

TRANSONIQ HACKER

The Independent News Magazine for Ensoniq Users

ESQLIB ESQ-1 / IBM-PC Librarian

Review by Mike Klingler

FOR: ESQ-1 and IBM-PC or true compatibles
PRODUCT: ESQLIB
PRICE: \$69.00
FROM: S.N. Musser, 619 N.Park St., Allentown, PA. 18102

ESQLIB was tested for review using an IBM true compatible with 640k, 2 floppy disk drives, monochrome monitor, and Roland MPU-401 MIDI interface.

\$69.00? You have got to be kidding! Are you sure this isn't a software review for a Commodore program? This was my reaction when I was asked to review ESQLIB for the IBM-PC. \$69 is unheard of in a day and age when \$100 seems to be the standard low price setting for IBM related software. I accepted the review half-heartedly resigning myself to the fact that it would most likely be a disappointment at that price. Boy, was I wrong!

The first thing that strikes one's eye upon receiving the software is the brevity in the owners manual. 22 pages to be exact, and very well written. A description of the files is given followed by step by step installation procedures for the different formats or drive setups one might have. Upon starting the program you are warned not to turn on the ESQ-1 until the program has been successfully booted or you may experience a MIDI "loop-back" effect. I tried it both ways and the program worked fine.

The main menu screen is what you would expect. It is nicely laid out and organized into 3 groupings: Sending, Receiving, and Editing/File Directory.

In sending information to the ESQ-1 you are allowed to send individual programs (1) or a bank of internal programs (40), one sequence or all sequences, and Send Set which allows you to send both sequences and their appropriate programs (40) simultaneously. Nice!

All individual programs are sent to the ESQ-1's write program screen. From there you can write the patch to either internal or cartridge memory. (ESQLIB always addresses the internal memory of the ESQ-1. You cannot send or receive information directly to or from the cartridge.)

You may also send individual sequences or all sequences. In sending an individual sequence to the ESQ-1 it will always be loaded into the highest numbered sequence location. Sending all sequences will replace every sequence and song present in the ESQ-1, so make sure to save your work before playing with this feature!

Send Set is where the true power of ESQLIB comes to life. This is where you can send an entire set of sequences and their appropriate program banks to the ESQ-1 simultaneously. This is great for live performance. Keep in mind that you must first put your set together using the Edit Set feature. After loading in the first of your sequences/programs to the ESQ-1, the set automatically advances to the next group of sequences/programs to be loaded into the ESQ-1. Hit the space bar and off goes your second tune.... and so on. Nice!

In receiving information from the ESQ-1 you are allowed to receive one program or an entire internal program bank, and one sequence or all sequences. My only complaint

In This Issue...

MIRAGE:

Review: Softsynth <i>Jordan Scott</i>	9
Review: Mr. Wavesample <i>Jordan Scott</i>	10
Review: Leaping Lizards O.S. 3.d <i>Darwin Stearns</i>	14
Wavesamples & Wavetables <i>Duane King</i>	19

ESQ-1/ SQ-80:

Review: ESQLIB <i>Mike Klingler</i>	Cover
Review: Dark Horse <i>Rick Hall</i>	7
Review: Don Pribble's Best <i>Michael Carnes</i>	13
Steel Guitar Techniques <i>Jack Ginnever</i>	17
Hackerpatch <i>Hallstone, Mims, Contributors</i>	22

EPS:

Pending (Still)

GENERAL:

Random Notes.....	3
Hypersoniq.....	3
Ensoniq Tour Dates.....	6
Classifieds.....	21
The Interface.....	24

here is that I think it would be nice to be able to receive the set of both sequences and programs simultaneously. You can send a set, so why not be able to receive a set? Also, keep in mind that ESQ-1 will only receive from the internal memory of the ESQ-1. So if you want to receive sounds from your cartridge you must first load them into your ESQ-1's internal memory. One more thing - make sure when you're receiving one program from the ESQ-1 that you correctly position the cursor, in the ESQ-1, under the desired program or that beautiful electric piano that you thought you saved might turn into the infamous F-111 jumbo jet!

The editing portion of ESQ-1 is divided into editing either set or program banks. Editing sets is used to create or change set files. In other words, this is where you establish which sequences and programs go to the ESQ-1 in simultaneous fashion and in which order they are sent. To send the set simply go to Send Set menu and press the space bar. Simple! Inserting and deleting of existing sets is also simple and proves to be a significant time saver. Editing banks is used to create new bank files or change the patches in an already existing bank. This part of ESQ-1 seems to work fine but could use some serious re-thinking on the author's part. The edit screen is divided into two parts: the program bank file window and the clipboard window. In addition there is a copy buffer window. In editing you must copy, swap, or paste a patch one at a time to the copy buffer window. Gruelling! The audition feature is nice in that it sends a patch directly to the ESQ-1's write page so you can hear the sound. Finally, there is a list routine that displays or prints the contents of the currently highlighted program file. Beware monochrome monitor users! This feature does not work using a standard monochrome monitor.

The clipboard window is a temporary work area which contains copies of up to 120 programs. You can move information back and forth between the program bank window

and the clipboard window but it must go to the copy buffer window first. Tedious! Also, the Get routine from the clipboards screen is a bit cumbersome in that you end up loading a sound into the clipboard window without actually seeing it happen. Consequently, a lot of toggling back and forth is needed to verify that it loaded. The author would do well to study Turtle Beach's ESQ Manager for use of split screen editing where the entire edit bank procedure is accomplished on 1 screen.

Finally, included in the program is a DOS shell feature which allows the user to temporarily suspend ESQ-1 and return to DOS. It is from this DOS shell that program files can be printed out. It's too bad that you need to exit to DOS to this. Also, it would sure be nice to be able to view the patch ingredients on the screen first. Oh well!

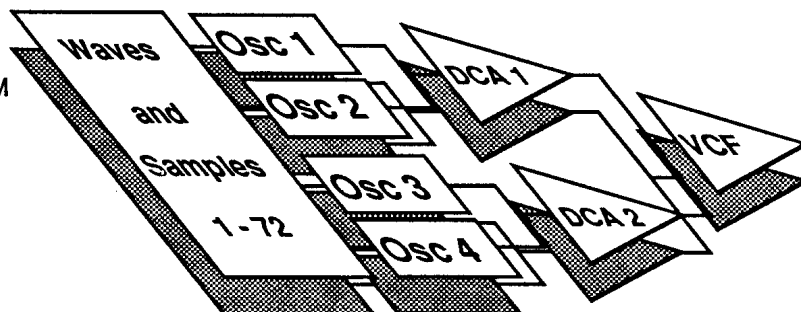
CONCLUSIONS: ESQ-1 can hold its own with any librarian program that I have seen for the ESQ-1/IBM combination. Its strength lies in the Send/Edit Set feature. This part of the program alone is worth the amount asked. Its weakness lies in the edit bank features and the fact that it is designed to work best with a color monitor. Most of us musicians would rather spend our hard earned dollars on new gear than a fancy monitor.

At \$69 ESQ-1 just might be hard to pass up.

Note: Just before press time, Musser sent me the latest version of ESQ-1. It promises to be much faster. However, the last routine still doesn't run on monochrome monitors.

