Transoniq Emu

Formerly Transoniq Hacker

The *Independent* Resource for Emu-Ensoniq Users

Syntaur's "Supersoniq" CD-ROM

Tom Shear

Product: Syntaur Productions' *"Supersoniq"* CD-ROM
For: ASR, EPS, and TS series keyboards.
Price: $169.95.
Contact: Syntaur Productions, 500 W. Prairie Ave., Eagle Lake, TX 77434. Phone: 1-800-334-1288, 1-409-234-2700, Web: www.fatsnake.com/syntaur.

I'm the first to admit it. The floor of my studio is a disgrace. It's a virtual sea of wires and hundreds upon hundreds of floppy disks. Some contain sounds... others contain sequences... some of the mysteriously unmarked ones could hold classified information on Area 51 for all I know. It's a mess. But that's okay. I am in acceptance of my sloppiness. My girlfriend was too until she wiped out in a pile of them while trying to find her way to the bathroom in the dark. Of course, none of this would've been a problem had CD-ROM become a viable format for sound storage a little earlier. Those hundreds of floppy disks can now be stored on a single CD-ROM that's a lot more durable, less space-consuming, and much harder to wipe out on if properly stored. This month, we look at the latest offering from Sam Mims' infamous Syntaur Productions, entitled *"Supersoniq."*

Supersoniq, simply put, is the entire Syntaur Productions library of samples all on a single CD-ROM. Every sample from volume 1-20 is represented here in a well-organized fashion that makes finding what you're looking for a breeze. The documentation is, as always, impeccable. A listing of every sound, complete with description, block size, effect used, and information on what the patch selects do is provided and puts the piddly lists most other manufacturers provide (if you're lucky) to shame. The source and techniques used to produce the sounds is also mentioned in most cases, so you might learn a new trick or two in the process. Also, unlike many collections which claim to be usable with the older EPS samplers, these actually ARE. You won't find any 16000 block alpine horn samples here... The sounds are incredibly memory efficient, without skimping on sound quality. So let's see what's on this thing...

The first directory consists of drum kits. Here you'll find 26 different kits ranging from standard rock and jazz oriented acoustic kits, to synthy zaps, thonks, and beeps. My favorite sounds by far were the synth drums. ARP KIT was especially nice providing some very odd, but definitely useful abstract percussion and drum sounds. Technoheads will lose their minds over this one. The JUPITER KIT was very cool too providing sounds that are similar (although not overly so) to some of the vintage Roland drum boxes. Of course if you need those too, there are also full TR-606 and TR-909 kits in this directory. The OBERHEIM KIT and ELECTRO KIT provide smaller, although equally great sounds. If Kraftwerk does it for you, you'll lose it over these. Of course, the acoustic drums are nothing to sneeze at either. In addition to the BIG ROCK KIT, you'll also find an especially nice BRUSH KIT. Also of interest is the 3559 block YAMEK DR-KIT. Or it rap is more your thing, the LOOP BITS KIT is a must, consisting of sounds extracted from drum loops

In This Issue ...

Articles:

To Pro or Not to Pro — That Is the Question
Eric Montgomery 3

1 + 1 = 11: CV Pedal Tips
Joe Travo 5

Re-Sampling a Drum Kit on the ASR-10
John Heath 6

Reviews:

Syntaur's "Supersoniq" CD-ROM
Tom Shear ..... cover

Basement Tapes: *Choose You & ICONGO*
Captain Charismatic (Jim Langlois)
Steve Vincent 6

Regular Stuff:

Random Notes 3
Hypersoniq 3
The Interface 9
Classifieds 13
Hacker Booteeq 15

making it much easier to program your own authentic-sounding loops.

Next up is the percussion directory. The 11 instruments here are again evenly divided between acoustic percussion like the exotic ETHNIC DRUMS and the bombastic ORCH PERCUS and electronic percussion like the Minimoog-generated LECTRIC BITS. Some may find themselves wishing for more traditional percussion sounds, but what is here is very well done, so shut yer yap and stop complaining.

"But what if I like the things I strike to make more melodic sounds?" I can hear you saying. Well, you can either start slapping opera singers, or, more advisably, you could dial up the "Tuned Percussion Directory." Here you'll find everything from bells and whistles (literally), to gamelan like timbres (T1 POT COVER), to marimbas, kalimbas and clavarimbas (oh my), to purely synthetic sounds (like the excellent recreation of the ESQ-1 preset WAVBEL). This time however, there are a couple variations on each sound represented, and the always detailed patch selects programming furthers your options even more.

The next directory is the one I was most skeptical about: the drum loops. When the "Loops" set first came out I had to wonder who in their right mind would spend that money on 12 loops when you can get whole volumes of loops for a much lower price per loop. And how good could they be anyway? Very good, actually. I was really pleasantly surprised by the quality level here. The loops were generally very original sounding, and use some very interesting production techniques that would undoubtedly make them stand out in a track. Most of these would more be useful in "edgier" types of than your standard rock, jazz, or funk, but they are excellent nonetheless. Put it this way... if you know what the "Revco" referred to in the documentation is short for (and no, it's not the drug store chain), you'll probably dig these loops.

Logically enough, the next category represented here is bass. The first subdirectory here is for bass guitars. I have to admit that I've always had something against sampled bass guitars. The attacks always sound too artificially bright and consistent. They almost always just sound cheesey to me. Unfortunately, none of the ten instruments here did much to change my mind (although the SADOWSKY BASS is rather nice). The two very memory efficient acoustic basses fared much better to my ears, but only marginally so.

Nothing to fear however, as the 31 excellent synth bass sounds that followed more than made up for it. Things start off with a sample of a rare Soviet analog synth called the Aelita providing a very nice, modulating, bright synth bass. Actually, quite a few of these sounds make very good use of filtering and modulation to provide much more "alive" sounds than you may have come to associated with sampled sounds in general. Both analog (the CS-15 BASS and MOOG 404 were particular favorites) and digital (check out the classic DX bass sounds) are represented equally here, and there are some pleasant surprises as well, including the two floor shaking sub-basses.

Following the basses, we come to the guitars directory. I'm not going to say these are the best sampled guitars I have ever heard, but considering the absurdly small block size the Syntaur team has squashed them into, they are mightily impressive. Here you'll find a nice, bright steel string acoustic, a MANDOLIN, and a COUNTRY PICK guitar all bumping elbows with the likes of a 1951 LES PAUL, and the very handy sampled chords in both standard 'rock' style, and nicest of all, some nice choppy reggae skanks which is something you don't come across too often in sampling collections. A little bit of everything if you need it, but some people again may find themselves wishing for more variations of each type of instrument. What a spoiled lot we are.

The next directory you'll find is the VOICES directory. These are mainly divided between synthy choir type sounds and pads made of vocoder sampled vowels. As a bonus you also get COUNT IT OFF with a drummer counting of the standard 1-2-3-4 (do prog rock drummers count off 1-2-3-4-5?), and VOCODER SLANG, which contains cheesy phrases like "Get Funky" and "Wow" spoken in a robotic voice.

The SYNTH directory is by far the most impressive and is, to my mind, the best example of Syntaur's phenomenal programming skills. I consider myself a pretty experienced Ensoniq samplist, but there were a few spots on here where I had to dial up a few parameters to figure out exactly how the heck they achieved some of these sounds. What makes the synth sounds so impressive, is the movement and "life" in them Lots of the sounds make skillful use of dynamic modulation techniques, so that no two notes sound exactly the same. Take ARP TOY BOX, for example... this sample was created on an old ARP synth using ring modulation. On your Ensoniq Sampler, however, it the tones produced depend on your touch... from short, muffled ganks, to harsh, clangerous strikes. And SO many of the sounds offer this amount of expression. It not only makes the sounds very fun, and inspiring to play with, but also makes your tracks sound much more interesting. The usefulness of these sounds is furthered by stupendous patch programming that offers everything from a simple variation on the main sound to actually providing access to whole new samples. And the truly astounding thing is that it's all done in such small block sizes. I am guessing the majority of people will be poking their noses around this directory of digital, analog, and lead synths the most, if only for the fun of it.

Finally, we round off this collection with a series of SOUND EFFECTS. These are probably the least essential of the collection, but they're still fun in their own right. While the samples of a woman coughing, hiccuping, and doing a pretty poor job of faking an orgasm might be of use to some people, my guess is that the more abstract samples such as the AIR WRENCH, PNUMATIC SLAM, and TV SMASHES will get more use. An alarming number of these sounds were produced by smashing things or dropping them on concrete. One can only wonder when Beavis started programming for Syntaur. Regardless, most of these sounds do make pretty cool industrial percussion sound right out of the box, and with further tweaking, some of the less obvious candidates lend themselves to this application as well. So in conclusion? If you need a little bit of everything, it's hard to go wrong with this collection. People needing multiple versions of the same types of sounds, or lots of acoustic instruments should probably look elsewhere, but otherwise, this would make a great first CD-ROM for people to pick up, and it complements big sprawling sound collections like mine pretty nicely too. As far as I am concerned, it's worth it for the synth sounds alone. ▬

***Bio:** Tom Shear contains adult language and situations and should not be viewed by sensitive or young viewers.*

Front Panel

RND (♪♪)

Some slight changes on the cover this month... That's "Poly" out there going faster than sound (transonic, if you will...). And, no, it's NOT a plucked chicken — as any fool can plainly see, that's a somewhat stout, but PLUCKY and resourceful EMU.

