-10 floppy and was glad I saved it. Here it is, for the first time in public — a bit of Ensoniq history.

The Tone Thing

As a guitarist striving to improve my chops, I borrowed an Eric Johnson instructional video from a fellow employee. Eric had (has) a unique tone that I thought would be a challenge to try and capture as a preset on the DP/4. When he played his Strat delicately, his sound was sweetly chorused; as he dug in, it was harder, with more guts and sustain. I think I came mighty close to capturing this sound (I'm still working on the technique, though).

Making the Preset

Avoiding all the usage of data entry controls (and press this, press that verbiage) to keep this article concise. Press Edit, and then set the following parameters:

Unit A= Parametric EQ

Mix= 99
Volume= 99
Bass Fc= 506 Hz
Gain= -25 dB LoShv
Mid1Fc= 778 Hz
Gain= -01 dB
Q= 05
Mid2Fc= 1450 Hz
Gain= -15 dB
Q= 01
TrebleFc= 11 kHz
Gain= +10 dB HiShv
EQ Input Level Attenuation= +00

Modulation

All modulation is disabled. For all four units, set the modulation parameters this way:

Mod1 Src=OFF
Mod1 Destination Parameter=OFF
Mod1 Param Range Min=00%
Mod1 Param Range Max=99%
Mod2 Src=OFF
Mod2 Destination Parameter=OFF
Mod2 Param Range Min=00%
Mod2 Param Range Max=99%

Unit B= Guitar Amp 4

Mix= 99
Volume= 43
Amp PreAmp Gain= +15 dB
Amp Output Level= 66
Amp Level Detect Attack= 1 ms
Amp Level Detect Release= 800 ms
Amp Tube Bias= 06
PreEQ Input Level Trim= +00 dB
PreEQ HighPass Cutoff= 150 Hz
Pre-EQ Fc= 600 Hz
Gain= +20 dB
Q= 06
Noise Gate Off Below= -70dB

Gate Release Time= 40 ms
 Speaker High Pass Cutoff= 26 Hz
 OutEQ1 Fc=120 Hz
 Gain= +00 dB
 Q= 05
 OutEQ2 Fc=2500 Hz
 Gain= +00 dB
 Q= 06
 Speaker LowPass Cutoff= 2.0 kHz

Unit C= EQ-Chorus-DDL

Mix=66
 Volume=99
 LFO Rate= 24
 Width= 23
 Chorus Center= 99
 Left/Right LFO= In-Phase
 Chorus Left Delay Time= 600 ms
 Chorus Right Delay Time= 300 ms
 Chorus Delay Regen= +14
 Chorus Left Echo Time= 1000 ms
 Chorus Right Echo Time= 750 ms
 Chorus Echo Level= 00
 Bass Fc=506 Hz
 EQ Gain= +00 dB
 Treble Fc= 11 kHz
 EQ Gain= +10 dB
 EQ Input Level Trim= +00 dB

Unit D= Hall Reverb

Mix= 47
 Volume= 99
 Hall Decay= 2.81 sec

Hall Predelay Time= 10
 Hall LF Decay Time= +15
 Hall HF Damping= 18
 Hall HF Bandwidth= 99
 Hall Diffusion1= 71
 Hall Diffusion2= 64
 Hall Decay Definition= 25
 Hall Detune Rate= 25
 Detune Depth= 15
 Hall Primary Send= +50
 Refl Time= 105 ms
 Level= 00
 Send= 00
 Ref2 Time= 120 ms
 Level= 00
 Send= 00
 Position Balance= +94 -17 +12

Config Parameters

1 Source Config 1,2 > ABCD
 AB Input Select= (1) Mono
 AB Unit Routing= [A->B] serial
 CD Unit Routing= [C->D] serial
 AB-CD Routing= AB->CD serial
 Dry Path Around AB Amt= 00
 Dry Path Around CD Amt= 00
 (b)ypass (k)ill= A=b B=b C=b D=b

Save It

If you like this preset, name it and claim it (save it as explained in the musician's manual). Press Write and select a location

using the big silver knob. Press Write again, and use the arrows and silver knob to name the preset. I named mine "Ah Via Music-tone." Press Write once more. You've just saved the best guitar preset ever.

The Conclusion

The key to the best sound is that the Input Level knob is set properly. Make sure that when you play hard, it only occasionally goes into the red. If I may paraphrase Jack Nicholson from the film *As Good as it Gets*, "(this preset) makes me want to be a better player." Thanks for reading. If you've got any improvements or suggestions, please drop me a line (through the *Hacker*).



Bio: Tom Tracy is weathering the journey, taking the path less traveled. To Fehrion, wherever you are.

Hacker G*L*I*T*Z

Interview with Bill Champlin

Part II

John R. Bolles

Where we left off last month...

JB: The Ensoniq equipment has always been pretty intuitive and easy to use.

BC: I think, of all the instruments I've got in my studio, the TS-10 is probably the only axe that I really know. You never really know it, but I sure use it an awful lot. I know everybody in *Chicago* uses their Ensoniq stuff quite a bit. Everybody's pretty adept at getting in and out of the sequencer section. We did that *Signature Series* for them and they gave us a whole mess of equipment. And rather than go, "Well, here's another free axe sittin' in the corner," our Ensoniq stuff gets *used*. I think I've used my TS-10

so much that I've somehow screwed up the ability to change octaves on it. I gotta find out what's going on. I think I actually might have finally overused the instrument, and it's starting to go.

JB: The chips starting to revert to sand?

BC: Something. I'm sure I just hit something wrong somewhere. Usually I do demos on it, and then for records I access a lot of sounds. Have you heard "*He Started to Sing*" at all?

JB: Yes. Excellent CD.

BC: There's one or two songs on that album where I used almost all factory sounds from

Ensoniq stuff. The sounds are great. When these guys handed me a TS-10, I guess the SD-1 was out right before that. Jason Scheff, the bass player in *Chicago*, had been going, "Hey, man, this SD-1 is pretty cool. You can actually work up stuff on the road and it's pretty nice." Then the TS-10 came out, and it was like one step up from the SD-1. I was doing an album with Peter Wolfe, and he had a Synclavier, and racks and racks of synthesizers lying around. We ended up using mostly the Ensoniq stuff, mainly because it was easily accessible.

JB: And it sounds good.

BC: Yeah. There's one called AIR VENTURE that, I swear to God, I load it down every time. It's warm and fat and it's got a whole bunch of different oomph on it. My only problem with the TS-10 is that I just get so far into it — I overuse the memory and the polyphony so quick — then all of a sudden voices start borrowing from each other and throwing the drums out of whack. 'Cause my voicings — there's gotta be ten voices in every chord, you know...

JB: So do you use it mostly for a scratch pad to figure out arrangements and to write with?