BIO: Mike Klinger is a graduate of North Texas State University and is a music educator. He is the founder of The Synthesis/ MIDI Workshop in Portland, Oregon where he actively participates in teaching courses in Synthesis and MIDI as well as designing and teaching electronic music curriculum for the State of Oregon school districts. ■

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Front Panel

RND (♪♪♪)

Ensoniq's production of the EPS continues to ramp up. If you're on the waiting list, you'll probably receive your EPS over the next few weeks. (None of our writers actually has one in captivity yet, so we can't really start covering this beast the way we'd like to.) Ensoniq has also started shipping the 2X Expander for the EPS. They're also planning on putting out a plethora of sound disks. Bill McCutcheon and John Greenland have been assigned to spend full-time EPS sampling. Two new sound disks for the EPS are now available: ESD7 (Harpichord & Finger Snaps), and ESD8 (Pipe Organ). Not to ignore the SQ-80, Ensoniq has released a new patch disk, VSD3 - "The Performance Disk" - traditional keyboard sounds with an SQ-80 kick. Meanwhile, Mike Ford's position at Ensoniq has been broadened to include buying sounds for the new instruments. If you're interested in having Ensoniq distribute your sounds, write to Ensoniq, 155 Great Valley Parkway, Malvern, PA 19355, Attn. Mike Ford.

* * *

We're now set up to handle newsstand sales. If you're a music store dealer and you'd like to start carrying the *Hacker*, please let us know. If you know of a music store that *should* start carrying the *Hacker*, please let *them* know!

* * *

Last month we reported that several people were having trouble getting in contact with Heaven, the Saratoga, Calif. patch vendor. Heaven has sent us the following: "Recently we moved to a larger location. In the process, we experienced a temporary disruption in our service. We apologize for any inconvenience this may have caused anyone. To alleviate any further problems we are now maintaining our old phone number and mailing address."

* * *

M.U.G., the International Mirage User's Group, has started providing a 24-hour hotline for Mirage questions: 914-963-1768.

* * *

Leaping Lizards of Seattle would like to announce that Richard Elam of Peoria, IL won their coloring contest. (!)

* * *

We were going to have a chart in this issue showing the latest O.S. for each Ensoniq instrument. Well, the EPS and the SQ-80 still haven't settled down enough to really nail this. Your Mirage should be running O.S. 3.2. The ESQ-M is on 1.2. And the ESQ-1... It seems that early editions of 3.4 may have a minor bug. If you order an upgrade now, you should receive an O.S. without the bug. However, exactly what they're going to call the "non-bug" edition of 3.4 hasn't been determined. We'll have more info on the bug in next month's *Interface*.

TRANSONIQ-NET HELP WITH QUESTIONS

MIRAGE 24-HOUR HOTLINE - M.U.G., 914-963-1768.

ESQ-1 QUESTIONS - Tom McCaffrey. ESQUPA. (215) 750-0352, before 11 p.m. Eastern Time.

ESQ-1 QUESTIONS - Jim Johnson, (602) 821-9266. 5 to 10 p.m. Mountain Time (AZ).

ESQ-1 QUESTIONS - International, Brendon Sidebottom, (03) 689-5731 Australia. No calls between 4 a.m. and 10 a.m. Australian Eastern Standard time.

SAMPLING & MOVING SAMPLES - all over the place. "Mr. Wavesample" - Jack Loesch, (201) 264-3512. Eastern Time (N.J.). Call after 6:00 P.M.

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

SAMPLING - Mark Wyar, (216) 323-1205. Eastern time zone (OH). Calls between 6 pm and 11 pm.

MIRAGE HARDWARE & FIRMWARE - Scott D. Willingham. Pacific Time (CA). Weekdays: 6-9 p.m., Weekends: 12-9 p.m. (213) 397-4612.

MIRAGE OPERATING SYSTEM - Mark Cecys. Eastern Time (NY). Days. (716) 773-4085.

MASOS - Pete Wacker. Whenever. (602) 937-1177.

HYPERSOINQ NEW PRODUCT RELEASES

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BACK ISSUES

Back issues are \$2. each. (Overseas: \$3 each.) Issues 1-9, 11, 13-19, 21, 22, and 27 are no longer available. Subscriptions will be extended an equal number of issues for any issues ordered that are not available at the time we receive your order. ESQ-1 coverage started with Issue Number 13. SQ-80 coverage started with Number 29, (although most ESQ-1 coverage also applies to the SQ-80). EPS coverage started with Number 30. Permission has been given to photocopy issues that we no longer have available - check the classifieds for people offering them. Reprints in our "Quick and Dirty Reprint Series" are available: MIRAGE OPERATIONS, for \$5, and MIRAGE SAMPLE REVIEWS for \$4. Each contains material from the first 17 issues.

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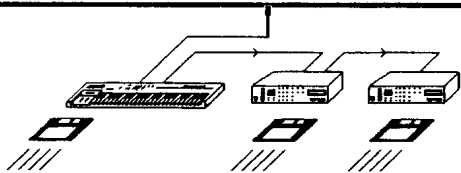
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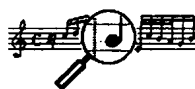
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Dark Horse Music, Vol. 1

Reviewed by Rick Hall

FOR: ESQ-1, SQ-80.
PRODUCT: Vol. 1.
PRICE: \$19.95.
FROM: Dark Horse Music, PO Box 295, Crested Butte, CO 81224.

"Well", he says, "I don't see no p'int about that frog that's any better'n any other frog."

- Mark Twain: The Celebrated Jumping Frog Of Calaveras County

Reluctant as I am to pan what is probably a perfectly sincere attempt at programming a useful group of sounds for the ESQ-1, I cannot in good conscience recommend this sorry offering from Dark Horse Music. Those of you who are familiar with my work within these pages as a reviewer of ESQ peripherals know that I am not one to pass judgement on the potential usefulness of any given group of sounds, believing that to be a task which rightfully falls to the artist who is their potential user. But by now I think I have heard enough of what is available on the market to be able to determine to some degree whether or not an entry such as this volume has anything unique or outstanding to contribute to an already saturated field. My opinion, for what it's worth, is that your money is probably better spent elsewhere.

Most of these patches sound similar to others I have heard, done better, in many of the collections I have had occasion to review. I am NOT suggesting that they are plagiarized; it's only that I cannot detect anything particularly new or innovative here. In addition, I do not consider these voices to be professional-level programming. I found muddy horns with a release time so long as render the patch virtually unplayable. Another brass program, laughably entitled FATBRS, had an

extremely abrupt cutoff which sounded anything but brass-like. There is the usual abundance of tinny, echoey bell sounds, an annoying Farfisa-like organ, and of course the ubiquitous plucks and doinks which no ESQ-1 collection would be complete without.

One program, TAIBEL, appears twice in the volume. Several of the sounds come layered with *CART* positions, which can provide some pretty interesting, albeit unintended, surprises if you happen to have an Eprom sitting in your machine. In fairness, I tried to contact Dark Horse Music to ask about these anomalies, but when I called the number supplied with my cassette, I got a private residence. The occupant claimed to have never heard of any Dark Horse -- musical or otherwise.

It is revealing that the "ESQ-1 Effects Tips" sheet which accompanies the data cassette (\$19.95), detailing ways in which effects such as chorusing on string sounds can "thicken" the sound, advises the buyer who might not already have an effects processor such as the Yamaha SPX-90 to "save your \$\$ and try to get one...". It is true that the addition of a five-hundred dollar effects unit is probably what it takes to make these programs sound decent, but why not save your \$\$ and "try to get" a volume with voices that sound good all by themselves?