Note to new subscribers

If you just found out about us via Ensoniq... You're probably wondering what all this *"Transoniq Emu"* stuff is about. Well, Ensoniq and Emu have recently merged and as a result the ol' *Hacker* is undergoing a name change and is going to start including coverage of the Emu instruments. Other than that, this is the newsletter you thought you were getting.

If you just found out about us via Emu... Then you might be wondering what all this *"Transoniq Hacker"* stuff is about. Prior to the recent merger of Ensoniq and Emu the *Transoniq Hacker* has had a long history (going back to 1985) of covering the Ensoniq line of instruments. We're just now starting to also cover the Emu line — but for at least the next several months there's going to be little scattered bits of "text debris" left over from our prior existence. Please bear with us as we try to track the merger of the two companies with our own makeover.

Meanwhile, it's going to take a little while for our Emu coverage to grow. Feel free to start submitting Emu-related questions and letters to the Interface (a fast way to get results is to visit our web site version — www.transoniq.com), and you might even consider writing articles for us. We *do* pay — a measly 4 cents/word — and that's exactly how all of our current writers got started and went on to establish their own personal little cults of devoted followers...

HYPERSONIQ New Product Announcements

Rubber Chicken Software announces two new upgrades for their *Tools* product line. For *Ensoniq ASR-X Tools,* completion of Modules 3 and 4. Module 3 includes an EPS/ASR file translator. Notable features include SMF translation, batch writing from SCSI drives and CD-ROM's, translation of effects, and more. Module 4 includes a host of 1-SOUND building functions, such as adding, deleting, and modifying single or groups of wavesamples. Price of the program is $59.95, all upgrades are free.

Ensoniq MIDI-Disk Tools and *Disk Tools* now feature a SMF convertor to and from EPS, 16-Plus, and ASR song and sequence files. Also included is a basic sequence editor, where you can filter in or out certain MIDI events. *Ensoniq MIDI-Disk Tools'* price is $59.95; *Disk Tools* is $39.95. Again, all upgrades are free.

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To Pro or Not to Pro — That Is the Question

Eric Montgomery

Should I get the new Red X? Maybe you already bought the Black one and now you are concerned about whether your original X is outdated? What is the difference and why should I have one or the other? Why is the ASR-X/X Pro better than the other groove boxes on the market? My answers to these questions include facts and suggestions so that you can make the best choices. Let us proceed.

Color and Colour

We can begin the discussion of the ASR-X and X Pro differences with color. The Pro is... well... It's RED! It definitely stands out in a crowd. The Pro has something called Stomper software built in to the unit. This software allows you to "create" or render your own electronic drum sounds (the sounds are like those of the Roland TR-808 or TR-909 drum machines). While the original X doesn't include the Stomper feature, it will load Stomper sounds or any other data created on the X Pro. If you can access an ASR-X Pro, all that you have to do is create the sounds or sequences you want, then save them to a floppy disk. You can load Stomper sounds or any other data created on the X-Pro in an original X. The other option to getting Stomper sounds is to use a computer and the Stomper software program. Get on the Internet and download the Stomper software program at the following URL: http://stomper.base.org/.

By the way, I should mention that this software was designed for Windows. According to Master Zap's website and other Mac users, it should work okay on your Mac if you run Virtual PC or Softwindows95.

Sequencer

The ASR-X has 70,000 events in the sequencer memory. It is capable of doing up to 16 tracks of recording. Volume and panning can be recorded into a sequence as well as any controller data can be recorded to each track. Even though the X has none of its own controllers, you can record those in from a software sequencer and or other software/hardware controller. You might want to do the recording of controllers to

do "rez filter" type stuff or to modulate effects. The X-Pro has the same sequencer as the original X except for two things, the ability to expand its sequencer memory and setting fractional tempo settings. Adding sequencer memory is as simple as adding an 8 Meg SIMM or higher. When an 8 Meg to 32 Meg SIMM has been added to the ASR-X Pro, the sequencer memory goes from 70,000 events to 140,000 events.

An example of a fractional tempo is 120.50 BPM instead of just a whole number like 120 BPM. "What's so cool about that?" you might ask. Well, I'll tell you. Let's say you have sampled a drum groove into the ASR-X Pro. You will find that some sampled loops don't quite fit in the sequence. Normally you would have to time compress or expand the sample to make it fit. (Time expansion/compression is called Scale time in the ASR-X and ASR-X Pro). Now you don't have to go through those extra steps — just set your tempo in fractions as needed.

Memory (RAM)

So far as for memory (Ram) the X classic can go to 34 Megs of Ram (one 32-Meg SIMM + the 2 Meg of Ram already on board). The ASR-X Pro will go up to 66 Meg of RAM (two 32-Meg SIMMs + the 2 Meg of ram that comes stock).

All sample times just have to be doubled. For example, the max sample time in the classic X is 6 minutes @ 44.1k mono, 3 minutes @ 44.1k stereo. The X Pro's sample time at the max memory is 12 minutes @ at 44.1k mono and 6 minutes @ 44.1k stereo. The stock sample time is the same between the two machines, 20.5 seconds @ 44.1k mono, and 10.3 seconds @ 44.1k stereo.

NON-ASR-X Sounds

As with both machines, they will convert load the EPS, EPS-16+, ASR-10, Roland S-700 series and Akai S-1000/1100 series libraries. The convert loading works great on the ASR-X Pro and also works very well on the classic ASR-X with OS 2.62.

Software

A benefit for the ASR-X Pro is that the OS (Operating System) is now a "Flash OS." What this means to us non-technical people is that now the OS upgrades do not have to be on E-Proms and ROMs. The OS upgrades will be on floppy disks. You will even be able to download it from Ensoniq's website: www.ensoniq.com. Technology is a beautiful thang. No longer will you have to wait for those chips to come in the mail. No longer will you have to pull out a scribe and screwdriver to go through the user installation process.

Hardware

Another major difference is the Essentials set of buttons. These buttons allow you to select 15 of your "Favorite" (sound familiar?) sounds by the press of a button. The Essentials buttons also allow you to select sequences or song steps while you are in Pattern mode or Song mode respectively.

ASR-X versus the MPC-2000

Well, those are all of the differences between the ASR-X and ASR-X Pro. Let's answer the question,

"Why is the X better than the other groove boxes on the market?"

Specifically, let's look at the difference between the X family and the Akai MPC-2000 or Roland SP-808? My opinion is that the Akai piece has a great sequencer. The sequencer timing is good. The MPC falls short beyond having a good sequencer. The MPC-2000 does not have built-in sounds nor expansion board technology. The effects are not as good as Ensoniq's either (Ensoniq has a custom effects chip). By the way, the effects are an extra option on the MPC. Yes, they charge you extra for the effects. So, overall, I would have to say that the ASR-X is better simply because you get more than just a sequencer and sampler. The X is a sampler, 16-track sequencer, synthesizer tone module and an effects module. It is an all-purpose musical tool.

ASR-X versus the SP-808

At the NAMM show I heard the SP-808 and thought to myself, "This is the coolest thing in the world." NOT! I started to listen to what was really happening in the performance and I found that it was just a good selection of sampled drum loops and musical loops. To me, the SP-808's downfall was the amount of polyphony: 8 notes. To me, that says that the Roland piece is not a true musical instrument. It is only good for triggering a maximum of 8 sounds. The X has 32 notes of polyphony. Again, real music created by real people is the idea. If you want to use the X to trigger just a few loops, then go ahead. You can still achieve the same results as with the SP-808. If you grow beyond that point, and you will, then the X can continue to grow with you and accommodate you.

That's it! Now you know. Both the ASR-X and ASR-X Pro are wonderful works of engineering art. They both allow for the effortless creation of the music that we hear on television, the radio, movies, commercials and even the Internet and video games. All sorts of people are using these masterful pieces. For example, I even heard ASR-X sounds on Janet Jackson's *Velvet Rope* CD and on some shows on a cable television network called BET. You need one if you want to be current; the X is a must.

You can be very creative with the sounds, sampling and resampling capabilities of the ASR-X or ASR-X Pro. They both have 2 Meg of great internal sounds. The internal sound palette is even greater (24 Meg greater) when an EXP-3 has been added. Don't forget that you can use the ASR/EPS, Roland S-700 and Akai S-1000/1100 sound libraries. You still have to remember that sounds for a sampler are endless, simply because you can sample. Start sampling from CD's like the one that came with the X's as well you can purchase Ensoniq's CDX-2 and CDX-3 audio sample CD's. Both X's have great effects and a 16-track sequencer. Use the info you just learned to answer the questions at the beginning of this article. I am sure you will be able to decide what can work for you now.