BC: Yeah. What's so wonderful about it is: The TS-10 and a set of cans, and I'm on the road. The problem with the road is that it's the last place in the world that you can really be musical — when you have the most spare time. I've got a 24-track studio here where I really do most of my work. But when I'm on the road, after about a week of playing the same 12 songs over and over again, you start really wanting to come up with something new. And the TS-10 is just perfect to have there. You get a day off, you got a whole bunch of time, you put down a towel on a desk in a hotel room, set it up, and you're ready to go. You basically have everything you need right there. Lately, what I've been doing is taking a year and a half's worth of songs I've done on the TS-10 and dumping them into the Macintosh. I got hold of Gary over at the company who was really helpful in teaching us how to offload all the information and dump it all into the Macintosh, which has tons of memory. He was really a nice guy, helped me out no end. All I have to do is build up banks of the most important sounds. I still have two songs to go.

JB: What are you using, Performer?

BC: Yeah, I'm using *Digital Performer*. My programmer and kind of musical partner, Tom Saviano, is a wiz with quantizing and shifting and stuff like that. So any problems I got myself in, like overkicking the polyphony on the TS-10, once you start sending some of the MIDI information to different boxes, all those voice-borrowing problems are gone. What I'm using most out of the TS-10 are the factory drums; they're really cool. I've hardly even scratched the surface of what that thing can do. What I like about it is its 96 ticks per quarter note, which is very similar to the old Linn 9000. If I still have a lot of memory, there's just something about the groove of the TS-10 that's very cool. The Macintosh has got, what, 496 ppq or something? It's way more high-resolution. There's something about the "old-fashioned" one that's got a groove to it that I almost like better.

JB: Elton John said that he used the Linn drum machine when it first came out, and it had more soul than the human drummer they were using.

BC: Sometimes, yeah. I think it has something to do with where the microprocessor is when you start. When Jay Graydon goes to tape with a 9000, or even with a Macintosh, he cuts it three times. I say, "What are you

trying to do, use up tape?" And he says, "No, man, just let me put it down three different times, and then I'm going to play the first four bars of each one back to you." And you swear to God there's a difference. It's just random as to how the microprocessor behaves. Of course, Jay is a guy who can hear nanoseconds, OK? He'll get you listening too closely. But, listen to his records; they're perfect.

A lot of times when I do a demo, I'll just take the TS-10 and put it on two tracks of a 24-track. You look at the track sheet and it'll say: "Tracks 1 and 2: Band." (Laughs). So I'll take up five or six minutes of tape and have four demos on it. I love the TS-10, I do a lot with it. To say nothing of the DP-4 they gave me. The thing sat in a box for about six months. Finally my engineer said, "Let me check this out." He had it up and running in about five minutes, and he was going, "My God! This is the best piece of gear you've got in the building!"

JB: I haven't heard any bad things about it.

BC: I actually got a call for a guitar date for an Italian record the other day. I just used the DP-4, didn't even bother with an amplifier. And they were totally diggin' the sound... 'cause I wasn't going with a hard amplifier sound. For any clean or chorused or delayed sound, the DP-4 is as good a guitar box as anything I've ever had. And I've had numerous guitar processors.

JB: What about the Signature Series CD Chicago did for Ensoniq?

BC: Basically, for the organ samples, I sat there and played one note after another all the way from the bottom to the top on Peter Wolfe's B3, and they recorded it. Apparently, a lot of people have used the organ sounds. We also had fun putting together some vocal things.

JB: Chicago is keeping you busy, but the band definitely has its own musical tradition. What's motivating you to pursue your solo career, and now your work with the Sons, more and more?

BC: If, for some reason, my stuff was being recorded by Chicago, I probably wouldn't do it. But I don't think it's ever going to be, so I will.

JB: I see you stepping out more in Chicago — bringing a couple songs in, I hear some vocal arrangement things that are definitely your touches.

BC: Yeah, they pretty much just hand the

background vocals to me. I at least have made a name for myself as a background arranger. There are very few arguments in terms of what to do with backgrounds. As far as lead vocals are concerned, it's a pretty rare thing for me to be doing leads. I just recorded one.

JB: I've noticed that lately it seems the ones you sing on are the ones that become hits: "Look Away," "Here in My Heart." But, moving right along, in general, how do you feel digital technology has helped you realize your music?

BC: I did an album called "*Through It All*," and I really needed to bring the album in at a low price, plus I didn't want a lot of people in my face telling me what to do. It was the first album where I pretty much produced it myself. I used drum machine the whole record. All during the time I was making my first solo albums and doing all kinds of other records, everybody was using drum machines, and I was using real drummers. Then, when I released "*Through It All*," the fad was to use real drummers, and I got a lot of flack for using drum machine! "*Wrong Way Champlin*" shows up again...

JB: Who cares? It's kickin'. Is your studio, Gold Mine, analog or digital?

BC: Analog. Sony MCI machine and an old Trident 75 that my tech, Steve Furlong, kind of modded up. He's got it sounding pretty good. Everybody's saying hard disk is next, and there won't be any tape soon. But you better back up, because there's always a chance of dumpage. Graydon is way into the ADAT — he was involved in R&D-ing the ADAT, and helped design the BRC. But he's still got two of the sweetest Sony MCI's you've ever heard sitting in the studio. There's something about analog tape compression on the bottom end that you just can't get from anything else.

JB: Well, you're basically right, but the only way I was able to have my own studio was because of affordable gear like the ADAT and the Ensoniq keyboards.

BC: And there's about 2 or 3 million people right there with you. I understand what you mean. I've got a DA-88 in the studio — I've mixed to the DA-88. It's amazing. Seamless punching. So, yeah, I have to admit, there's something really good about the digital domain. But there's also something a little bit transparent. We had to really fight to keep some of that analog bottom end. I don't mind a little hiss if it's gonna slam. The thing is, when you're dealing with digital, and your final resting place is CD, you don't

have the problems that you would with analog; you've just got to make sure you don't go into the red. So it seems to me that you ought to be able to get more bass. But the problem is that the bass that you do get doesn't have that slappage. Guys are working on that all the time, trying to figure out a way to get that same king of... I guess it's square wave versus sin wave or some kind of scientific stuff...

JB: Another part of the digital picture is all the stuff you can do with your keyboard. Being able to rough out finished demo tracks is definitely a convenience over the old approach.

BC: Absolutely. It's funny, usually when

musicians have been given free stuff from companies, it ends up sitting in a corner. But Ensoniq gave me this TS-10 and the DP-4, and I swear to God, they're the two pieces of gear that I use virtually every day. I'm real happy with the equipment. I understand that there are limitations, but everything's got limitations. The TS-10 goes everywhere with me. I wish I was as adept at *Performer* as I am with the TS-10.

* * *

Bill Champlin's CDs are being sold through *Thoughtscape Sounds*. Find them on the internet at www.thoughtscape.com, or call the order line at (800) 435-6185.

To hear audio clips, go to the Champlin Records website at:
<http://members.aol.com/champlins/>

To get more into Bill and his music, the Bill Champlin fan club website is at <http://members.aol.com/champlette/champlin.html>, or e-mail Rosie at Champlette@aol.com. ■

Bio: John Bolles, acting on the advice of his peers, has not quit his day job. He has, however, built his own studio, recorded some stuff, and set up a recording company in his spare time. Visit his website at <http://members.aol.com/AllegraRC/>.