I'm one of these guys who feels that if you can't say anything nice it's probably best not to say anything at all, so I'd like to end this now. I will, however, in parting venture the speculation that, if I had thought my ESQ was always going to sound like this, I would have bought another synth. Fortunately, all I had to do was avoid buying this data cassette. ■

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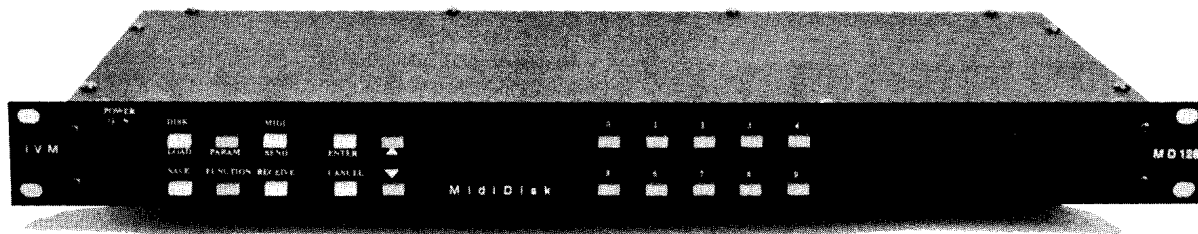
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Softsynth

Digital Synthesis Software For The Mirage And Atari ST

Review by Jordan Scott

FOR: Mirage and Atari ST
PRODUCT: Softsynth
PRICE: \$295
FROM: Digidesign, 1360 Willow Road, Suite 101, Menlo Park, CA 94025. (415)327-8811.

It's been a while coming, but music software for the Atari ST is finally pouring in. That's good news for Mirage owners because many innovative programs initially released for more expensive computers are now being converted to the less expensive ST (we're told that Digidesign is making an ST version of their Sound Designer). You may have noticed the Hacker's first review of Softsynth for the Mac in the December '86 issue. Digidesign has updated the program since then and we've also had more time to examine the program. Here's a closer look.

SOFTSYNTH BASICS. Please refer to the Hacker's first review for the program's various synthesis features and basic operations (they have been faithfully ported over to the ST). The ST version runs on the 520/1040ST with either a color or monochrome monitor. The program can run from a hard disk and features "key disk" protection which requires the master or backup disk to be in the default drive during program booting.

MENU OPTIONS. After the program is booted, the main screen appears with the icons, sample data parameters and the display of envelopes of all 32 partials and the associated partial fader levels below (see Figure 1).

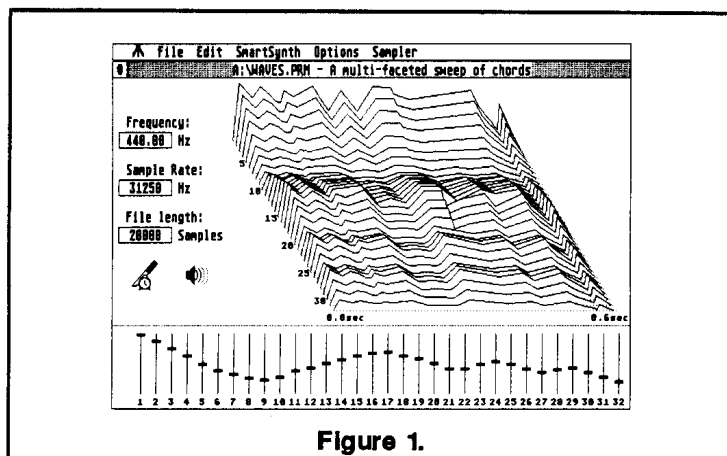


Figure 1.

Above this display is the menu:

- 1) FILE - Sends parameter and sound file data to and from the ST disk. Select, send and convert files from 16-bit Sound Designer format to 8-bit Mirage format (or other sampler compatible with Softsynth). With the future release of ST Sound Designer, Softsynth files can be loaded directly into the wave editor program.
- 2) EDIT - Includes copy and paste features for the envelopes and partial tuning contours. Also a clear feature to set selected parameters to zero. FM Patching page is selected here.
- 3) SMARTSYNTH - Accesses parameter page for the

wavesample generator program and the command to generate a wavesample based on the currently defined Smartsynth parameters.

4) OPTIONS - Selects viewing angle and partial type to be displayed on the main screen. MIDI keyboard sends MIDI note data to sampler for auditioning sounds (useful for rack samplers). Normalize function maximizes the amplitude level of the synthesized wavesample without creating distortion. Save settings allows customization of various Softsynth options.

5) SAMPLER - Selects sampler to be used with Softsynth (the program automatically selects the Mirage after handshaking during the boot procedure).

SOFTSYNTH IN ACTION. Believe it or not, now your home computer can get down and make some funky sounds. I'm tempted to believe that this program with its four synthesis methods (harmonic additive, partial timesplice, smartsynth and FM), can make any sound you'd ever want. The program is so easy to use that it invites the user to explore the possibilities of new sounds. Before you go out and sell your keyboard synthesizer, be aware that there are some big obstacles in getting those great sounds from the computer into your sampler. The sounds created by Softsynth are nothing more than wavesample tables, so you still face the sonic limitations of the Mirage and many of the same old sampling keyboard problems. That means you'll still have to deal with looping for sustained sounds, output aliasing, setting and assigning wavesamples to the keyboard and all the other requirements involved in making a sound usable in performance.

After playing with the various Softsynth parameters, you'll want to audition the sounds on the ST. The sound quality output of the ST speaker is poor at best. For this reason alone, many prefer the Mac for its 8-bit audio output on its internal speaker. The ST sound quality can be improved using some hardware accessories. One is called Monitor Master, which in addition to providing switching abilities between a color and monochrome monitor, provides an audio out which can hook up to your audio system for improved monitoring. Another possibility is the use of a digital to analog converter (D/A) which can be plugged into the ST's cartridge port and selected for use from the Softsynth program.

FILING SYSTEM. In order to get an accurate representation of the sound, you'll need to send the sound file (wavesample) to the Mirage. Softsynth creates two kinds of files: Parameter files (which use the .PRM extension) and sound files (which use the .SD extension). The parameter file saves to the ST disk the values of the envelopes, partial levels, tuning contours, and other elements in each of the 32 partials which are used to compute the Softsynth sound file. The sound file is the computer generated wavesample that will be sent to the sampler. In order to hear the sound represented by all the parameter data, you will first want to select the speaker icon on the main and other work screens. It takes several seconds to synthesize the sound (depending on wavesample length and parameter complexity), and after the computations are completed, the sound will be produced from the ST speaker. To hear the sound from the Mirage, however, one has to create a sound file on disk. This is accomplished by selecting the "Synthesize" option from the file menu. Only after saving

the sound file to disk, can the file be sent to the Mirage. This disk transfer process takes time and quickly becomes a chore each time you want to monitor an updated parameter setting.

In general, this file/transfer system seems to be inconvenient and cumbersome. It takes several distinct steps to do what should be a single step. The transfer process would be more efficient if you could synthesize the sound and store the file in RAM for immediate transfer to the Mirage. After all, the aim is to playback the sound on the sampler. If you synthesize a soundfile but forget to save the Softsynth parameters to disk before quitting the current file, you won't be able to retrieve the parameter data from the sound file data. Maybe this is wishing for too much, but it's a pity that Softsynth can't convert sound files into parameter files for this reason and for re-synthesis possibilities. As it is, Softsynth writes sound files only.

Before sending a file to the Mirage, Softsynth provides a nice memory map of the selected bank with the number of bits available in the currently selected Mirage wavesample. If not enough memory is available, you're given the option of aborting the transfer or truncating the synth sound file. By the way, file transfers to the Mirage take about a second for each 1k of wave data. When you add the time it takes to create a file and transfer it to the Mirage, you end up with large delays in the sound creation process. This, however, is the price you pay for the precision that software-based computer synthesis offers.