As always, be cool, be funky, make music, think Emu-Ensoniq! ▬

Bio: *Eric Montgomery has written demos for Ensoniq products and Christian Music projects. Eric is now working on his next CD and enjoying that thing called life!*

1 + 1 = 11

CV Pedal Tips

Joe Travo

Presented here are two more tips to go with the article, *"9 1/2 Tips for Playing the VFX Live."* (Issue #149.) These two tips deal with the CV pedal, an integral part of the expressiveness of the VFX — and most other synths, too. "A whole article on the CV pedal?" Yes indeed. Anyone who uses organ patches, or strings, or even those ana-digi-wah-wah-trans-sweep-synth-waves knows how important this accessory is, and having to do without it really cramps one's style.

These two tips (1 + 1) will allow you to take your CV pedal to "11" — just like Spinal Tap. These two tips resulted from my trusty CV pedal finally giving out on me, after ten years of faithful service. I guess that set-up and tear-down, four to eight times weekly, every week for ten years finally took its toll, because one night (at rehearsal, luckily) my VFX wouldn't make a sound. All the lights were on, the connections checked out okay, and my amp was working, so I started unplugging pedals, and sure enough, when I pulled the CV pedal, everything worked fine, except I had to control my volume with velocity pressure.

TIP #1

I don't know if you've ever taken apart your CV pedal, but it's a pretty simple assembly, consisting of the pedal assembly itself, a 10K pot, the gear drive that opens and closes the pot, and the TRS (tip/ring/sleeve) plug (and cable) that plugs into the back of the keyboard. I needed the pedal in two nights for a big dance we were playing, and didn't want to buy a new one if I could avoid it, so I figured I'd take it apart and see if I could fix it. (I was hoping that there wasn't an internal problem with the CV jack on the VFX.)

Anyway, I figure it's got to be one of three things, so, in this order, I pulled out my trusty multi-meter and checked:

1. The gear drive: NOPE (I just made sure this wasn't broken, and that the adjustable doohickey was providing the proper tension on the gears, then cleaned out the accumulated rat hairs and unidentified detritus and took the rest of the assembly apart, including disconnecting the cable from the pot.)

2. The 10K pot: NOPE

3. a. The TRS plug: YEP

b. The cable connecting the TRS plug to the pedal: YEP

I had isolated the problem (a short circuit) in either the TRS plug or the cable connector, but which one? At this point I figured that the 3,000 or so times I had plugged and unplugged the unit was the cause. Rather than take a chance and do a lot of cutting and soldering without knowing exactly where the problem was, I figured I'd just replace the entire cable and plug assembly.

Now, as always happens with these situations, it was about 10:30 p.m. when I finally figured this out, and my local electronics hut was closed for the night, so it was time to dig out the parts box. I had a couple of TRS plugs, but no 3-conductor cable. Then I noticed an old headphone extension cable that I didn't use anymore because it had a faulty female jack. I metered it (after removing the female jack) and it came up fine, no shorts at all. I had marked the tip/ring/sleeve connections on the pot (something I highly recommend), so it was a simple matter to hook up the new cable. After I had desoldered the old connections and re-soldered the new ones, I used shrink wrap to solidify and insulate these connections. This is a Very Good Idea with units like this that take a lot of abuse. (Remember, this is one of the parts that you control with your FOOT.) Hooked everything back up, and it works like a charm. As an added bonus, the new cable is a telephone-type coiled unit, so there's not much pressure on the plug when I move the pedal around, and I can move it further from the keyboard if needed. Looks cool, too.

TIP #2

Ever need more volume, but your amp's not up to it? The solution may be right under your nose, or more specifically, your foot. This idea came to me one day when I was working on my Hammond M3 organ. There's a screw on the back of the (built-in) amp on the organ that's marked "PEDAL SENSITIVITY." Turning this screw counterclockwise changes the range of the built-in pot that responds to the "swell" pedal, so that when the pedal is completely "up" (or back) no sound is produced. When the pedal is "down" or forward, maximum volume is produced, but, as we are about to see, "maximum" is a relative term.

Turning this screw clockwise has the inverse effect, so that although the "up" pedal position now produces a very low volume of sound, the "down" position is now louder than it was before. My guess is that the reason for this is that the clockwise turning of the screw allows the pot to open more, up to "11," as it were, producing more volume.

What's this got to do with the VFX and the CV pedal, you ask? Well, the pedal set-up is basically the same concept as with the Hammond. The 10k pot in the CV pedal takes the control voltage that the keyboard puts out, and returns whatever portion of it the partially (or fully) open pot is letting through, thereby controlling the volume. While repairing the CV pedal, I manipulated the pot by hand, and discovered that it wasn't opening all the way when controlled by the gears in the pedal. I changed the way the gear lever and the gear itself mesh, moving it by a factor of one gear tooth, and put everything back together.

Now, with the pedal in the full "down" position, this gave me about as much more volume as turning my amp up by one digit (like from 10 to 11) does. Of course, it also changed the volume in the full "up" position, so that the keyboard still produces some volume with the pedal completely "up." However, since the only time my keyboard is ever completely silent is when my hands aren't on the keys, I figure it's a beneficial tradeoff. In addition to extra volume in the VFX, this also gives me more volume in the two MIDI sound modules that I control with the VFX.

I hope that your CV pedal never goes down at a critical time, but if it does, remember that in spite of what you learned in Mrs. Grundy's math class, one plus one does equal eleven, and crank it up. ▬

Bio: *Joe Travo (still the LizardMan) lives in Visalia, which is in Central California, where he continues to play keyboards with AUGUST, a Latin/funk band, whose CD, "Then & Now" is doing well. He also plays with a blues/rock band (formerly SUSHI BLUES) that recently played a benefit for "Critter Creek," a wild animal hospital. For some reason, the animals seemed frightened whenever he was nearby.*

Re-Sampling a Drum Kit on the ASR-10

John Heath

First let's start out by using the sample patch Stereo Drums which can be found on CDR4 or within the ASR in box samples. Load the sample Stereo Drums. The sample will have a hall reverb effect. Let's turn off the effect by pressing the effect button and then press the down arrow until you get to no effect. Now hit any key and you should get a dry effect.

Select the A1 key which is the Kick-Drum. Press the sample source select button and move the cursor under INPUT-DRY and then press up arrow key until the display reads MAIN-OUT. Now select the FX button. We want to send the KICK-DRUM though the reverb effect, which is ROM 02.

Strike the A1 button to demo the sound. Now the KICK-DRUM should be coming through the reverb effect. Press the YES button and choose instrument #2. In order to get a good sample, adjust your volume on the ASR all the way up and adjust the sample input level button. When you get a good signal, select the Yes button then strike A1 key, which will then begin sampling. Then strike the NO button to stop sample time. Press the middle, C3, key as your root key.

Now strike the C3 key again to hear your new re-sampled KICK-DRUM. Neato, yes?

Now go back to the main instrument button #1. We're going to send the SNARE-DRUM through a DELAY effect #5.

Select sample source select button, press YES, and then select your (sampled instrument #2). Strike the YES button. Select key A1 for our SNARE-DRUM sound and adjust sample rate and then select YES button. Remember to hold the A1 key down until the sound is completely finished in the DELAY effect cycle. This will give a good sample.

Select the NO button and use D3 for the root key. Now let's add the HI-HAT. Remember to go back to your host sample in instrument #1. We'll use the F2 for our HI-HAT sound. Select the effect button and use #14 which is the SMALL ROOM effect. Select sample source button, hit YES button, select your sampled instrument #2, which is receiving the re-sampled information. Select the YES button again, then strike the F2 key which will trigger sample. Once again press the NO button to stop sampling. Let's use the root key E3.

Now you should have a re-sampled Drum Kit. At C3 through E3. Select the edit button, then the instrument button continually until you get to the UNNAMED INST page. Then use the arrow keys to select letters for the name of your new re-sampled instrument.

When you are done, press the instrument button until you get to the KEY RANGE page. Here you want to select the key range of your sampled instrument. Select C3 for the Low range and E3 for the Hi range and then select edit button. Now your kit covers ranges C3 through E3. All other keys will be silent.

Remember, you can use any effect that you like. Happy re-sampling and don't forget to truncate. This is also a great tool in creating vocal backgrounds. ▬

Bio: *John Heath can be found at JYH30@aol.com.*

eTE — A Faster, Cheaper Emu

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HACKER BASEMENT TAPES — *Steve Vincent*

Choose You & ICONGO

Captain Charismatic (Jim Langlois)

CDs: *"Choose You"* (c) 1998 Mighty Kids Music; *"ICONGO"* (c) 1998 Mighty Kids Music.
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Equipment: Ensoniq TS-12, D-Drums, Mitsubishi 32 track digital recorder, ProTools III.