HACKER BASEMENT TAPES

Steve Vincent

Extended Logic

CBIRD

CD: CBIRD - *Extended Logic* (c) 1998
Studio 1057

Artist: Christopher Bird

Contact Info: Studio 1057, P.O. Box
4901, Greenwich, CT 06831-0418,
Phone: (203) 353-1129, Email:
Studio1057@bongoboy.com.

Equipment: Ensoniq EPS 16+, Yamaha
SY synthesizers, Alesis Microverb III,
Macintosh.

Christopher Bird describes his music as "ambient electronic instrumental," an accurate moniker. More than anything, this fully-packed CD (total time 73:26) evokes a general mood, sets the background ambience of a room. Although it has many interesting features that reward a close listen using headphones, it is what I think of as "room" music, that is, music to play late in the evening with the lights low to create an atmosphere.

At low or high volumes, this mood-setting aspect of Christopher's work is highly successful for a number of reasons: first and foremost, he is consistent from track to track; there are no jarring leaps from one style or tempo to the next. In fact, his "formula" is so similar on every track that it pushes the envelope of redundancy. But the actual result is a constant acoustic "space" in which the same mood is suspended and held

for a long time. Which brings me to the second reason this CD works so well: it is long. A pet peeve of mine is short CD's, which I would describe as less than about 55 minutes. A CD will hold over 70 minutes of music, so I feel short-changed if I get much less, especially with ambient music. If you're going to sustain a mood, at least keep it going for as long as you can! *Extended Logic* is a mood marathon.

The CD insert is fairly sparse — a list of the track titles with a very cool digitally tweaked cover photo showing seven boulders suspended above an endless ocean. Christopher included a postcard bio and explanation of his music. From his bio:

"...Christopher Bird, a professional artist who has experimented with various musical venues during his career. His ambient electronic instrumental pieces embody a structured approach to composition and form, while random processes lend the music an improvised feeling. The use of synthesized instruments and effects is evident in his work, as well as progressions that build into powerfully sweeping sequences and layerings.

"Extended Logic is a suite of eleven pieces that consists of variations on a central theme grouped into two parts. The instrumentation uses extended chord structures and percus-

sion with solo parts modified using stereo effects and enhancement. The structure of each piece uses a 'build method' so that parts are added one at a time to form a cohesive entity."

When it comes to reflecting on compositional strengths, I often emphasize two aspects of composition that make for strong tunes: memorable melody lines and poetic or impacting lyrics. *Extended Logic* has very little in the way of up-front melodies and is sans lyrics. However, Christopher's compositions shine in the area of harmonics: his main compositional formula is to alternate between two extended chords and bounce arpeggios around the chord structures. Heavy yet judicious use of ping-ponging stereo delay adds motion and interest to these two-chord oscillations.

Another strength of this project is Christopher's choice of synth sounds: airy string pads sustain the lush chords measure after measure, with regal brass emulations and chromatic mallet sounds bouncing the arpeggiating "melodies" in a dance around the percussion tracks. There is nary a cheesy sound in the entire CD.

The eleven tracks on *Extended Logic* share so many similarities that a track-by-track description would be redundant, so I'll highlight some of the many bright spots instead:

Sublime Realization — Anyone who reads this column regularly is familiar with my dread of sampled sax. Well, Christopher uses a sax emulation on this track that has the timbre of a sax, but he doesn't play it like a sax: he fades this soloing line in and out of the mix, and washes it with generous

amounts of stereo reverb, delay, and chorus. It sounds like some of the solo sounds used by Enigma. Excellent work!

Precious Sharing — Christopher brings an acoustic piano sound into the mix here, pounding out a ping-ponging alternating chord structure. Over this foundation he plays a brass part using open fifths. Blending in a human vocal tossing in some delay-enhanced "oh's" adds a wonderfully organic element.

The Thaw — The most striking element of this track is its wonderfully lush chords, sustained measure after measure. If you've ever listened to the "*Emerson, Lake and Powell*" album (one of my favorite ELP's), you hear this kind of chord structure in the brass part of the opening song.

The Storm — Like "*Precious Sharing*," Christopher uses an acoustic piano patch to lay the chordal and percussive foundation for the song, but like his use of sax earlier, he extracts music from the acoustic piano in an unorthodox way, ping-ponging the chords with a perfectly-clocked fast (16th note) delay. The result is almost like someone frenetically strumming an acoustic guitar. If this were not produced perfectly, the result

would be lame. But Christopher produced it perfectly.

Plateau Dub — Use of the shakuhachi in ambient music is a close contender with sampled sax for the Cheesy Cliche Award. I point out Christopher's use of a shaku sample on this track because it is an outstanding example of extracting and using the beauty of an instrument but molding it carefully and lovingly into a different style. In this case, he downplays the "hiccuping" yodel effect that most people emphasize when bastardizing the shakuhachi and instead emphasizes the wonderful wooden timbre with sustaining notes sweetened with generous amounts of digital delay.

My only "raised eyebrow" is over some of the song endings: the tunes quickly peter out on a number of occasions, making me wonder what happened. It's actually not that jarring, and is not much different from a fast fade. If the music is playing in the background for some room ambience, this complaint would never surface. A mild nitpick on an otherwise superbly produced CD.

With ambient or New Age (can we stop using that term now?) CD's, I assess my enjoyment of the music on the basis of its

"trance quotient." I'm on my third listen as I type this, with my mouth hanging open, slack-jawed and drooling like someone who falls asleep on the couch on a Sunday afternoon. I would say CBIRD has an excellent trance quotient. ■

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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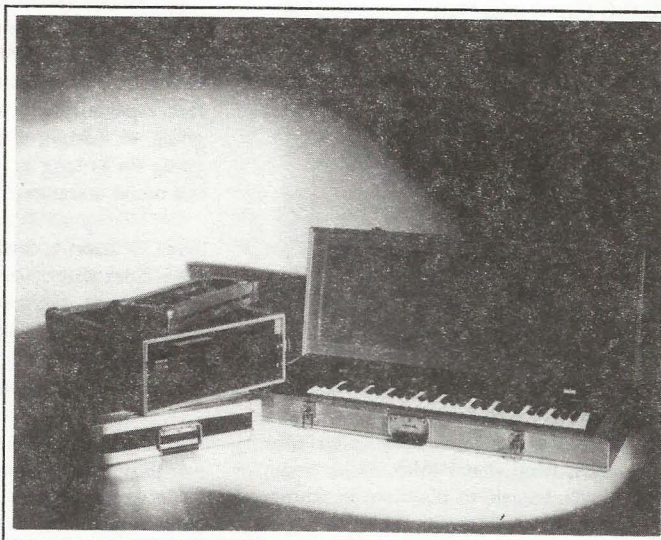
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U.S. Mail - The Interface, Transoniq Hacker, 1402 SW Upland Dr., Portland, OR 97221

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.

Transoniq,

I just recently purchased a used Ensoniq **EPS Classic**. At first all seemed well, but soon it started to give me some trouble. The problem is that after booting and tuning the keyboard, anytime you access the floppy drive the machine engages the floppy drive but just spins it without reading the disk. When in this state the machine won't do anything else and there is nothing you can do but turn the machine off. I've tried different O.S. disks and different instrument disks to no avail. Another thing is that it doesn't do this all the time, although 90% of the time it does. Sometimes it works just fine. Do you know what's wrong? What can I do?