FM SYNTHESIS USING SOFTSYNTH. The big new item for the version 2.0 Softsynth software is the FM patching page (see Figure 2). The program adds some twists to Yamaha's system in that the modulator can be output along with the carrier's sound. The system is flexible enough to simulate equivalent DX algorithms, although the patching system doesn't work with that methodology. As a convenience to those familiar with DX algorithms, equivalent Softsynth patches are presented in the user's manual. Keep in mind that you have 32 partials, which is like 32 operators in Yamaha lingo. I think if you use all 32, it's a little like hammering a nail with a bulldozer. But, they're all there if the sound calls for it. (Hmmm...what would a bulldozer hitting a nail sound like?)

THE SOFTSYNTH SOUNDS. Many folks are wondering if Softsynth will turn their \$1500 sampler into a Fairlight or Synclavier. The obvious answer is no, because you still won't have 64 voices, 16-bit resolution, and 100 megs of direct to disk memory. If you ask, can Softsynth create sounds like the

big boys?...I'd say the answer is yes. It takes a lot of work, but I've come up with those famous Peter Gabriel Fairlight sounds, some great acoustic sounding kettle drums, a nice reedy sounding church organ, buzzy DX-type harmonics, and great smartsynth horns. In creating these sounds, I've learned that less is more. Keep in mind, that when you use a lot of partials, you start to lose track of what each individual partial is doing. With this in mind, usually I'll need no more than ten partials to create the most complex sound I'd ever want.

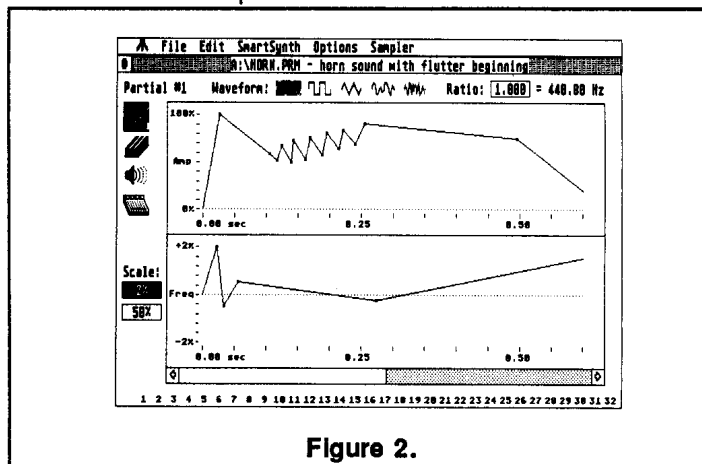


Figure 2.

CONCLUSIONS. After reading all this, you probably realize that Softsynth is an extremely powerful tool. Of course, at \$275 retail, it should be. In fact, in the few weeks that I've played with the program, I've begun to wonder if it's overkill. I think that if the program were streamlined, it would be cheaper and less cumbersome than it is as mentioned in the complaints above.

Most musicians can't afford the extra peripherals like the D/A converter for the ST cartridge port and the hard disk drives which make this program a lot quicker to use. This program, however, is targeted at the advanced programmer who needs the detailed control that Softsynth offers. Most studios will probably want the program to interface with their samplers. For the rest of us, I hope Digidesign creates a scaled down, introductory version (as other software companies do for their more advanced products). If they can come up with a \$100 Softsynth for the ST, they'll have a winner! ■

Novelty Sounds From Mr. Wavesample

By Jordan Scott

FOR: Mirage.
PRODUCT: Keyboard, Novelty and SFX Samples.
PRICE: \$9.95/Disk.
FROM: Mr. Wavesample, Jack Loesch, 162 Maple Place, Keyport NJ 07735.

While Mr. Wavesample has been busy sampling lately, poor ol' Mrs. Wavesample has had to put up with some of the odd sounds to be reviewed here.

BANK ONE LOWER: PROPHET 600 STRINGS

In case you don't know, the Prophet 600 is a great six-voice, dual oscillator analog synthesizer which came out in early 1983 and was the successor to the famed Prophet 5. This sample is actually made up of four separate wavesamples and the transitions between the samples are good and shouldn't be

noticeable (unless you're into constantly playing chromatic scales). In general, this is a faithful reproduction of the real thing. I have, however, heard better analog string patch samples from some of the Rolands. Program 1 features gobs of chorusing while the other program variations feature the raw sample with plain vanilla settings. In his note with the disk, Jack says he doesn't include variations unless requested.

BANK ONE UPPER: PROPHET 600 NASAL BASS

I don't know whether this sound was covered by all the lower programs intentionally. After uncovering it by selecting any lower wavesample above number five, you get this analog synth sound that features some filter modulation along with lots of resonance. The loop doesn't work really well on the first of the two wavesamples, and, unlike the lower samples, it wasn't sampled for single-page loops. The sample is better

sited in the lower keyboard as it is a bass synth sound. This sound was sampled at a low level and I wasn't thrilled with it.

BANK TWO LOWER: STEAMBOAT

This bank features two samples both taken from a W.C. Fields movie. Sample number one is a showboat whistle and has a top key of fifteen. The second is a sample of the following dialog: "Shall I cast off, Mr. Baldwin? We're leaving." Unless your set has a nautical theme, the dialog sample has limited uses. The whistle would actually be nice if it had a decent loop. Beyond using it as a sound effect, when used melodically it sounds vaguely similar to the flute sound at the beginning of Peter Gabriel's "Sledgehammer." As mentioned above, there are no variations and with this bank, you'll need to reset the top key numbers to effectively use the samples.

BANK TWO UPPER: JACK'S TOILET

Jack commented that he couldn't resist this sample; personally I can. The sample takes the whole upper memory and suffers from a loud initial flush sound at the beginning of the sample. The attack of the sound definitely needs some trimming. I'd suggest moving Wavesample Start (P60) to page 15 (hex).

BANK THREE LOWER: EMAX GLUCOSE

This sound is a winner. The sample uses only half the lower memory and is spread across the whole keyboard. This is the kind of sound that only a sampler could make; a combination of vocal sounds with some other elements for an unusual and

appealing result. The loop on the sound works well. Thumbs up here, Mr. Wavesample!

BANK THREE UPPER: DX7 DOUGH

The upper sound is uncovered by selecting lower program two and is a sample from a DX patch of the same name. It uses only 32 pages of the memory and hides some of the other aborted samples in memory. This sounds like an imitation of an analog synth. In the low keyboard range it sounds like a plucked bass (synthesized) and at the upper range, it has a pizzicato string quality. The loop is a single page and, in general, this is a very usable synth sound.

I like many of the sounds, however, I would encourage Mr. Wavesample to use available memory better and to get the sounds organized efficiently. As for the novelty sounds, they are a bit obscure. But then again, you never know what you'll hear from a Mirage these days.

Bio: Jordan Scott is an Operations Engineer at IDB Communications, a leading supplier of satellite transmission service for audio, video, and digital data networks. In addition to his articles for TH he's been doing some writing for MCS. Currently, he records stuff at home like everyone else in North America. ■

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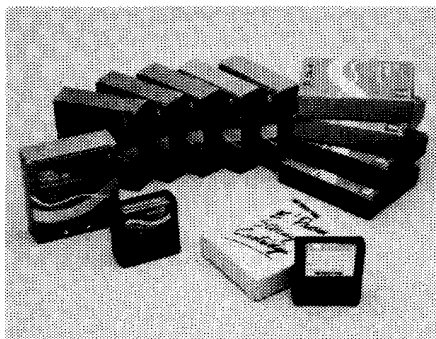
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Don's Best for Organ Sequences for the ESQ-1 by Don Pribble

Review by Michael Carnes

FOR: ESQ-1, SQ-80.
PRODUCT: Don's Best for Organ.
PRICE: \$14.95.
FROM: Don Pribble, 6810 Highway 55, Minneapolis, MN 55427.