I know I've used this anecdote in a previous article, but it fits here again:

Once upon a time when I was in grad school, I found myself in a lecture hall awaiting an address by an elderly and erudite linguistic scholar. However, instead of introducing his speech verbally, he pulled out a slide-whistle and played a few notes, modulating the pitch up and down, with starts and stops that emulated human speech. I thought, "This poor old guy has finally gone over the edge; he's wacko! This should be fun..." He would play a few notes on the slide whistle, then speak a sentence in his scholarly English. It didn't take long before we got it: What he played on the slide-whistle was the same as what he spoke verbally in the following sentence, only without the words; he was emulating on his instrument the pitch and linearity of his sentences. He ended his introduction with the statement (following, of course, the slide-whistle version), "CONTEXT IS EVERYTHING." This was the main point of his address. In linguistics, the understanding of language, context is everything. We under-

stood what he was wordlessly saying on the slide-whistle, because the immediately-following context gave us the verbal "key" to his strange noodlings.

Context is everything. I had to keep this in mind constantly as I listened to Captain Charismatic's two CD's, *"Choose You"* and *"ICONGO,"* because outside the context of the artist's intended audience, this would be a strange project indeed, beginning with the CD cover photos: a guy dressed in a middle-eastern tyrant's military uniform of gold lame and a red beret? This immediately conjured images of Weird Al Yankovich doing a caricature of Saddam. So what is the context of Captain Charismatic's musical offerings? He apparently is a man of the cloth (and I don't mean gold lame), an evangelical Christian with an outreach ministry to children. Judging by the photos in the CD liners, he conducts meetings or rallies for children, giving them the gospel in his unique theatrical way. His approach seems to be a "warfare against the devil" theme, thus explaining his military get-up and "special forces mission" flavor of some of his lyrics. An action hero for Jesus.

Who is Captain Charismatic? Quoting from his website (www.mightykid.com): *"Captain Charismatic is anointed by God to share the gospel in a very simple, easy to understand, and compelling manner. God gave him this gift when he called him into the ministry almost 20 years ago, because He planned to use him to minister Jesus to children, and hope to our generation. His real name is Jim Langlois (pronounced Lang-wah, it's French!). For the past 16 years, Jim has served as the children's director at Faith Landmarks Ministries (FLM) in Richmond, Virginia. The children know him as Captain Charismatic. Captain Charismatic "shines" with the joy of the Lord and children are drawn by his humorous, easy and friendly manner."*

Captain Charismatic (Jim Langlois) explains in his accompanying letter that these two CD's are really one project; it just blossomed into a two-CD set because he decided to include instrumental versions of most of the tracks. He never explains why he did this, but I would guess that he envisions his young audience (actually their parents) buying these CD's at one of his rallies, taking them home, and after listening to his vocal tracks, they can sing along (or more accurately, "speak" along) karaoke style to the instrumental tracks. At any rate, these two CD's contain 12 different tunes.

So what does Captain Charismatic sound like? He sounds like a youth pastor with excellent MIDI and digital recording gear, who is using his gear and talents to create songs that will challenge his young followers to follow God, not the devil. His musical style is mostly upbeat pop, often with a slight latin or mildly reggae feel, with spoken-word (vs. sung) vocals in a white-bread pseudo-rap, conversational style. The engineering on this project is superb. Compositional, lyrical, conceptual and production critique will follow. But to get a feel for Jim's music, let's listen to a few tracks:

Choose You — The title track to the *"Choose You"* CD is in what I would call an "Amy Grant" style: synth oriented pop, with lots of major sixth chords. As mentioned above, Jim speaks, does not sing, his lyrics. Perhaps this is because he is, after all, a preacher; or maybe he can't sing as well as he speaks. At any rate, one big plus for this approach: his message is crystal clear and impossible to misunderstand. On this entire project, the percussion programming is excellent; Jim's primary musical identity is apparently "Drummer" (something us non-drummers could never understand... just kidding), as evidenced by the photo of Jim sitting behind his kit surrounded by kids wearing red berets. Usually his percussion expertise works in his favor, lending a clear, catchy, danceable beat to his songs, great for children's music; but once in awhile his rhythms get a bit complex or lost. I suppose every musician wants to strut his or her stuff every now and again. This track is a long (6:14) admonition to "choose" to serve the Lord. I can't help but scratch my head a bit at the double-bind here: Captain Charismatic spends over six minutes pointing out the "correct" choice, over and over commanding his audience to "choose" in an authoritative voice. Where is the choice?

Yeah Jesus — Latin percussion lends excitement to this call-and-response tune where one can envision the Captain getting his kids to yell the "Yeah Jesus" part, while he gives the answering oracles. Anyone who saw Robert Duvall's *"The Apostle"* will recognize this Sunday meetin' style. Jim stretches out with some really nice drum solo breaks, which he calls a "live drum solo" in his liner notes, playing DDrums and Paiste cymbals.

Icongo — The meaning of this title-track word becomes clear once the lyrics begin: it's really the phrase "I can go," that is, the devout follower "can go" and preach the gospel. (Apparently "Icongo" would be the third-world accentuation, or else this is an example of the Captain's speaking in tongues.) This song focuses on a mission, challenging the young listener to be a missionary preaching against evil. The ethnic percussion lends rather a Central American intelligence mission feeling of urgency.

My Shepherd — Now we know why Captain Charismatic speaks his lyrics: he sings on this one. Mercifully, his voice is buried in the mix with a bunch of kids and some female vocalists. Actually, his singing voice is not unpleasant, but he apparently recognizes it's best used in his spoken-word style. The lyrics are straight from the familiar 23rd Psalm, and are presented in a sing-songy church chorus fashion.

Now that you've had a sampling of the Captain's music, it's wringer time. I've divided my critique into different categories; first...

Engineering: This two-CD project has been flawlessly engineered. The digital domain yields pristine sonic outcomes, and the Ensoniq gear used by Jim shines with its broad sonic palette. The instruments are well balanced in the mix, EQ is faultless, and effects are used transparently and sparingly, leaving the central message of the gospel clearly front and center. Once in a while I thought my speakers were distorting from too much low-frequency content, but when I lowered the volume the distortion seemed to be part of the actual bass patches used. This would not be my choice of a bass sound. Otherwise, two enthusiastic thumbs up for engineering.

Production: "Production" is distinct from engineering in that production focuses on the musical choices made, versus the tracking/mixing choices made. On the positive side, I think Jim highlights his strengths by using "spoken word" vocalizations rather than singing (the exception being on *"My Shepherd,"* as noted above). He also has produced some very excellent percussion tracks which keep his music awash in forward momentum, which I would imagine is important when trying to keep the attention of a few hundred middle-school kids. The female background vocals (Nicole Carpenter, Charlotte Humerickhouse, Licia Spiers) are very cool, adding a classy element (not to mention some actual singing) to these tracks. On the "negative" side of production, I felt that most of the song intros were too long, some as long as a minute or more before the lyrics begin. For kids, this is a long time to wait. For adults, too, now that I think of it. Perhaps this is to give Captain Charismatic time at the beginning of each song to preach to his audience when doing a live show. Also, the chord voicings used by Jim could use a bit more variation; there is a pre-

ponderance of major sixth chords on tine piano. Some different patches at least would help.

Composition/Lyrics: Given Captain Charismatic's conservative evangelical charismatic church context, the lyrics he has chosen fit well. However, I found them to be run-on sentences, often without rhyme or poetry, forced into a musical context as a variation on preaching, and not particularly pleasant listening. As a communication device, Jim's lyrical and compositional approach uses more group hypnosis than poetic suggestion in order to speak to his listeners. It is the difference between art and manipulation; and I'm not necessarily using the word "manipulation" in a negative sense. I have given similar criticism to other religious projects in the past: the lyrics are believed to be given directly by God, so they are outside the realm of legitimate critique by us lowly humans. But apparently the writers of far more ancient prophecy did not throw out the aesthetic realm when penning their works: the writings attributed to David, Moses, Solomon, Daniel, and countless others in biblical history alone, established the pinnacle of art and poetry. Of course, one would have to read ancient Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek to appreciate the magnificence of their writings. Perhaps God has thrown out his/her love for beautiful and artistic use of language in these latter days. It sure makes a case for sticking with the instrumentals.