Thanks in advance for your help.

Anthony

san_agustin_1@hotmail.com

[PF - Tony: Could be a multitude of things, but I'd suggest cleaning the floppy drive first. Any commercially available 3.5" disk cleaning kit from a computer store (Best Buy, Radio Shack, etc) will work fine. Old and venerable as the EPS Classic is, chances are it's just dirty heads on the floppy drive. Make sure you feed it 800k (720k DSDD) disks and NOT the 1.4 Mb DSHD disks. If you can't find any 800k disks you may have to tape the shutter on the right-hand side of 1.4 Mb floppies closed with tape...

If this behavior persists, ping us back and we'll get the next bigger hammer...]

[Anthony - Cleaning the drive didn't work, it still does the same thing. Next bigger hammer please. Thanks.]

[PF - Tony: Techzam. 805.520.9845. They rebuild floppy drives for \$40, but I'd call to verify this, as one reader pinged in saying they raised their rates...]

Dear everyone,

My O.S. floppy sits in my EPS drive - I turn it on, it works a few seconds and then freezes saying "loading system." Once in a while it actually gets through the boot-routine and then works just fine, but most of the time it doesn't. A friend of mine reports the same of his EPS-16+.

Does the drive need replacement? Cleaning'?

Regards,

Halfdan E (half-e@post1.tele.dk)

[PF - 1/2Dan: Is the drive LED lit while the "Loading System" prompt is displayed? I ran across an old stubborn EPS Classic (one of mine, actually) that behaved the EXACT same way. I couldn't figure it out, and my wife said "Pat, the light ain't on: I'll bet nobody's home." And sure enough, I'd get the "Loading System" prompt but the LED on the drive was off. Turns out the power cable to the drive was intermittent...

So I popped the hood open, removed the drive carrier/left cheekblock/pitch/mod/wheel assembly (4 screws hold it down; 2 from underneath the instrument and two at the back ledge), and snoopied around. Turned the instrument back on and pulled down on the drive power cable enough to ensure it was getting power, and bingo, the light came on and the instrument booted...

It could be as simple as dirty heads on the drive, however. I'd recommend (just like the previous post) a 3.5" head cleaning kit from an electronics/computer store like Best Buy, Radio Shack, of the like. Be sure to try that first.

But if the light comes on and nobody's home, take your 16+ to an Authorized Ensoniq Service Center to ensure it gets professional help (especially if you're the least bit worried about popping the hood on it). And don't trust anyone BUT an Authorized Service Center, 'cause parts don't exist for this thing anymore...

And if the floppy drive turns out to be defective, see our "related links" page for Techzam's #: they rebuild drives for around \$40.]

TH -

I've just purchased an EPS sampling work station and I'm in search of a video tutorial. The people at Rubber Chicken Software said they heard of an EVS video but, didn't know where to locate one.

Does anybody out there know where to get an EPS tutorial video?

ACOUNTRY1@aol.com

[PF - AC: Nope: EVS folded years ago. You might find an old one on a dealer's shelf if you post to enough newsgroups. Covert Video started doing videos of the wavetable synth line (KS-32, SD-1, etc.), but the only sampler they did a video of was the ASR-10...]

[Garth Hjelte (chickenEPS@willmar.com) - And thanks to good 'ol Marilyn who owns the Covert videos, they are unavailable, destined to die in some basement, without being a help to anyone. Blame her.]

[TH - I believe Marilyn acquired Covert as part of a divorce settlement, never was an "Ensoniq-person" and probably has no real interest in even thinking about the videos. Unfortunate, but that's the way these things go...]

[Jimmy (jdelaio@csulb.edu) - I have a video that I got with my ASR years ago. It shows you around the board a bit like sequencing and stuff. Like I said, it's for the ASR. But the ASR and the EPS are very, very alike.]

[PF - Jim: True. Are they still available?]

[Timothy 9light111@earthlink.net] - I would also be interested in seeing that ASR video, as well as a four-times expander for my EPS classic. Any leads for the expander or the video would be appreciated. Thank you in advance.]

[PF - Tim: So would about a thousand EPS owners. Check with Syntaur Productions (www.fatsnake.com/syntaur). Ol' Sam was crowing he had access to the original EPS expanders. Seriously, he might have one in stock. Ping that URL...]

[RCParent@aol.com - Hello Guys:

I'm writing this because a friend of mine in D.C. told me that this "event" was unfolding again. My name is Rick Parent and I made those tapes known as "Covert Videos." My mistake was thinking that Marilyn, my ex wife, would continue the business or sell it. So much for the nice guy crap. I will once again try to acquire the masters as I can see there are still those with a need and no source.]

TH -

If someone has schematics or PCB layout (and component layout) for the OEX, I'd be very interested about them. You can send me email to jannemarkus@hotmail.com.

Thanks.

Janne Miettinen

[PF - Janne: Ensoniq only. Authorized Service Centers who purchased the \$150 set of discontinued (read vintage) keyboard schematics might have a schematic of the OEX-8 (EPS

Classic-specific only), but I'd doubt it. And since it's not compatible with the 16+ and ASR (OEX-6 only), it may or may not do you any good anyway. Good luck in prying one out of Ensoniq...]

[Garth Hjelte (chickenEPS@willmar.com) - There is a (reverse engineered) schematic of the OEX-8 for the Original EPS at <http://www.soundcentral.com/keyboard/ensoniq/faq.html#oex>]

[PF - Gang: There weren't many like Dick Lord: the guy reverse-engineered the workings of the EPS in a single evening. Ensoniq brought him into the fold (possibly to shut him up - ever see the 2nd installment of "Inside the EPS?"). Haven't seen that level of work since Martin Luther found 100 discrepancies in the Bible overnight and nailed it to the Pope's door back in the 1600s. Is Dick still doing cardio-pulmonary hardware repair/calibration/etc?]

TH -

I am trying (unsuccessfully) to have my EPS read the MIDI time clock messages being outputted on my Roland VS-840, so when I begin playing the VS-840, the EPS begins simultaneously and locks in to the time clock messages.

Can anyone help?

ACOUNTRY1@aol.com

[PF - ACOUNTRY: The EPS sequencer was 48ppqn, so if you've slaved the EPS to follow MIDI clock, that's about all we can do here. Make sure the EPS is set to follow MIDI (or external) clock/sync, and make sure the VS is sending MIDI clock. That's about all you have to do from the Ensoniq end.]

[Garth Hjelte (chickenEPS@willmar.com) - And the VS-840 needs to send a MIDI Start command also, obviously. We work with a VS-880 from time to time, and it synchs rather well, except for the semi-frequent crashing of the EPS/ASR from some errant bytes from the VS.]