Don Pribble has assembled a number of sequenced performances into this collection, representing his best work. There is a substantial amount of music here: I didn't put the clock on it, but there is enough to make up a complete organ recital. I treated the collection as exactly that, and listened in terms of musical quality, program selection and program order.

Now many of the readers may see the words "organ recital" and flip right on past the article, but I urge those readers to stay with us. For many, the organ dredges up memories of yawning through dreary hours of the church little-old-lady. The truth of the matter is that the organ has a huge body of virtuoso music, much of which is not well known outside of organ circles. The organ is, after all, the world's first and most successful synthesizer. Those who have heard a first-rate organ under the hands (and feet) of a good player know the timbral range and raw power of the instrument. Dull it's not.

Mr. Pribble has selected a number of pieces which generally focus on virtuosic aspects of the organ. For the most part, he has used conservative timbres which sound like pipe organ stops - a wise choice that is generally sensitive to the music. While I have a number of criticisms, I should state up front that I enjoyed listening to this collection. The pieces are done musically and the performance level is good. This clearly represents a lot of work and I appreciate the effort that has gone into it. There are lots of clams in some of the performances, but I am glad they are there. A few stinkers here and there assure me that it's a real human performance and organists are notorious for a little slop, anyway.

One last note before I discuss individual pieces...The cassette that I received was in a pre-release state and the documentation was not complete enough for me to be 100% sure about which pieces were where. I have a reasonable level of confidence that I have matched composer to composition, but for any that I have missed, let me apologize to Don Pribble and to the readers. For non-classical types, I'll try to clear up some of the more confusing terms as we go.

The first piece is a "Gigue Fugue" by Buxtehude. (A "gigue" is a dance in fast compound meter, usually 6/8 or 12/8. A "fugue" is the most challenging of canons.) Buxtehude was a hero of Johann Bach's, which is no small praise. The music is high quality and Pribble's performance is nice and lively. Stop selection (timbre selection to non-organists) is not ideal, starting out with stops that are too strong and leaving little room for dynamic growth as the piece evolves. The performance is marred by the final cadence, which sounds mechanistic - a problem with cadences in many of these performances.

Following this is "The Cuckoo" by Weaver. This is a flashy little piece based on a falling major 3rd, like the sound of a cuckoo clock. There must have been hundreds of these cuckoo pieces written last century. With the exception of a prominent square-wavey stop, the sound is a pretty convincing electric church organ sound, like an old Rogers or Allen organ.

Next was "Allegro from Symphony VI" by Widor. This is a moderately quick movement from one of Widor's numerous organ symphonies, and has a big, processional sort of character. On a real pipe organ, this would knock you out of your seat, and Pribble has done a good job of evoking this on

the ESQ-1. The tempo is too rigid and the organ pedal passages aren't convincing, but this still was my favorite performance in the collection and makes a great demo sequence for the synthesizer.

The last piece on this set is "La Nativite" by Langlais. This is an early 20th century French piece and the broad and luscious harmonies are evocative of Ravel or Debussy. I liked the piece quite a lot (musically, it is one of the best in the entire collection), but I didn't like the stops chosen. One of the primary sounds had a little filter "wow" on the attack that was very distracting. I think that the piece would be better served by using either more or less synthetic timbres. It's stuck in the middle where it is and I hope Mr. Pribble will give it another listen because the music is nice and dreamy.

The next set begins with a setting of a hymn tune "Brother James' Air." The composer is not listed and may indeed be that great master, Anonymous. There is no credit for the setting, although I suspect that it may be Pribble's own. It's a pleasant setting, but is marred by the same filter attack as the Langlais. This is followed by three pretty much interchangeable pieces by Widor and Vierne. These are flashy-surface, low-content sort of works that would normally be used to clear the palate between more substantial works. All are credible performances with reasonable stop selection, too-rigid tempi and uncomfortable final cadences. The voice-stealing is quite audible in a few places, but would go away if you had an ESQ-M hung onto your system. There is nothing wrong with this kind of music, but a little of it goes a very long way.

Next is "Carillon Sortie" by Mulet. It's another flashy virtuoso piece with a rigid tempo and lots of notes. It's unfortunate that Pribble didn't use a carillon (bell) stop in here, since that is the intent of the piece. After that is "Canon in B Minor" by Schumann. Canons are a wonderful and challenging form in which a theme is played against itself at various transpositions and time offsets. The Bach two and three part inventions contain lots of very fine and listenable canons. A good canon doesn't need to be supported by an instrument playing harmony - that's all implied by the voices of the canon. Anyway, after Bach's death, the canon went into a long period of decline. By Schumann's time, nobody knew how to write a canon - especially Schumann. So this "canon" has two voices sort of lamely going through a pseudo-canon, supported by lots of active harmony to help make the canon make sense. Pribble has definitely made the best of this situation by doing sort of a humorous setting, using a marimba voice. This way, he has created timbral interest where there really isn't much musical interest. It's a cute idea and I'm sure it sounds better this way than the way Schumann wrote it. Last on this set is a "Toccata" by Gigout. It's another piece of the fast and virtuosic type and is well done, but hard to distinguish from many other pieces in this collection.

The next set has two pieces, the first of which is "Carillon de Westminster" by Vierne. It is a set of variations on the familiar Westminster chimes (the grandfather clock chimes). Really not so much a set of variations as the same chime tune with different harmonizations. Using an electric bass for a pedal was a little distracting, to say the least. The second is an allegro from "Trio Sonata V" by Bach. This comes as a welcome breath of fresh air and substance after twenty minutes of cotton candy. The tempo is too fast and the performance is just a tad on the mechanical side, but it is still Bach and quite listenable.

The final set is a single movement, the "Toccata in F" from Widor's fifth organ symphony. While it is another virtuosic

movement, there is more artfulness in this music than in some of the similar pieces on the tape. The organ pedal that Pribble has chosen for this piece is too throaty and speaks too quickly to be convincing, but, all in all, it's a good finale performance.

To summarize, I would like to have heard a little less flash and a little more substance, maybe some Messiaen or some Poulenc, maybe even some Des Pres or Ockegham. The organ voices are generally good - Pribble knows how the basic stops sound - but they need work on their attacks. None of the voices has that distinctive "chiff" of a real pipe organ. There is clearly musicality here and as I stated at the beginning, I enjoyed listening. While I am not sure who he is planning to

sell to, I wish him luck. Even if you're not a small church or a high-school senior trying to fake your taped auditions to conservatory, you might want to look into these. With all of their blemishes, they clearly show what can be done with the ESQ's sequencer, and you might find that they broaden your musical world.

Bio: Michael Carnes divides his time among engineering (he is a senior software engineer at Lexicon), music composition (his last piece "Intermediae" was written for the gifted "Marimolin" duo and featured ESQ, Mirage, Violin, and Marimba), and trying to be a good dad. ■

Leaping Lizards O.S. 3.d

Reviewed by Darwin Stearns

FOR: Mirage. PRODUCT: O.S. 3.d. PRICE: \$24.95. FROM: Leaping Lizards, 1614 1/2 NE 80th, Seattle, WA 98115. (206) 527-3431.
--

I'm certain you'll agree that the Mirage keyboard has always fallen short in the area of MIDI implementation. OS 3.2 gave us local mode ON/OFF and a few other bells and whistles, but still didn't offer the degree of control we really needed. Thankfully, Steven Fox of Leaping Lizards in Seattle, Washington has taken care of this problem. With the aid of his Mirage Monitor program for the C-64, he has produced OS 3.d - an enhanced version of Ensoniq's 3.2 operating system that turns the Mirage into a usable master keyboard for most MIDI applications. Sampling has been disabled to make room for the improvements, but as we're all using MASOS for sampling (aren't we?), the loss of these functions should be unnoticeable.