Concept/Intent: Jim is obviously an established Christian youth worker in Richmond, Virginia, who appears to have a sincere wish to lead young people into a belief system that will enrich their lives. However, if I were a parent sending my child to one of his rallies, and all I had to go on were these two CD's, I would have a couple of concerns: One, the authoritarian nature of this message and approach. It feels a bit "brain-washy" to me. Two, the focus on "the devil" as being the source of anything and everything bad. This shifts the spotlight away from personal responsibility for actions, and presents a dualistic and oversimplistic worldview in which "evil" is anthropomorphized (or would it be "demonomorphized"?) away from real life to a concept of purely spiritual battle. I realize I am digressing into the realm of theology, but an offering like Captain Charismatic's project must withstand (or at least allow) the scrutiny of other viewpoints. Once again, inside the context of Jim's intended audience, I believe he fulfills his mission of creating a rallying-point for children of the church to share their faith. ▬

If you would like to order one (or both) these CDs, or read more about Jim's ministry (or how to speak in tongues), visit his website at www.mightykid.com.

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

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

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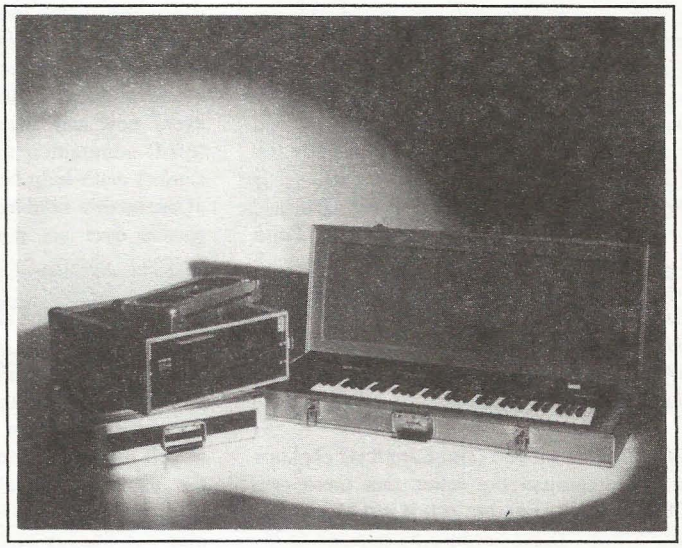

Shown: 4-space rack with EPS-16 PLUS module, 2-space rack, Eagle-I VFX-sd case

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Letters for The Interface may be sent to any of the following addresses:
U.S. Mail - The Interface, Transoniq, 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 –

I've never had this problem before: I'm working on a relatively small song (42 Blocks originally) when the **ASR** goes "medieval" on me. I try saving my "Song and Sequencer" data to a few note changes I made when the file balloons to a ridiculous 472 blocks. As it saves it begins asking for multiple disks, so I put in one, then 2, then 3, then 4, THEN 5! I'm not using any audio tracks so I know something is wrong and I quit the procedure. Each disk shows that the sequence file is hogging up 3172 blocks!!!! I don't get it. Any thoughts? I've tried re-saving multiple times without success. Thankfully, I have the original song on another disk but I made some crucial changes I wanted to save.

Jo-L of VeerChasm
VeerChasm@aol.com

[PF – Jo-L: Check out Rubber Chicken's website for details on this issue at http://www.soundcentral.com/~chickeneps/, click on the "Ensoniq Tips," and then check the "Sequences that are way too large" article. Sounds mysteriously like the "Incredible Growing Sequence" issue of the EPS and 16+. The solution is to recompile the sequences into a song, but the article/tip makes it a lot clearer...]

TH –

Forgive me for possibly stating the obvious, but Peter Heim asked (Issue 158) how to change patch selects on the **ASR-10 Rack** when programming sounds, and Pat pointed out that incoming continuous controller #70 messages would indeed do this. But why not just press Edit-Instrument and go to the PATCH SELECT page? By using the Up and Down arrows, you can switch between LIVE (i.e. whatever CC#70 message is being received at the time) and any of the four patch selects. It's certainly not as convenient as those dedicated patch buttons, but it does what Peter is looking for.

Sam Mims
Syntaur Productions

[PF – And yet another way...

A programmable MIDI box like a Peavey PC1600, a Yamaha MEP-5, a Kawai MX-16 (or any number of equivalents) will generate patch selects on the push of a button as well...]

[Peter C Heim (pch7@interport.net) – Cool! Never saw that page before – thanks. Someone also emailed me to tell me (accurately) that there's a patch select jack on the back for a pedal input – guess I didn't look close enough (blush).]

Dear Ensoniq Hacker,

Do you know how to get a locking cover for the **ZR-76** Music Workstation and/or a dust cover? We purchased the Workstation for our church and need to leave it out so people can use it, but would like to protect it.

Thank you,
Paul Hogue
Director
phogue@zoomnet.net

[PF – Paul: I don't know if Ensoniq makes a locking cover, but it's probably worth a call to 610.647.3930 to see what recommendations they have. Dust covers are readily available: see the Hacker's "Booteeq" for info...]

[TH – It's been a little while since we've had a dust cover advertiser, but Le Cover (1-800-228-3878) used to advertise custom fit covers for Ensoniq gear. Haven't seen a locking cover – you may have to visit a hardware store and kludge something together for that.]

[WARNERPRD@aol.com – Paul: I own a 76 also. I purchased 3 forms of protection for mine. The first is a stretchable nylon type dust cover available at most music instrument stores here in Seattle, should be the same in your area. The second is a soft cover gig bag, and I use one that is designed for an 88-key size to do light local travel with the dust cover on also. The third is a hard case made by SKB corporation and I use this for out-of-town travel. The 76 has to fit in a hard case for an 88-key size also because of the units thickness. If you ever get a hard case, be prepared to have a few strong people to carry it loaded. Once you put the 76 in the case, you could break the handles off trying to lift it by yourself, or worse hurt yourself. But if you are leaving it set up on stage where you worship, the stretchable dust cover works great. If the need arises, you can e-mail me directly if you have questions or need help in the ZR's use for I use mine also in the same arena as you. Kyle, WARNERPRD@aol.com]

Dear Transoniq Hacker,

I have an Ensoniq **EPS** that I am trying to hook up to my PC to use with a MIDI sequencing program. The problem is, the instant I hook the cable up to the MIDI In jack, the keyboard says "Error 144, Reboot?" This happens even if I plug in the cable after the keyboard has calibrated, but *not* if the MIDI cable is not also hooked up to the PC. (If it matters, I have the latest OS and EProms, and my EPS is hooked up to an external SCSI drive via a third-party adapter.) Have you seen this problem before? Please help!!

Stuart,
tebret@hotmail.com

[PF – Stuart: Sounds as if the computer is sending out MIDI data faster than the EPS can deal with it, as Error 144 is a MIDI Buffer Overflow. Ensure whatever application or utility is capturing the port on startup isn't sending out sysex messages or active sensing. Might be a problem with the EPS, but since it doesn't do it until you cable up to the computer I'd point the accusing finger at the PC. Check your MIDI configuration in both the Device Manager AND your sequencer application. Chances are the problem resides there.

The "third party" SCSI adapter you reference raises an eyebrow. Do you mean SCSI interface or SCSI cable? Ensoniq notes erratic operation with SCSI interfaces other than the genuine Ensoniq variety.]

TH –

You have probably answered this question a thousand times, but I'm new at this: Is there a patch map available that would allow the Ensoniq **VFX Synth** to play general MIDI sequences generated on a MAC computer? How do I get a copy of this patch map? The preset setup I have plays the sequences but the instrument sounds are all wrong.

Gary L Weeks
gweeks@ssac.com

[PF – Gary: In a word, no, but it really depends on what sequencing application you're using. FreeMIDI (from MOTU) has a VFX patchmap available (or maybe it's a Unisyn profile: I've slept since then). OMS and Opcode do not...

The issue here is patch numbers, as the GM specs 128 locations. As the VFX holds only two banks of 60, it falls a bit short, even when using

bank selects. Theoretically, you could map VFX sounds into patch locations that coincide with GM patch selects for the first 60 sounds, but still you'd have to send a bank select for patches 61-120 in order to call them up. It's SOOO much work I'd have to say no, but you might find a few attempts at such at www.soundcentral.com and other sites.

And we haven't even addressed the GM drum map issue...]

TH –

My name is Gene Keen, I'm the musical director for *The Mickey Finn Show*. I use several Ensoniq keyboards, including a **TS-12**. I'm trying to locate a keypad, or action for my TS-12. It's a 76 key weighted Fatar action, and at the moment they are BACK ORDERED from Italy. I don't want to send my keyboard back to the factory, as I do most of the maintenance work myself and don't want to be without my instrument. I need to find a service center willing to sell/exchange a keypad for me. Believe it or not, Las Vegas HAS NO SERVICE CENTER! Thanks for any help.

Gene Keen
Las Vegas, NV
genekeen+AEA-msn.com
gkeen+AEA-juno.com

[PF – Gene: Not surprising. A LOTTA people are flaming Fatar. It appears their name-branded keyboard controllers (StudioLogic) are failing at an alarming rate, so it's not surprising anyone else is having problems. The only relief I can offer is to contact Ensoniq directly at 610.647.3930 and ask what the deal is...]