TH -

I've been receiving Transoniq Hacker for about a year now. I enjoy sorting through it although it is mostly "Greek" to me. I'm a new Ensoniq MR-76 user. I'm trying to combine the Ensoniq with a Midwest Micro computer using a SoundBlaster AWE 32 Wavetable sound card. Is it possible to send tracks to a program such as Cakewalk (3.1), clean up the player mistakes, and send the track back to the Ensoniq? If so, how is this accomplished? (Keep it simple, please! As you can tell, I know very little.)

Also, is it possible to send MIDI data from one program to another within the computer sys-

tem? For example, scan the music in using Midiscan and send it to another music software program (or even send it to the Ensoniq)? If so, how?

Anxiously hoping for help,
Lois C. Boso
lboso@citynet.net

[PF - Lois: Answers, in order:

(A) Yes. Save your MR-76 file as a (ta-da!) Standard MIDI File (SMF) and then open it in Cakewalk.

(B) Yes. Open the (ta-da!) Standard MIDI File in Cakewalk and edit each track to taste.

(C) Yes. Save as a (ta-da!) Standard MIDI File in Cakewalk, copy to a PC-formatted floppy, and load it into your MR.

(D) Yes. If you haven't guessed the answer by now, save it as a Standard MIDI File and open it in any application that supports SMF's (just about every app out there)...

All of the above requires a gameport-to-MIDI adapter (available at most computer stores for around \$15)...

TH -

I recently experienced a main system board failure on my EPS. Who can replace this since Ensoniq discontinued support? Also - am looking for a replacement SCSI board as it was also zapped.

Thanks,
Tony Crow
spryc@mindspring.com

[PF - Crow: Good luck. The SCSI board can probably be repaired, as there are no proprietary VLSI's on it. Can't say the same for your EPS logic board. I'd call around to locate an Authorized Ensoniq Service Center that has the schematics for the EPS and see if it's something that can be repaired. If there's an Ensoniq chip that's kaput, you're hosed...

Sorry I don't have better news for you, but that's the deal when it dies. Definitely pursue an Ensoniq Service Facility that has the schematics and let a GOOD Ensoniq tech check it out, 'cause it might be something as simple as a 7805 or other regulator (might just be the power supply) causing all the problem. Better see a specialist before parking it in the closet...]

Hi,

I just finished writing an Editor/Librarian for the DP/4 for the PowerMac. I talked to Ensoniq, and they suggested that I let you know about it.

I really don't know the form here - I wrote this

during weekends and vacations over a 3 year span since I'm a home studio nut - not a professional programmer. I've never put out shareware before!

If you want to take a look at it, the URL is <http://www.reset.com/surgical>. It's pretty comprehensive: Visual config editor that redraws itself to show the current configuration; 41 different algorithm layouts; all drag & drop etc.

Anyways, if you have any suggestions or advice on how to get the word out on this, please let me know!

Thanks,
Rob Martin
rimm@panix.com

[TH - Well, this should help. We'll also be looking into doing a review of your program.]

Hi,

I was wondering if anyone had any information regarding getting an ESQ-1 to turn on again after changing the internal battery.

A few years ago, my ESQ-1 would give the low-battery warning when I turned it on. I ignored it since I store the sequences and sounds via MIDI. However, it stood unused for about 6 months, and when I went to use it again, it would not turn on.

I replaced the internal Lithium battery, but when I turn on the power switch, nothing happens. The display is completely blank. Pushing the Record and upper left soft button do not have any effect.

Does anyone know of some other "reboot" procedure which needs to be done?

Thanks!
Peter Eggleston
eggleson@aai.com

[PF - Pete: Check all internal connections, ESPECIALLY the one to the display board. If your ESQ-1 sat dormant for awhile chances are most of the contact points are oxidized and need to be cleaned. Recommend a zero residue cleaner (Blue Shower, etc.) to clean these connectors.

If that doesn't bring it back, check the power supply. Look for +5, +12, +28V (to the display board), and their negative counterparts. If the power supply checks out, time to visit an authorized Ensoniq Service Center for professional diagnostics...

[PF - Pete: This just in from an Ensoniq service tech. Turn off your ESQ-1, unplug the AC cord, flip the lid/open the hood, and with a piece of wire, short the lithium battery terminals together for about 5 seconds. This is the "hard" reset Ensoniq didn't want us to know

about. Note: this only works on the ESQ rev's with the two connectors on the one end of the display board, and not on the rev with cables at each end.

Also, if your ESQ-1 has two sets of cables connecting it to the logic board, disconnect the 4-wire connector and power up your ESQ-1. When you press program, edit, and other buttons on the panel, you should see numbers, character, and other things pop up on the display. This indicates the display board is functional and the logic board is defective.]

TH -

1. I have a KS-32 that recently gave me an error code and re-initialized by itself. I guess I need to replace the battery. How is this done? I have electronics experience, but would like the procedure. Does the battery have to be jumped, etc.....

2. When I MIDI to my SQR, for some reason the first of the eight tracks keeps changing the MIDI Channel. I need Program change "ON" because I want it to respond to them. Any ideas?

3. I have an old Ensoniq Midi Merger. It has eight channels. Anybody have any info on this little item?

Thanx for any help you can give.

Rick
rickbeck@dmv.com

[PF - Rick: Answers, in order:

(A) The KS-32 reinitializing itself is not cause to replace the internal battery. The battery maintains patch and sequence data, and has nothing to do with error codes. One day you'll turn on your KS and it will tell you "Battery Low" in the display - THAT's when to replace the EEPROM battery. The error code was, for lack of technical terms, a "brain fart" that scrambled the contents of your KS-32 so weirdly the only way to recover was to reinitialize itself. My SQ-1 used to do that on a regular basis until I installed the grounding kit (only for the first 100 or so SQ-1's)...

(B) Set the MIDI IN mode of your KS to "Multi," then select the sequencer mode. This way, all 8 tracks will respond to inbound MIDI data, program change, CC#'s, on their respective track.

(C) What you have there is a KMX-8. Ensoniq still provides ROM upgrades for them at a nominal charge. They might have some info on it at their website (www.ensoniq.com)...

[Rick Beck - Thanx for the help, reassuring to know there's actually humans out there. I've check Ensoniq's website, unless I'm looking in the wrong place, I haven't been able to find anything on the KMX-8.]

[PF - Rick: I pinged there last night and all I found was the current ROM revision in the archives. You may have to call them at 610.647.3930 (vox) and order a manual from them to get any more of the skinny on this product...]

[Eric Montgomery, Ensoniq Technical Support - Just wanted to let you know that we no longer have OS chips for the KMX family. We have not had those for a few years now.]

T.H.

I have an EPS-16+ Turbo, still running 1.1 O.S. It is not midied or SCSIed to anything, but it is sick. It crashes (with "ERROR 129-REBOOT?") after being on and played for about an hour. I downloaded EPSm and O.S. 1.3 to my Mac G3 and have been unable to successfully load the new O.S. without it going to the same "ERROR 129" message. I erased the flashbank where the original 1.1 O.S. and several samples resided thinking the 1.3 wouldn't load on top of 1.1. Still no luck.

I've been a subscriber since I bought my EPS-16+ new and think your publication is wonderful. Thanks for any advice anyone might have.