Judging by the overwhelming number of responses I've received to my letter in September's "Interface," the ability to transmit and receive on separate MIDI channels is a feature many Mirage users have wanted for quite some time. It's almost mandatory for any kind of serious multi-track sequencer work. Since I like to record my Mirage tracks first and the overdub the other tracks using the Mirage as a reference point, you can imagine how many hours I've wasted changing and re-changing sequencer channel assignments simply because the Mirage wouldn't allow this function. Therefore, I was very pleased to find that MIDI channels are selected independently in OS 3.d, with P75 setting the transmit channel and P82 setting the channel for incoming data. With local mode off, it's like using a rack mount Mirage with a separate controller keyboard unit. Personally, I'd be satisfied if this were the only new feature added, but channel selection is just the beginning.

P73 has been implemented to allow the Mirage mod wheel to transmit continuous controller information other than simple modulation. By the same token, P74 now lets you use the footswitch to transmit controller switch information other than sustain. In what I consider to be a very wise design choice, Mr. Fox has seen fit to configure both of these parameters to cover the full range allocated for them in the MIDI specification (00 - 1F for continuous controllers and 40 - 4F for switch controllers) rather than limit your choices to the values that have already been defined. This is definitely a nice touch, and is indicative of the care with which this program appears to be crafted.

P76 is now the keyboard transpose parameter. By selecting the appropriate value you can transpose, by semi-tones, the keyboard and internal voices down three octaves and up two octaves and a fifth. This gives the Mirage an effective range of

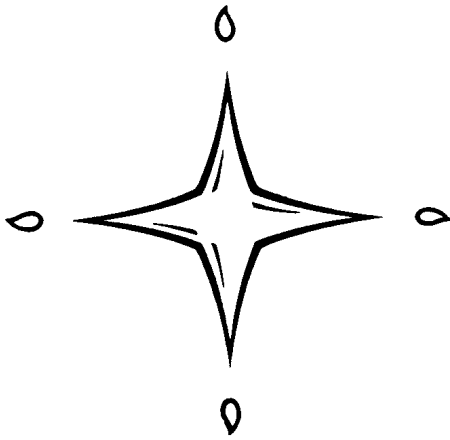
128 notes from C-2 to G8 - very useful for everything from coaxing those extra low notes from your favorite bass sample to putting that upper synth in a range where your dog can really appreciate it. The value displayed for this parameter is the decimal MIDI note number assigned to Mirage key #1. Given the limitations imposed by the Mirage LED display, this is probably as good a method of transposition notation as any. It does require some getting used to, however.

Besides the new MIDI capabilities, 3.d offers a couple of extra features that you might find useful. Since sampling functions have been deleted, the upper and lower sample keys have been pressed (pun intended) into service as "panic buttons." Hitting either of these keys now sends a MIDI all-notes-off command to the Mirage and all connected instruments, effectively killing any pesky stuck notes that might be hanging around. Also, parameter changes made with the ON/OFF keys are more than three times faster than they were in OS 3.2. This should allow you to make quick filter frequency changes, etc. during a live performance, as well as making everyday life with the Mirage a bit more pleasant.

As if the previously mentioned features weren't enough, you get three banks of sounds thrown in for the same price. Banks 1 & 2 are titled "Start 1 / Stop 1" and "Start 2 / Stop 2" respectively, and are exactly what they claim to be (I don't want to spoil the joke, so that's all I'm saying). Bank 3 contains nine different sound effects - a cross between a water drop and Coke bottle strike, crashing Christmas ornaments, crickets, typewriter, sawing wood, steam engine, jackhammer, cuckoo clock and touch-tone phone. Granted, these sounds aren't all that musically useful, but they are fun - and isn't that at least part of the reason you bought your Mirage in the first place?

Although this article is intended to be a critique of OS 3.d, I really can't find anything to be critical about. Inasmuch as it is an extension of the 3.2 operating system, time spent learning the new functions is minimal. The documentation is thorough and easy to understand. The program is not copy-protected and can be moved onto the disk of your choice with any of the available OS copy utilities. Admittedly, there are few features that would be of interest to rack mount owners, but at a price of \$24.95 + \$2.50 p+h this is an item no Mirage keyboard owner should do without.

Bio: Darwin Stearns is a restaurant equipment dealer by day, and lives in his dome home in the heart of beautiful Boskydell, Illinois with his wife and 1.75 children. After the kids have gone to sleep, he can be found in his basement studio, "The MIDI Evil," making funny noises and forcing his sequencer to play Bach orchestral scores into the wee hours of the morning. ■



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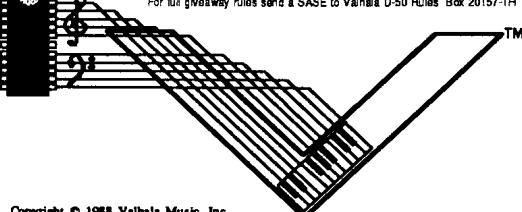
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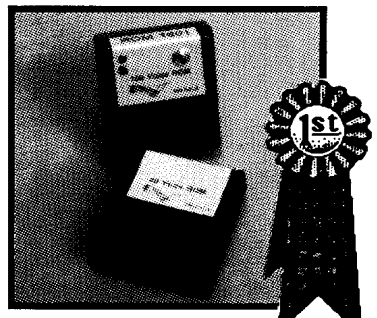
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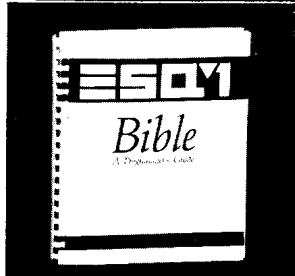
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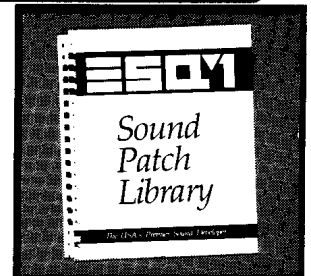
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ESQ80 And Steel Guitar Techniques - MODE=HELD

By Jack Ginnever

Ever since I heard Jan Hammer trade lead licks with Jeff Beck I've been fascinated by the performance possibilities of synthesizers. One of the reasons that I bought my ESQ-1 was for some of the performance capabilities that it offers. I'm writing because I've read a lot of stuff about the ESQ-1's sonic capabilities but not much in terms of its unique pitch-bending features (actually, the ESQ-1 review in the Sept. '86 issue of Keyboard said that the Chroma Polaris has similar features). Specifically, I'd like to share some of the things I've done with the MODE=HELD parameter on the Master Page of the ESQ-1.

The ESQ-1 Owner's Manual Version 1.0 says on page 19 that "With a little practice you can simulate guitar and pedal steel-type techniques..." Although I'm not a country music fanatic, I've always enjoyed the way a steel guitar can add to music. Since the ESQ-1 helped my efforts, I've developed some techniques and a patch to mimic a steel guitar that I use in some old Eagles and Crosby, Stills and Nash tunes.

The patch is really an electric piano modified to give a more guitar-type tone with a long sustain. It sounds the most realistic when played in the upper two and a half octaves. The mod wheel is used for vibrato.

The most important part of making a realistic imitation is the technique involved to imitate the particular pitch bends that a steel guitar player uses. The rest of this article describes one convincing lick that will get you started. It requires a sustain pedal, some practice and a little foot and finger coordination.