[Eric Montgomery (Emu-Ensoniq) – Ensoniq has the TS-12 keyboard assembly in stock. As everyone knows, it is Ensoniq's policy to sell parts to authorized service centers only. Listed below are two service centers that can service the unit.]

Pro Music & Drum
608 Maryland Pkwy
Las Vegas NV
702-382-9141

Starsound Audio
2679 Oddie Blvd.
Reno NV
702-331-1010

TH –

I recently bought a used **DP/4** for my studio, and was totally pleased to discover the excellent guitar FX! I am wondering if any readers use the DP/4 regularly with a live guitar rig, and what patches and equipment you use: direct to the house, out to a Fender amp, other stomp boxes patched in. I would appreciate any emailed responses, or better yet print the responses here in the Interface for all to enjoy...

Thanks.
Steve Vincent
vincents@harbornet.com>

[Eric Montgomery (Emu-Ensoniq) – I don't use a guitar amp. I always go direct. I enjoy using the Plate and Hall reverbs with a compressor (first in the chain) on acoustic guitar. If I am looking for distortion I always use a speaker algo to give the sound some guts. Can't tell you about any presets because I program my own presets.]

Hey TH,

I know this may sound like a very stupid question who have all the latest cool sampling equipment, but here goes: I have an **MR-RACK** as well as some other sound modules like the JV-1080,etc. I love all the sounds – especially the MR so why do I need to get a sampler? Are there any advantages besides types of sounds available, ie: better fidelity, effects, etc., on samplers vs. sound modules? I do home recording as a hobby, but have a CD coming out next year, so I do want pro quality sound.

Thanks,
R. Williams.
clarusrw@cts.com.

[PF – RWilliams: Samplers are the most esoteric of audio modules, in that you have TOTAL control of the waveform, the wavetable, etc. The initial affection for samplers was their ability to "sample" any sound, so they were used as "Polaroid" cameras to take snapshots of audio sounds that didn't exist in keyboard instruments (or didn't sound very good in existing keyboard instruments, like an accurate piano sound), and so they became VERY prized instruments...

Nowadays, samplers are used to take these "snapshots," where they are later collected with other samples and burned into a ROM, where this type of instrument is termed a "wavetable" synth. Inevitably, some people are happy with these "built-in" sounds, some are not and demand to make their own "ultimate" instruments by sampling it themselves...

Samplers are unusual instruments in that they make no sound of their own until waves are loaded into them...]

Greetings all!

I'm trying to burn a CD from my **ASR** HD and need to know the specifics. If it's at all possible. I'm using a Mac 604e/System 8, EPSm, & Toast 3.5.2.

It would seem that a straightforward "SCSI copy" or "Disk Image" would be the way to do it, but the Mac doesn't like EPS/ASR disks. I've tried mounting the disk in EPSm and switching to Toast but EPSm won't allow you to do that. Also, just having EPSm running stops the Mac from spitting the ASR disk out but Toast doesn't recognize that there is a disk at that SCSI ID. All advice greatly appreciated.

Thanks,
C.M.Uberti
evening@grover.ulster.net

[PF – CM: Helpful tips can be found at http://www.soundcentral.com/~chickeneps/. Check out the "Ensoniq Tips" section. Poses an interesting topic – I've never tried to burn an Ensoniq CD as they're so slow compared to a HDD. Readers?]

[Kare Rodmalm (kare.rodmalm@mailbox.swipnet.se) – Hi,

I just saw C.M. Uberti's question about burning Ensoniq-format CD's on a Mac. Maybe this has already been answered, but I've successfully burnt a number of Ensoniq CD's using pretty much the same hard- and software as C.M. I use a d2 540 MB removable drive which I turn on before booting the Mac (no cartridge in the drive). I then launch EPSm and put the Ensoniq-format cartridge in the d2 drive. When the drive has spun up I launch Toast and choose "SCSI copy." Toast has no problem finding the d2 drive on the external bus and the CD's work just fine with my ASR-10. I also tried setting it up the way you would do it with a fixed drive, i.e. mount the drive in EPSm and then launch Toast (I'm not sure what C.M. means by EPSm not allowing you to do this). Again, Toast had no problem finding the drive on bus 1. Hope you get it all sorted out.]

Hey,

Does anyone have a schematic for the **SQ-1** keyboard? If so, please let me know – or if you can help me identify a resistor.

Thank you,
Mike
MrWiggly13@aol.com

[PF – Mike: Nope – Ensoniq's the only one who has these. Try an Authorized Service Center and see if their tech has one in the shop to compare it to.]

Hi,

EPS Sound Output is hosed?

I have an EPS Classic (4x expanded) which I foolishly let someone touch that powered it up while my back was turned to my PC playing a

song on Cakewalk Pro Audio 6.0. Reason for the history: By the time I lurched for it; I was too late. The MIDI data seems to have affected something that gives me a lot of static no matter what Instrument I load. I can faintly hear the instrument behind the obnoxious noise and every other function seems to work okay. I tried sending a "All Notes Off" sysex message but no luck. I also tried sampling and the display shows input volume overloading before I sample (it will sample the selection faintly under the noise).

I keep my screwdriver away from precious objects so I just would like to know if there is some (before OS 2.49 disk power up) reset or trick I don't know about before I take it to my friendly Bench Charmer? I'm not feeling well without it...

Thanx
Larry Tillman
ltillman@suninternet.com or tillmanL@aol.com

[PF – Larry: Take it to your bench charmer immediately. Do not turn it on again, do not try to charm it yourself. This could be something as simple as a bad op amp or output device: it could be something as fatal as a bad DOC chip. In any case, call 911 and get it looked at before something irreparable takes it down for the count. Make sure your tech has the EPS schematic set. If he doesn't, find a dealer who DOES and take your pet to him instead. You want a knowledgeable Ensoniq tech WITH the EPS schematic set to look at it at the component level, rather than blindly noting it's a logic board failure and telling you that they aren't available anymore...]

TH –

I have an Ensoniq **EPS**. It seems that when it heats up after an hour or two it completely freezes up or flips out. Have you heard about this before?

Chris O. in Austin.
SLpNgSoUl@aol.com

[PF – Chris: Heat IS the enemy. A fully expanded EPS (with 4X, SCSI, OEX-8) can draw enough juice from the power supply in the EPS to almost physically BURN the skin if you touch the heat sink for very long. And, when the power supply gets hot, its performance and behavior become non-linear (as in ANY electronic circuit)...

Heat increases resistance, which in turn generates more heat, which in turn generates more resistance, which generates more heat, ad infinitum. If the power supply gets hot, voltages it generates fluctuate, which is fatal for digital circuitry. I'd recommend two things here:

Simply buy a fan and aim it at the external heat sink of your EPS. This will drop its operating temperature a good 20-30 degrees, which will stop the mad cow disease your EPS is experiencing. The other option is to have your Friendly Ensoniq Tech rebuild your power supply. I wrote an article in the Hacker YEARS ago about replacing the 5 and 12 volt regulators (and some other technical-ese), but your Ensoniq tech can replace the power supply with a fresh one for around $60 and labor. I personally recommend the latter, as a new power supply will maintain a more constant voltage than your 10-year old one, and, if you're in the studio, a noisy fan is NOT an option...]

[MAGI43@aol.com – Yes my EPS-16+ isn't crazy about temperature extremes either. Too hot or too cold and I get some very undesirable sounds and actions. If it's too hot or cold for you it is most likely getting in the range where the EPS will start to get ugly.]

[SLpNgSoUl@aol.com – Thank you for your response to my letter.

Being a technician that never has time to work on my own equipment, I suspected a heat problem and wanted to go into it with some circuit chiller spray and figure out what component was overheating. Although I did need some assurance from some experienced Ensoniq personnel. Is it possible to get the schematics for the Ensoniq EPS? I would feel a lot more comfortable with a schematic than without.

I bought a CD ROM with hundreds of already looped sounds for samplers. The only problem was that I had no computer access until recently, and that left me sampling the CD as an audio CD, leaving the sounds unlooped. Now that I do have access I would like to know how I can transfer the CD ROM over to my Ensoniq. I heard somewhere that I need to purchase some type of connection. Are these CD ROMs with already looped sounds a way to cheat in a way? Am I taking the fun out of learning how to loop my own sounds? Where would unlooped sounds for me to practice with come from?]

[PF – Schematics are available, but only to Authorized Ensoniq Service Centers. Check with your dealer to see if he's purchased the schematic set of obsolete Ensoniq Keyboards. Maybe he'll let you look at them. Most heat-related issues center around the power supply. I'd suggest a zero residue cleaner on all contact points/cables, etc., and cramolyn (if you have access to it). Replace the regulators, rectifiers and power supply caps in the power supply (or have your Ensoniq Dealer order you a replacement for around $60), as these components get hit pretty hard every time you turn your EPS on. No parts in the PS that you probably aren't already familiar with if you've done tech work...