Gary Coots
cooter@flash.net

[PF - Gary: Here's where I'd start sniffing around...

Check your firmware to ensure the ROMs are V. 1.00F. If this is the case, I'd try to find another source for V. 1.3 software. Try a dealer or other manner other than the net to get it just to ensure it's not corrupted. If it reports the error right after "Tuning Keyboard-Hands Off" you may have a connector problem. Pop the hood of your 16+ (if you feel comfortable doing the following) and, with the unit unplugged from the wall, wiggle the cable connectors/unplug and reconnect the cables inside the 16+. The culprit may be the keyboard connector to the logic board, but you have to remove the keyboard assembly to get at it. If you're the least bit leery of trying this yourself, take your pet to an Authorized Ensoniq Service Center and have a tech clean all the connectors inside the 16+. Better than 90% of all Ensoniq-related failures revolve around interconnection points (I guess they didn't expect these things to live this long, eh?). Attacking the problem from that aspect results in better than an 80% success rate...]

[Gary Coots - Thanks, Pat. I re-plugged all connectors that I could reach and it works fine now. I was able to load the 1.3 O.S. that I had downloaded and put it in the Flashbank with a couple of samples. Is there any way to increase the Flashbank memory? Have you gotten any feedback on the internal Zip drives? I'm considering going that route. Gracias.]

[PF - Gary: Lotta people don't believe it, but reseating the connectors on the older Ensoniq boards DOES result in a 80% success rate. Zip drives are cool, and I've heard that the new Zip Plus drives (that autosense a SCSI port or a parallel port and configure accordingly) now work properly as well. They require termination power (which the 16+ does NOT provide) so you need to add a SCSI Sentry or other device to supply termination power...

Other than that, internally-mounted Zip drives are wonderful. Having 100 Mb at your disposal in cartridges is quite the boon. The only caveat involved is you can no longer format cartridges on the EPS-16+: remember, when it boots from a SCSI drive the "Format SCSI Drive" commands are unavailable. So unless you have a computer, a second Zip drive, and an Ensoniq-format utility program to massage your Zip-Carts into Ensoniq format, better to leave the floppy in there. If you've got all of that, see RCS's internal Zip kit as well as their wares to let you do that...

No further expansion of FlashRAM is available. I suppose someone could build one up to the theoretical max of 4096 blocks, but since you have to "Change Storage Device" to get to Flash anyway, it's really only useful for the OS and a coupla frequently used instruments. And at the price of PSRAM back when it was made, a 4096-block FlashRam module would've set you back around \$900, so Ensoniq didn't pursue it any further...]

[Derek (Dvkrogh@aol.com) - Here's a little trick:

"Format SCSI Drive" is disabled if you boot from hd, but not "Copy SCSI drive." If you're on the road or just want a simple solution, just use this command to format a disk. Just put in an existing Ensoniq disk and copy (i.e. from SCSI 5 to SCSI 5). Then put in an unformatted disk as destination disk, and it will get formatted. The only disadvantage is that you'll have to go through the 100mb copy process, but it's done pretty fast.]

[PF - Derek: Yes. very cool trick...]

Hey.

I'm interested in programming for the EPS-16+. There are two things I would like to do:

* Program an operating system. There are heaps I could improve on (I guess everyone has their ideas - and thus this has probably been answered...) and from what I gather of how the operating system works, it should be possible to program it to do what I want it to do. What I would need to do such stuff is either an EPS-16+ assembler (I guess only Ensoniq would have these) or the specifications for byte-code of the system (I have much experience in intel-asm programming so doing it bitwise would be no problem).

* Programming effects for the EPS-16+. I would like to program effects as Waveboy does, for the EPS-16+. If nothing else, I would like to change the parameters in effects which are modulatable. Only being able to change the mix of an effect with a modulator is annoying (as is not being able to do so anyway with LFO – as is not being able to modulate any parameters at all...).

If someone could get me some information regarding this stuff, that would be very cool.

Danke – alex
itech@senet.com.au

[PF – Alex: Aside from a spellchecker, you'll need quite a bit of stuff to do an OS rev for the 16+.

First, you HAVE to know assembler (ASM or MASM) and be comfortable in that environment (that's the hard part). Secondly you'll need a ROM burner with a software interface/interrogator to siphon the existing code out of the OS ROM hi and OS ROM low. Thirdly, you'll have to reverse-engineer this code to come up with the (a) environment under which this code is invoked (both how, where, and why) and (b) establish a working knowledge of what calls and logic states these ROMs invoke of the CPU. Fourth, you'll need a working knowledge of the Motorola MC68000, and a fluent vocabulary of the internal address registers of that particular CPU. Then you've got to figure out how all of this fits together...

And finally, you'll need one helluva lawyer for hacking copywritten intellectual Ensoniq property by doing any of the above. Ensoniq vociferously prosecutes any hacks of the OS, ESPECIALLY FX code (only Bill Mauchley of Waveboy gets to play the FX card, kloans). They've VanSmacked a couple of European companies that tried into another dimension: oblivion. Sadly, with Ensoniq itself (a) discontinuing tech support on the 16+ since September 11 of last year, and (b) not providing spares in ANY form, I'm afraid you're merely rearranging the deck chairs on the Titanic. Out...]

Hi Hackers –

Can anyone recommend where to start reading about Sysex? It's stayed mysterious to me for a long time, but the idea of changing parameters on the fly from a sequencer, etc., appeals to me – any suggestions?

Thanks for a great service,
Peter Heim
pch7@interport.net

[PF – Peter: Start with the Sysex documentation from Ensoniq for your particular flavor of Ensoniq Keyboard. Once you know what commands to send, it's pretty straightforward to enter those strings into your computer from a sysex message dialog box in Performer, Cake-

walk, StudioVision, etc. Best of all, the Ensoniq Sysex documentation is free...]

Hello,

I have a KT-76. Is there such thing as an adapter for the SRAM drive? The last time I checked those blank cards cost over \$100. Wouldn't it be nice if we could save sounds and sequences on a zip drive? Is that possible?

David & Krista Moses
dmoses@one.net

[PF – David: Nope. Been there, done that, burned that T-shirt. I tried an HP 235 Mb PCMCIA drive in a KS-32, a KT-88, even the SQ-series – wouldn't even recognize it as a flash card, let alone a disk drive. And it seems NONE of these above instruments recognize a FlashCard bigger than 512K, so it wouldn't matter if a PCMCIA drive WERE recognized, the instrument would still only recognize the first 512K anyway...]

[Eric Montgomery, Ensoniq Technical Support – I usually suggest that any KT/SQ-1/SQ-2 or non disk drive Ensoniq product owner go with a MIDI disk drive. That is the only other means of storage besides the cards. Yamaha makes the MDF-2 (maybe up to MDF-3 now), Alesis made the Datadisk and I believe Peavey made one also. One of these drives is probably around the price of 3 or 4 of those cards, but has paid for itself the first time you saved more than 2 dumps to the 3.5 floppy disks it uses.]