First, make sure that MODE=HELD and RANGE=02 on the Master Page. Then select the patch supplied below and follow these steps in order;

ESQ-1 PROG: STLGTR										BY: GINNEVER											
		OCT	SEMI	FINE	WAVE	MOD#1	DEPTH	MOD#2	DEPTH												
OSC 1	0	0	0	EL PNO	LFO1	4	OFF	-													
OSC 2	0	0	3	EL PNO	LFO1	5	OFF	-													
OSC 3	2	7	0	SQR 2	OFF	-	OFF	-													
		LEVEL	OUTPUT	MOD#1	DEPTH	MOD#2	DEPTH														
DCA 1	63	ON	OFF	-	OFF	-															
DCA 2	63	ON	OFF	-	OFF	-															
DCA 3	51	ON	ENV1	63	OFF	-															
		FREQ	Q	KEYBD	MOD#1	DEPTH	MOD#2	DEPTH													
FILTER	2	2	51	ENV3	45	ENV2	15														
		FINAL VOL	PAN	PAN MOD	DEPTH																
DCA 4	47	8	LFO2	47																	
		FREQ	RESET	HUMAN	WAV	L1	DELAY	L2	MOD												
LFO 1	20	OFF	ON	TRI	0	1	0	WHEEL													
LFO 2	12	OFF	OFF	TRI	63	0	20	OFF													
LFO 3	0	OFF	OFF	NOI	0	0	0	OFF													
		L1	L2	L3	LV	T1V	T1	T2	T3	T4	TK										
ENV 1	63	0	0	63	0	0	8	0	0	1											
ENV 2	63	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0											
ENV 3	63	63	63	59	22	63	0	47	37	15											
ENV 4	63	47	0	29	63	0	41	43	36	9											
		SYNC	AM	MONO	GLIDE	VC	ENV	OSC	CYC												
MODES	ON	OFF	OFF	0	OFF	OFF	ON	OFF													
		SPLIT/LAYER	S/L PRG	LAYER	LAYER PRG	SPLIT	SPLIT PRG	SPLIT KEY													
	OFF	-	OFF	-	OFF	-	-	-													

- Depress and hold the sustain pedal from steps (b) through (e).
- Depress and release C5.
- Depress and release G4.
- Depress and hold D4.
- While holding down D4, move the pitch wheel all the way up. This will change D4's pitch from D to an E.

Since only D4 is being HELD, it is the only one affected by the pitch wheel. This also makes the resulting chord a simple C major triad.

This is a very common riff found in many country tunes with a steel guitar. With a little listening, practice, and experimentation you'll find many more licks to throw into some of the CSN tunes. For more very helpful hints on steel guitars and imitative synthesis in general check out the October '86 Keyboard Soundpage and the accompanying article on Jim Cox. ■

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Mirage Wavesamples and Wavetables

By Duane King

Wavesamples and wavetables are not the same. The wavesample, or sample, is simply the digital representation of a sound. You may have recorded it, someone else may have recorded it, or it could be computer generated. It's just a collection of numbers in the Mirage's sample memory. The Mirage doesn't know what is in the memory and it doesn't care how it got there. It is only interested in the wavetable. Each of the eight wavetable entries tells it what part of the sample memory to play back, and how to play it back. The wavetable entries tell the Mirage what to do with the numbers in the sample memory. The wavetable defines what and where the sounds are, not the wavesample memory. Never mind that pages 0 thru 4F contain a snare hit, and pages 50 thru FF is a car horn. The Mirage only has two ways of knowing where a sample ends; 1) sixteen zeroes in a row, and 2) the end of sample memory. It has no way to figure out where a sample starts.

So why am I saying this? I've discovered more limitations in my thinking that have affected how I make and manipulate samples on the Mirage, and I wonder if others have gone down the same route. I've already mentioned my first misconception. I believed that the sample was the basic unit of sound in the Mirage! I mean I really thought that you had to play back the entire sample! I realized that you could play back less than the entire sample, but I never dreamed that the computer doesn't care at all - except for the sixteen zeros!!! This means I can play back weird sandwiched splices of different samples if I want to and my Mirage won't even know what hit it!

How do you learn any new sampling techniques? Two ways I can think of - 1) read every word in every issue of Transoniq Hacker and other music magazines (Keyboard and Music Technology) - especially the interviews, and 2) study the works of other people. Take the Ensoniq Mirage factory disks, for instance. In studying those samples and finding out what was done and what effect it had on the samples you can learn quite a lot. Look at the wavetable entries. When you learn something that conflicts with something you were told or something you believed about the Mirage, use what you see.

I studied the Crotale samples on Disk 14. They make an unusual sound, and I wanted to find out what was going on. Upper program one of upper bank three is the one I want to zero in on. This sample has a lovely dissonance. It's a mix mode sound. The first thing I did was turn off mix mode. It sounded the same at first. Then I noticed that with mix mode off, the mallet sound is detuned or chorused and with mix mode on it isn't! The sound is more natural when the mallet sound is not detuned. That explained why mix mode was on but it didn't tell me what had been done to achieve the effect. The Crotale sample is defined by wavetable entry one. So I looked at wavetable entry two. I discovered that this entry plays only the loop segment of the wavesample. So by using mix mode, and mixing the entire sample with the loop segment of the same sample you can detune it without chorusing the attack portion of the sample.

Moving on to upper program three (P3) of the Crotales, you'll find a big surprise! This is basically the same as P1 except it is one octave down. This is done by using another entry in the wavetable to point to the Crotale sample and setting the coarse tune down one octave. That's been done before. The surprise is when you notice that mix mode is on and the starting wavetable entry is 4! I had always believed that when you use mix mode you have to use an odd numbered wavetable entry as the starting point. But right here is a working example that uses an even numbered wavetable entry!

So I pulled out my Advanced Sampler's Guide and started looking for that statement "I know I read," that told me to use ONLY odd numbered entries as the initial wavesample Parameter [27] in mix mode. The best I could do was on page 13 of the Advanced Sampler's Guide. In the discussion of mix mode at the bottom of the page it says, "The Mirage will gang the wavesamples together in pairs; 1 and 2, 3 and 4, etc. It will only look at the Top Key of every other wavesample: 1, 3, 5, and 7." This hints at it, but I was sure I had actually read that you should use only odd numbered entries for the initial wavesample in mix mode. Next I looked in the Musician's Manual in the Parameter Appendix for Parameter [28]. There it was! "For the MIX MODE to work effectively, odd numbered wavesamples (1, 3, 5, 7) should be from a different sound source than the even numbered wavesamples." But wait! I misunderstood!! It doesn't actually say that you have to use odd numbers for Parameter [27] when you are in mix mode. So all this time I have been missing out because I was forcing myself to arrange things so all my mix mode sounds began on an odd numbered wavetable entry.

So what happens when you use wavesample 8 as the initial sample in mix mode? On my old, never-been-upgraded Mirage, oscillator 1 works fine, but oscillator 2 basically gets lost. It tries to play from different places in the wavesample memory. I don't know how to describe what it sounds like. On the Crotales sound use upper program 1. Change Parameter [27] to 8. Change Parameter [32] (LFO Depth) to 1. Change Parameter [35] (OSC mix velocity) to 0. Pull the modulation wheel all the way down (towards the disk drive) and play the G in the third octave. That's the sound of oscillator 1. Now push the modulation wheel all the way back and play the G again. This is the sound of oscillator 2 only. It is repeatable, though! This means you could use it for something!