And I'd highly recommend you loop those

Transoniq-Net
HELP WITH QUESTIONS

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

All Ensoniq Gear – Ensoniq Customer Service. 10:00 am to noon, 1:00 pm to 4:30 pm EST Monday to Friday. 610-647-3930. Ensoniq's web site (www.ensoniq.com) can also be used to retrieve specs, OS info, hard-drive info, and the like.

All Emu Gear – Emu Customer Service. 8:00 am to 5:00 pm, west coast time, Monday to Friday. 831-438-1921.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

EPS, EPS-16 PLUS, & ASR-10 Questions – Garth Hjelte. Rubber Chicken Software. Call anytime. If message, 24-hour callback. (320) 235-9798. Email: chickenEPS@willmar.com.

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

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

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

sounds yourself. The EPS makes it VERY easy to loop stuff, and as the EPS doesn't recognize CDROM mechanisms, it's more work than necessary to find a way to loop them on your computer and then xfer them over to the EPS. Besides, you'll learn a lot more about the EPS this way...]

[SLpNgSoUl@aol.com – I bought my EPS at a pawn shop and all it came with was a power cord. I was lucky enough to find an OS disk at a music store. What does a brand new EPS come equipped with? What do I need to connect a computer to my EPS?]

[PF – SLpNgSoUl: Answers, in order:

(1) The EPS shipped with the OS Disk, a set of 7 "Essential" sound disks, the Musician's Manual, the EPS Sampling Guide, and a sustain footswitch. All are available from Ensoniq at www.ensoniq.com. You'll need to call them via voice to order all these "missing" parts.

(2) A MIDI-to-gameport adapter cable (if your 'puter has a soundcard), or a MIDI cable if your 'puter has a MIDI interface...]

Hullo,

I'm an ex ASR-10 user and about six months ago I bought an **ASR-X**. Although I'm still on the operating system just before 2.5, I've read what it does, i.e time stretching etc, and is it me or is this machine largely shortsighted? I admit I love the 44.1 kHz effects, the stepped LFOs and the other new features but am I blind?

How can there be no wave layers, no synthesize loop function, no X-fade? I mean I must really have a screw loose because I can't figure out how to save an effect!

Please don't get me wrong coz I love Ensoniq. All I really want to know is if my shoddy research before buying it has led me to inferior-editing damnation. I guess all these things can be added to the operating system in the future. Who should I email at Ensoniq to ask for the additions?

Anxious Ollie
Australia
foonggene@yahoo.com

[PF – Ollie: So you went from a Benz to a Cavalier and wonder why it feels different? I'm really not one to throw smak around here, but you didn't expect the ASR-X to be an ASR-10 rack, did you? Don't get me wrong, as the ASR-X is a fine playback device. It's just not designed to run as a full-fleged sampler like its bigger brethren. The ASR-10 was the commensurate sampling/sequencing/processing machine. The ASR-X is a groove box with limited editing features. We're comparing apples and oranges here. And you're just discovering the tradeoffs between a sampler and a sample playback device.

Then again, I think the EPS-16++ with Flash was the best thing Malvern ever did, so just shoot me...]

TH –

I would like to know if there is a utility/program that will let a Macintosh computer read and write **ASR** and EPS-16++ sample disks with the ability to view the wave samples and loop points?

Tamlyns@aol.com

[PF – Tamlyns: Alchemy. The premiere sample editor for the Macintosh. Made by Passport Systems. They're currently undergoing a reorganization, but you should be able to get with them and bag this most excellent app from them soon. Also check out EAVES from Rubber Chicken Software. I'd like to see this one myself. URL is http://www.soundcentral.com/~chickeneps...]

[Garth Hjelte (chickenEPS@willmar.com) – The above is not correct. As far as reading/writing floppies, only EPSm (http://fysmac-elg01.uio.no/eps/EPSmInfo.html) can do it. EPSm can read/write/format floppies and SCSI, and scEPSi can do SCSI. Neither Alchemy or EAVES can read/write. Alchemy supposedly can transfer wavesamples via SCSI; same with Peak. Peaks seems to be the top 'o the line editor for the Mac these days – written by former Ensoniqer, Steve Berkley.]

[PF – Au contraire, mon frere: Alchemy lets you import and export files over SCSI directly to and from the EPS/16+: once exported back to the 16+ save the instrument to floppies simply by invoking "Change Storage Device" from the Command-System pages. It's a DMA thing...

EPSm and scEPSi are NOT sample editors: viewing sample data and loop points are not possible with these utilities. But they're very useful, cost-effective shareware utilities, where Alchemy is $499. And given these prices, you can tell which is the application and which is the utility...

The real question that should have been asked is "Does your 16+ have the SCSI interface?" scEPSi is an excellent archive program (especially indispensible for backing up a disk image of that 2 Gb ASR-10 hard disk you spent 4 months building), EPSm is useful for formatting floppies and moving directories around. Alchemy is for viewing the sample and its loop data (in both 2D and Fourier analyses). If you don't have the SCSI interface on your Malvern loopbox, skip Alchemy, go directly to EPSm and scEPSi, pass go, and collect your $200...]

[Garth Hjelte (chickenEPS@willmar.com) – I was just answering the original question about reading/writing disks, which your original answer didn't address. Good clarification.]

TH –

I think that the motherboard of my **EPS** has blown out but I'm not sure. I'm getting strange numbers that will appear on the LED display when ever I press any button on the EPS and it won't load the O.S disk. If the motherboard has blown out, is there any way of replacing it? The local Ensoniq dealer won't repair it saying that Ensoniq gave up on repairing the EPS and they can't help me. I don't want to trash my sampler, can you help me?

Can you please tell me what parts are available for the EPS? I need the screws for the entire EPS board, a few LED lights, and possibly the motherboard. Please help me.

Thank you very much.
Raidan@webtv.net

[PF – Raidan: Partly true. Ensoniq no longer supports the EPS, as factory replacement parts are no longer available. All the other parts you reference (screws, LEDs, etc.) are readily available at any reputable hardware store: Radio Shack probably even has the LEDs you need. If not, you can obtain them from any electronic service facility worth a salt...

The issue here is the motherboard. Just because Ensoniq no longer has them in stock doesn't mean it can't be repaired. I've said this MANY times, and I guess I'll say it MANY more times, but when you get this kind of treatment, call an Ensoniq Service Facility that OWNS the EPS schematics. I'll quote my letter to Larry Tillman as reason why...

"Larry: Take it to your bench charmer immediately. Do not turn it on again, do not try to charm it yourself. This could be something as simple as a bad op amp or output device: it could be something as fatal as a bad DOC chip. In any case, call 911 and get it looked at before something irreparable takes it down for the count. Make sure your tech has the EPS schematic set. If he doesn't, find a dealer who DOES and take your pet to him instead. You want a knowledgeable Ensoniq tech WITH the EPS schematic set to look at it at the component level rather than blindly noting it's a logic board failure and telling you that they aren't available anymore..."]

TH –

What about the digital input for the **DP-Pro**?

Martin Pearson
Switzerland

[PF – Martin: Deceased as per Ensoniq announcement September 21, 1997, the day they officially got out of the FX business. "No plans to implement at a later time" either. Pretty shagadelic, huh?]

TH,

Is there anyone out there who knows how send from Cakewalk /V.6.00/ to Ensoniq's **MR-76** sequencer /OS 2.00/ commands to start, stop and continue the rhythm on track 10?

Any thoughts/experience would be greatly appreciated.

Edward Spyrka
espyr@radio.opole.pl

[PF – Save yourself a lotta headache and request the MR System Exclusive Specification from Malvern directly. It's free...]

Hello,

My **ASR-10** rack unit displays the message "error 129 – Reboot?" after I've recorded 60-70+ measures of one instrument/track on the sequencer. I searched the Ensoniq online knowledge base for answers and read that this error usually indicates that there is "bad sequence data." What is the cause of this? Also, am I supposed to have the option to reboot, as indicated by the wording of the message? I press "no" in order to save my work but end up losing it anyway.

My ASR-10 was serviced by Musician Select Service about 2 months ago and received a new board. Could this have anything to do with the error?

P.S. Yes, I am using O.S. 3.5.3.

Thanks,
Sean O'Donnell
sean611@yahoo.com

[PF – Sean: Yeah, that's been a joke since 1988 – there is NO option to recover from a crash other than reboot. Why Ensoniq chose a "?" is above and beyond me, other than a weird sense of ROM humor by some of the EPS software engineers...

But it's what you don't say that can hurt you here. Check your SIMMS to make sure they're properly seated: Rev 2 of the ASR mainboard MUST be populated by all 1 Mb SIMMS or all 4 MB SIMMS, so ensure you're not mixing and matching SIMMS. Also ensure all SIMMS are the same speed and configuration.

If you're not using poly-pressure on a lot of your tracks/songs, shut it off. It REALLY generates a ton of data that doesn't do a great deal unless you're deliberately using it's modulation functions. And if you're not using audio tracks shut them off as well. Your ASR will become a bunch more responsive...]