[PF – Eric: An EPS, a 16+, an ASR, and their rack variants offer Sysex storage for little more than the price of one of these dedicated boxes, not to mention another musical instrument you get in the process. I used to use my Mirage as the Sysex device (running MASOS) for my ESQ-1, and it, also, worked flawlessly. I wouldn't recommend Alesis to anybody (90 day labor warranty and factory service only) unless they started remanufacturing logic and display boards for all the discontinued Ensoniq equipment people are trying to get fixed. Peavey, well, at least parts for everything they ever made are STILL available. You can still find IVM (Indian Valley Marketing) disk drives boxes for around \$100: this is what the Data-disk was patterned after. And the Alesis NanoSequencer does Sysex to PSRAM cards (up to 32 Mb) if you don't mind that 90 day warranty...

No, gimme an old discarded and forgotten EPS/16+/ASR, press "Command" and "System" and remember when Sysex was this easy.]

Hi,

I have a fairly ancient EPS (S/N: EPS-500322-F date: 04/12/88). Also the following:

Macintosh Quadra 650, 24MB memory.

System software B1 – 7.1
Syquest EZflyer 230 MB External SCSI removable cartridge hard drive.

Over the years I have built up a considerable library of EPS floppies and am starting to worry about their shelf-life. Is there any hardware or software that would allow me to back them up on my EZflyer, either directly or (preferably) by allowing my Mac to read the disks and storing the result? I gather there is some software that allows the disks to be read by PCs.

Best wishes,
Patrick Gowers
patrick@trellick.gn.apc.org

[PF – Pat: Yes there is, but I'd still check those floppies: I've had way too many unreadable floppies even after boxing them up, putting them in a firebox and trying to read them (from a two-year hiatus). And these were backups of my work copies...

Yes, a bunch of apps are available for archiving Ensoniq media to PC format; there are only a few for the Mac. EPSm from Terje Norstad (<http://fysmac-elg01.uio.no/eps.html>) is the recommended – less than \$30. scEPSi is OK but buggy. I wouldn't trust my data too long in this format. Recommend EPSm for Ensoniq disk images (both floppy AND SCSI) to Mac format...]

TH –

I keep seeing all these people with conflicts between their Mac CD-ROM and ASR-10 in the Interface, and the advice is to change the SCSI ID of the CD-ROM drive, but do you know anyone who has actually tried to do this? If not, now you do. Unfortunately, it seems that the internal CD-ROM is recognized by the operating system ONLY at SCSI ID 3. I tried all manner of shareware and professional SCSI mounting utilities to recognize my lost drive to no avail. Of course, this was a couple years ago under System 7.5.5. It may be different under OS 8. If anyone knows differently, I'd love to be proved wrong.

Garth Robin Van Meter
vynyl@gwis2.circ.gwu.edu

[PF – Van Meter: Horsefeathers. You move the jumper on the back of your Apple CDROM, make it ID 1, 2, 4, 5, or 6, insert your startup/restoration CD, hold down the "C" key and start your Mac and watch it BOOT from the CDROM. True for System 7.1.1 (System 7 Pro) and later OS revs...

If your Mac is giving you grief with a change in CDROM SCSI ID#, zap the PRAM (command-option-P-R- on startup) to nuke the ID#3 fixation. As an Authorized Apple Specialist (as well as a tier 5 Apple tech), I assure you the Mac Plus and the Mac SE represent the only Macs that can't boot from a CDROM (ROM code issues)...

The caveat? Only an Apple-branded CDROM is a bootable CDROM. The only exception is a Sony 8X running an FWB toolkit driver in the Daystar Genesis MP series, and they're so rare I've only seen one...

TH -

My name is Luciano and I have an Ensoniq MR-76. I wonder if there are any PC programs that allow me to listen to .MF3 files. I'm waiting for your answer.

Thank you.
Luciano Leaes,
Porto Alegre, Brazil
onas@pro.via-rs.com.br

[PF - Luciano: Nope - simply save your MR files in SMF format and then play them from your PC. (And stop waiting - get busy...)]

TH -

Say it isn't so! Is there really no way to change the patch settings on the ASR-10 Rack model? If anyone knows a way, please tell me. Makes for some serious programming snags.

Thanks for all your help,
Peter Heim
pch7@interport.net

[PF - Peter: It ain't so.

The ASR-10 indeed responds to patch select CC# changes. I apologize for not knowing exactly what RPN is involved, but Ensoniq wouldn't throw down like that. I'm sure it's referenced in the ASR-10 Sysex Specification we recommended last letter (and that you've procured from Ensoniq as ordered last month, right?). I'll get the details and post them tomorrow.]

[PF - Pete: Sorry for the delay! Send CC#70 values of 0, 32, 64, and 128 for 00, 0X, X0 and XX respectively...]

[Peter C Heim - Thanks. Yep, CC 70 is the only way I've found. I was hoping someone knew another way. So it means you can't just change the patch while you're programming - I'd vote for a button.

BTW, I went to the Ensoniq home page, looking for sysex documentation for the ASR-10, and couldn't find it. I emailed their tech dept., but like often in the past, they haven't responded. Any suggestions?]

[PF - Petey: You have to request the ASR-10 Sysex documentation either by snail mail (with your mailing address) or calling them directly at 610.647.3930. Play menu-drive time warp to the Musical Instrument Tech Support Division and request it verbally from a phone tech. I spoke with Craig yesterday for the TS-12 Sysex

Doc, so there's a name to drop...]

Dear Hackers,

Here's a tip on rudimentary program hacking, from someone who barely knows what he's doing:

I have been playing a TS-12 (and reading TH) for several years. I often use keyboard sounds such as ELEC-KEYS and CRYSTAL-EP along with a couple organ sounds, such as JAZZY-B3 (from Syntaur Productions TS-Set 1), and an acoustic Yamaha grand. I hacked a patch using voices 3, 4, 5, & 6 in ELEC-KEYS (the 4 used in the OO patch select) and voices 1 & 6 from JAZZY-B3. It ended up like this:

OO = ELEC-KEYS OO
O* = JAZZY-B3 OO
*O = JAZZY-B3 OO + part of ELEC-KEYS OO
** = one voice from each of the above patches.

I used effect # 04 ROTOSPKR + CHORUS + REV and tried to optimize the parameters for the two sounds. (By the way, if you play a TS and don't have TS-Set-1 and TS-Set-2, go visit the Hacker BOOTEQ right away.)

Well, I told that story to tell this one. The above patch is pretty good, but the electric piano is not quite as punchy as the original ELEC-KEYS, and the organ is not quite as delicious as JAZZY-B3, or REBOPPIN. Sooooo, I picked up a used MR-Rack (advertised in TH) to get more effects busses and more polyphony. The sounds of the MR are rich and pleasing, but I miss some of the really punchy keyboard sounds that are my bread and butter on the TS,

especially ELEC-KEYS and CRYSTAL-EP, for example. I also haven't found enough variety in the organ sounds; there are a couple I really like, but they represent one sound each, not 4 sounds as on the TS with patch selects. I've read in the MR specs that there are 8 different ROM organ waveforms, but it doesn't seem that my Rack has that much variety of organ sounds. Maybe part of the problem is that I haven't learned how to do layers of sounds yet.