[terje.finstad@fys.uio.no – Sean: Your observations on your ASR-10 are not really indicating anything broken. All ASR-10's I've seen behave this way. Not many will experience it though since once you know about the problem, it is easy enough to stay away from problems. You crash when you try to hold a note down for more than 85 bars (in 4/4) on an empty track. It is of course unfortunate that the ASR-10 crashes, but the ASR-10 sequencer can not represent keydown events for this long in any case. Thus there is no reason to try. If you want to extend notes for that many bars, you can only do that by using the sustain pedal when recording tracks in the ASR sequencer. If you consider this in addition to Pat's good advice, you have no excuses for not continuing making great music. Terje.]

TH –

Can anyone recommend a good place to find used gear? (I've tried Rogue music.) Specifically, I'm in the market for an **ASR-10** 88-key model, and might prefer the used price. Thanks for the good help.

Peter Heim
pch7@interport.net

[Matt Savard (msavard@mwbi.org) – Try www.recycler.com and go to the music section. This is where I got my ASR-10 R for a great price!]

Gang:

Check out www.ensoniq.com again – it's been revamped again...

Pat Finnigan

Help Hacker!

After several futile efforts to have this question answered by Ensoniq-Mac computer guru Terje Finstad, I turn to the *Transoniq Hacker* community for answers.

I own a **TS-12** that doesn't have the SCSI option. I am trying to convert samples from one of the Ensoniq CD-Roms into the Ensoniq format using Terje's Mac program EPSm, but I can't figure out how to go about this daunting task from the program's documentation and the email lines from Norway have been strangely silent on this question. Anyone out there using EPSm?

You can answer me through the interface, or email me at coulson@boone.net. Any help on this subject would be greatly appreciated.

Thanks,
David Coulson
Boone, N.C.

[terje.finstad@fys.uio.no – David's line is clogged. If there is a point in getting hold of me, David can call me. There is really no conversion as such involved in your task. Save the instruments from the CD to your Mac hard disk and put them in floppy images.]

Classifieds

HARDWARE/SOFTWARE

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TH –

I have a problem using a **KS-32** with Emagic's Logic. The KS-32 doesn't respond to the different parts in Logic. It only plays one (1) sound on every MIDI channel. I think the problem could be in connection with the base channel concept in the KS-32.

numsehullet@yahoo.com

[PF – Numsehullet: Good guess, but no cigar. Set the MIDI IN mode of your KS-32 to "Multi," and press the "Edit Sequences" button. Now it's a multitimbral tone generator. Each of the 8 track buttons can play on 8 different MIDI channels (default is track # = MIDI channel #)...]

TH,

I have two questions:

1. Every time I try to hook up via MIDI or download sounds/demo from floppy, it seems to have an affect on the sounds, i.e. quality, volume, playability, etc.... For example, I recently installed a demo that I downloaded from Ensoniq's web page and after playing it successfully tried to play the keyboard later and the drums were way too loud and the keyboard sounds were barely audible. I have tried to load All Sessions from an older floppy hoping to restore the **MR's** overall quality back to its original state. This worked for a while but didn't last and after restarting the unit it seemed to help some.

2. I also have a Roland VS-880 expanded workstation that I would like to hook up via MIDI and run both the Roland and the MR-61 through my laptop. Could you recommend a suitable computer program that would help that is user friendly?

Thanks in advance for your help!!!
Steve and Gina
usin@whitemtns.com

[PF – Steve & Gina: The MR-61 "remembers" the track settings last used by the sequencer. Unless you create a new sequence to replace the old one with, or shut it off to erase the sequence in memory, those track settings will remain there. And if the demo you loaded had sounds that were loaded into Flash (and assigned to a track), the sounds that were previously loaded there are gone...

Hmmm, a user-friendly computer program? That's an oxymoron. What kind of laptop? Mac or PC? For a PC you'll need a MIDI interface and a sequencing application like Cakewalk. For a Mac you'll need a MIDI interface and a sequencing app like Performer...]

Dear sirs,

I have been using an **SQ-2** keyboard for about 4 years now, and have had trouble locating sounds for the instrument. I would like to know if there is an interface (or plans for one) that would enable the memory card slot on SQ-2 to be connected to an ISA bus PC so that samples could be loaded via CD or diskette on the computer and new sounds saved. The use of only 32k ram cards to load or save sounds is a major limitation for an otherwise excellent keyboard.

Frank G. McCarthy
babaianc@bucks.edu

[PF – Frank: No. The SQ-series is a wavetable synth, NOT a sampler. Consequently, no wave expansion is possible.]

TH –

I do a lot of live solo work on the guitar, usually without my trusty **TS-10** and the Rhythm Construction Set of drum sequences. Is there a good drum machine that has some of the TS' sequence control features – particularly footswitch start/stop and footswitch step (increment) to the next song pattern (sequence)? The low end Alesis and Boss units sound good, but I did not see the kind of footswitch controls I want.

Another question. Can any of these drum machines send MIDI to my TS-10, so that I can upload their patterns into sequences? If it is relevant, I am running the latest OS, 3.10.

In a perfect world I would go buy the new ZR-76, but I don't think I can sell that to my wife!

By the way, I have had years of excellent dealer support from Denver's Musician's Superstore/ ProSound chain. They have stuck with Ensoniq and customers through thick and thin.

Kindest regards,
Charlie
knapp@enviromgmt.com
www.enviromgmt.com

[PF – Charlie: (A) Only the Ensoniq boards allow footswitch control of the sequencer in that manner. To get an equivalent, you've got to go with a computer.

(B) I'd contact Roland and Alesis to ensure their pattern data can be routed to MIDI as well as their internal sounds.

(C) My wife isn't buying off on my ZR-76 argument, either...]

What's up,

I have an **ASR-10**, without a SCSI. I would like to know where I can find a SCSI kit in the Chicagoland area. Would I have to have it professionally installed, or can I install it myself?

Thanks,
Jazper Smith
ltdavis@midway.uchicago.edu

[PF – Jazper: Ensoniq reportedly still supports the ASR-10, so any Ensoniq Dealer in the Chicago area should be able to order it directly from Ensoniq and install it for you...]

[Jerome Miller (jerome@adept.net) – So why can't you find this on their website? (Ensoniq's.) I checked R.C. too, just EPS SCSI interface available there. I'm looking for one too. How much will I spend? I would prefer a do-it-yourself Rubber Chicken price. By the way, I'm selling my EPS-16+ (module, no SCSI).]

[PF – Jerome: Ensoniq doesn't sell the interface (or any other service parts, for that matter) to anyone but Authorized Service Centers. Hence they don't advertise it on their website for public consumption...]

TH –

I have an **SQ-1**+ that just recently had its battery go out. I imagine a lot of people are going to be going through this problem soon, so I thought I'd share my experience. I called my Ensoniq Authorized repair station and ordered the battery. I told the guy on the phone which keyboard, he said he had it, send him $24.95 and he'd send it my way... I even reiterated the model in a note I enclosed with my check. I won't mention their name, but they sent me a 3V Lithium BR 2/3 A Battery. "Oh Joy!" I thought until I pulled the cover off my SQ. There was a little BR2032 coin cell soldered to the logic board! Well, at first I went postal on the box that the new battery had come in, but then I noticed that the 2032 is also 3V. So with some wire and the trusty soldering iron, I installed that behemoth, and the SQ works fine. From what I understand, a 2/3A Lithium cell will last about *10* years, so maybe it was a blessing in disguise. So, for all you out there who are do it yourselfers, like me, keep this in mind.

Steve M.
applied@technologist.com

[PF – Steve M: This is good to know, as I've been parroting Ensoniq's line of a 2/3AA battery replacement (that's what they told me too!), so thanx for the heads up...]

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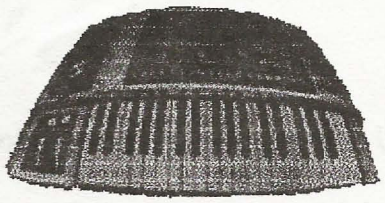
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- *Control and edit all parameters via MIDI (MD Tools, EAVES)*
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- *Special Unformatter™ can recover erased or formatted-over files*
- *Use your favorite Sample Editor to edit - including Ensoniq waves!*
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- *Works in native Windows enviroment - not DOS*

Ensoniq® MIDI-Disk Tools™..... $59.95!
MIDI parameter and disk editing - has everything listed above!

Ensoniq® Disk Tools™..... $39.95!
Floppy/SCSI disk editing and Instrument building

EAVES™ (for MacOS™)..... $59.95!
MIDI parameter editing and sample viewing for the Macintosh

WHERE CAN YOU GET ALL THIS?
by phone or fax: 1-800-8-PRO-EPS, 1-320-235-9798
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by Internet: chickenEPS@willmar.com