I found some sounds for the MR on the internet, but not enough in the above categories, and I have yet to find a percussive, bright EP sound such as CRYSTAL-EP from the TS. So now I'm trying to recreate CRYSTAL-EP on the MR. The OO patch uses 4 voices, so I'm programming 4 layers on the MR using Unisyn. After looking at the monitor for a couple hours, trying to find the equivalent parameters in the envelopes, filters, and output, my eyes go all glassy and I have to go lie down for a while.

I guess I'm more into performance than programming, and would prefer to get some killer keyboard sounds out of a can. Do any readers have experience translating programs from the TS to the MR? What's on the market so far in the way of electric piano and organ sounds, and pads, for the MR?

Dave Simenson
fivetone@elite.net

Dear TH,

Enjoyed Pat Finnigan's article in Issue #156 on studio recording. Right on! Nothing wrong with touching reality once in a while is there?

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Well, let me say this. I have been reading the *Hacker* for about four years now and I must say the questions sure have changed. Questions like, "How do I record program changes on the same MIDI channel in real time?" to questions on Mac software and ZIP drives. I'm not sure I want to get into the computer sequencing just yet, but I'm getting close.

However, I have been bitten by the SYSEX bug. I've been using an external sequencer in conjunction with my TS-12 and I've sent many panel button messages using the sysex charts. The examples at the beginning of the text were very helpful for button messages but I want to go a little deeper. Would you please post an example of an sysex message for, let's say, changing the effects output on track #6 from "voice" to "aux 1." Let us assume we're already in sequence mode and that track #6 is already selected. An example of this message would be extremely helpful.

I hope you can answer this question in the next issue of the *Hacker*.

Thank you in advance,
Deane Seelhorst
Chalfont, PA

[PF - Deane: I don't have a TS-12 or the Sysex Spec at this time, but Craig at Ensoniq tech support is sending me the Sysex Spec, so I should have an answer for you in a few days (upon receipt of the Sysex docs). Seems to me you simply send the sysex string for FX change down the same MIDI channel that corresponds to the track you wish to change the FX algorithm on (if the FX chip can be controlled by sysex messages)...]

[PF - Deane: This just in - Craig sent me the Sysex docs for ALL Ensoniq keyboards, but here's the skinny. When you're in sequence mode, the effect is global for all tracks with the exception of certain algorithms like "Chorus & Reverb" which you can assign routings thru Buss 1 (dedicated Chorus) or Buss 2 (dedicated Reverb). To change the FX assignment of Track #6 from "voice" to "Aux1" (as outlined in the Sysex doc) you have to send FO (start Sysex message), THEN send offset 205 (track #6 parameters), offset 17 (Effect buss), and eeeeeeee (where e=fx buss 4-byte MSB message and s=MIDI status 4-byte MSB message). If this doesn't work, replace the offset 17 with offset 10 (Pan message) Pppppppp, where P is the pan mode switch on/off, and p is placement in the stereo field/aux out assignments. And of course end with an F7 (end of exclusive (EOX))...

Reason I say replace 17 with 10 is from previous experience with an EPS/16+/ASR. If an output expander is present, when you panned full right you could send the next 8 higher message #'s to select outputs 1-8 on the OEX box. May be different for a TS since it's a wavetable box as well as a sample playback device, but try

both just to see...

And good luck! If this gives you more grief than satisfaction simply set up a duplicate track assigned to the AUX1 output and mute whatever sequences/notes you don't want playing out of that rear panel jack. And of course, mute the parent track when AUX1 info is active so you don't double the part (and eat up polyphony). Helluva lot easier than doing the above, but if you must have a computer sequencer tell an Ensoniq sequencer what to do, wear your propeller-head beanie when doing this or wear a NASA cap just for good luck...

PS: BTW, thanx to Craig at Ensoniq TSE for the Sysex docs! Priceless...]

TH -

I have a SCSI 3 fast and wide drive. Will the EDM allow me to Read, Write, and Format my drive for use with my EPS Classic or do I have to use a SCSI 1 or 2?

Thank you in advance,
Tim
light111@earthlink.net

[PF - Tim: You can use your SCSI-3 drive with the EPS, but you'll need a 68-pin to 50-pin adapter to make it work. And by doing so, you're throttling the drive back to SCSI-1, which is all the EPS understands anyway, so you'll be fine...]

TH -

I play an MR-76 at church - I just purchased a ZR-76 for home use. On the ZR, I created a layer using Guitar-A (Sprucetop) and Vocals (Ahhhs) and saved it as a single sound. I sent the sound to Track 1 of the 16 track recorder, recorded a song, when back, sent Legato Strings to Track 2 of the 16 track recorder and recorded on top of the Sprucetop sound, saved the song to disk, loaded the song on disk on the MR-76 (I also created the exact layer and saved it as a single sound on the MR as I had done on the ZR), but when I play back my song on the MR, only the Legato Strings play from Track 2. What am I doing wrong?

Thanks bunches for your help.
Brenda Bates
bates@connect.net

[PF - Brenda: You don't mention saving the layer sound on Track 1 of your ZR to DISK. You need to save the layered sound, THEN load it into the MR in the same location it resides in your ZR. Otherwise, the track is trying to locate a sound that doesn't exist...

Or are the channel assignments the same on the MR as your ZR? Typically, this is the issue that

confounds most users. It's best to "Save Session" so that you capture ALL sound data, sequence data, Flash, etc. That way the snapshot you take of your ZR can be completely loaded into the MR (with the exception of the "Favorites" sounds that the MR doesn't have buttons for)...

Hope this helps!]

Transoniq,

I have a 7-year old SQ-1 that needs a new battery. I thought it would be no problem, but I can't seem to get the bugger out. It looks like it's attached to the connectors and I don't want to pull them out. How do I get the old one out and the new one in?

Thanks,
Chris
c648911@showme.missouri.edu

[PF - Chris: Take a soldering iron to unsolder the 2/3AA battery out and put the new one in. Recommend you pay a dealer to do this, as parts are no longer available if you nuke it. Otherwise, back up all your sound and sequence data, remove the logic board, unsolder the old battery and solder in the new one.]

[Eric Montgomery, Ensoniq Technical Support - Pat is right about the service center recommendation. I do want to add though that the SQ-1/SQ-2 parts are scarce but still available.]

TH -

How do I get to my Expander on my EPS Classic? I have a 2x Expander (no SCSI plug in) in my EPS classic. What type of memory does the EPS understand, work with? Would it be possible to get 4 times the base memory with a different than original expander, as well as SCSI plug in?

Thank you in advance,
Timothy
light111@earthlink.net

[PF - Tim: Answers, in order:

(A) by removing the four allen screws that hold the fascia (lid) down. Pop the hood: you'll see the expander directly in the middle of the instrument connected to the logic board by an edge-card connector.

(B) The EPS understands the 2X and the 4X expanders only. No SIMM slots or anything remotely similar.

(C) See www.fatsnake.com/syntaur for obtaining a 4X expander, and www.soundcentral.com/~chickeneps for a 4X SCSI interface...]

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