I've read something else in the Advanced Sampler's Guide that bothered me. At the top of page 18 in the discussion of memory allocation it says, "It is possible, but sometimes dangerous, to allocate the same memory to two different wavesamples, or to overlap wavesamples. The Mirage does not check, for example, that wavesample #1 ends at 40, and will allow you to move the start of wavesample #2 to a number less than 40. If a loop marker is present in either wavesample, strange things can happen (see Sample Data Format in Part IV)." I've spent a good bit of time trying to get my Mirage to put 16 zeros (the "loop marker") at the end of the loop when loop end (Parameter [63]) was less than the wavesample end parameter (Parameter [61]). It won't do it. It consistently put the 16 zeros at the end of the wavesample.

I also tried overlapping two sounds in mix mode such that the second wavesample began in the middle of the first one and ended after the end of the first one. I could turn the loop switch on and off in the first wavesample and still hear all of the second wavesample play. I did note a slight difference in the tone of the wavesample - it was brighter when the first wavesample's loop switch was off. Also the second wavesample plays faster when the first wavesample's loop switch is on. When the second wavesample is made to loop such that its loop begin is in the middle of the first wavesample's loop and its loop end is after the first wavesample's loop end, the second wavesample loops faster when the first wavesample's loop switch is on.

You can overlap samples and loops without voiding the warranty on your Mirage! What else could "dangerous" have meant in the Advanced Sampler's Guide... I don't have the slightest idea why the first wavesample's loop switch affects the playback speed of the second wavesample. I only know

that it does. Try it yourself. See if you can use it for something.

You can use part of this previous technique to fatten up a sound but still get a natural sounding loop. If you have a sample that isn't as full sounding as you would like, say an ensemble sound, you can make a dummy entry in the wavetable just after the original entry. Set all the parameters of the second wavetable entry the same as the first, except for the loop switch. Make sure that Parameter [65] (loop switch) is off in the second wavetable entry. The original wavetable should have its loop switch on. Put the sound in mix mode (Parameter [28]), and set your oscillator mix (Parameter [34]) to 20 or 30. When you play the sound now, oscillator 2 will blend with the original sound, but won't loop. Adjust detuning (Parameter [33]) until the sample is fuller sounding. So you have a chorus effect up to the loop point. The looped section will not sound treated or processed.

You can even get an effect similar to a short delay time on a reverb unit. You use mix mode. Make sure oscillator detune (Parameter [33]) is zero. Make a dummy wavetable entry after the entry you want to add delay to. In the examples that I have seen (Unprepared Piano on Disk 18) the first wavetable entry has its start point set one page higher than the second wavetable entry. They are identical except for that. What this does is separate the two waveforms by a small amount of time. This generates a delay effect called flanging or when more pronounced - chorusing. This small delay has a different effect than just detuning the oscillators, it emphasises low frequencies somewhat. This gives it the reverberant quality. If you make the two wavetable start values differ by two or three pages you get a more pronounced echo effect. Again, don't use any detuning unless you want flanging or chorusing in addition to the delay effect. ■

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VOICE CRYSTAL UPGRADE #7-A1-14
MODEL: VC1
PATCH: TAKPNO
LOCATION: BANK A1
OSC 1: FINE=02
OSC 2: OCT=0. WAVE=SYNTH3
DCA 2: MOD#1=ENV2, DEPTH=+49
ENV 1: T2=04
ENV 2: L2=+36, LV=00, T2=08, T3=38
ENV 3: T3=56
FILT: RES=04
MODE: SYNC=OFF
NOTE: Drastically improves metallic sound typical of tack pianos.

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The Hacking Part...

PROGRAM: HARP (by Bryce Inman)

This is a very good example of a simple, effective patch. Bryce uses a minimum number of parameters to achieve excellent results. Given that, here are a few additional suggestions.

When a string is first plucked it vibrates sharp for a VERY brief instant. To create this effect, select OSC1 and OSC2. Change MOD1 to ENV2=+06. Set the parameters for ENV2 to the following:

L1=10 L2=00 L3=00 LV=00 TIV=00 T1=04 T2=04
T3=00 T4=00 TK=00.

These changes cause OSC1 and OSC2 to raise in pitch, then quickly return to their proper pitch. Experiment with L1 to change the amount of pitch variance. Experiment with T1 to control the length of time it takes to return to the correct pitch. Since OSC3 is not in use, I have set it up to add a wood/like quality to the sound. Set the parameters for OSC3 to the following:

OCT=-2 SEMI=00 FINE=00 WAVE=PIANO MODS=*OFF*
00 *OFF* 00.

Select DCA3. Turn it on and set MOD1 to read ENV3=51. Set the parameters for ENV3 to the following:

L1=63 L2=-63 L3=00 LV=00 TIV=00 T1=00 T2=00
T3=00 T4=00 TK=00.

Because of the pitch of the PIANO waveform and the way ENV3 is working, we have created a very quick percussive element to add to the harp sound. Finally, select OSC2 and change MOD2 to WHEEL=1. This allows us to add more detuning to OSC2 via the MOD WHEEL.

SQ-80 Modifications.

The SQ-80 additional parameters allow it to get much closer to the acoustic harp sound. First enter the changes outlined above for the ESQ-1. Then select OSC1 and 2 and change the waveform to STRNG. This waveform will need a smaller deviation in pitch so change MOD1 to ENV2=3 for both OSCs. Select OSC3 and change waveform to PICK1. Change OCT to 0. Experiment with different attack waveforms with OSC3. I found PICK1, PICK2, SLAP, PLUCK, PLUNK, and THUMP to be effective.

Erick Hailstone
The MIDI Connection

The Patching Part...

Program: HARP

By Bryce Inman

This is a simple but effective imitation of a harp. The sine wave provides the basic warm tone of the instrument, while the square wave colors the sound by imitating the plucked, vibrating strings. The mods on the filter are set to imitate the varying lengths of string - the higher strings are brighter with a short sustain and the lower strings are richer sounding and resonate longer.

[Sam Mims - This is a great sound - an excellent imitation which works best in the middle octaves. To sound like a harpist, play upward whole tone scales, or do multiple downward glissandos on the black keys with the sustain pedal down.]

Program: PHASOR

By Joe Ward

This is a somewhat non-musical patch that sounds best when played as a single sustained note between MIDI keys #60 and #83. It sounds like a "Star Trek" weapon that malfunctions. Changing the delay on LFO1 to zero will give a slight variation on the malfunction.

[Sam Mims - You won't use this sound very often in cover tunes, but it is very interesting due to the use of ENV4 as a modulator of LFO1. This adds the "sample and hold" random note effect after the key is released. Try changing the LFO1 MOD to ENV3 for a different end effect.]

Program: CHIFF

By Doug Fietsch

No comment.

[Sam Mims - Doug has produced a good "chiffy" flute sound, but there is still a bit of digital noise in the background, due to the use of the NOISE3 waveform. I prefer using the mod wheel to control vibrato, so I switched MOD on the LFO1 page to WHEEL. I also bumped the LFO1 DEPTH up to 2 on the OSC1 and 2 pages.]

Program: ZUITAR

By Erick Hailstone

This sound is chorused using LFO1 and is somewhere between a clav and a funky strat sound.

[Sam Mims - This is a nice sound, sort of like a hybrid electric piano/acoustic guitar. I was looking for a bit sharper decay after the initial attack, more like a picked guitar string, so I went to the ENV4 page and lowered L2 to 38 and T2 to 30. Turning on the SYNC mode (on the MODES page) gives an interesting clavinet-type sound.]

ESQ-1 PROG: HARP										BY: BRYCE INMAN
OSC	OCT	SEMI	FINE	WAVE	MOD#1	DEPTH	MOD#2	DEPTH		
OSC 1	0	0	0	SINE	OFF	-	OFF	-		
OSC 2	0	0	1	SQR	OFF	-	OFF	-		
OSC 3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-		
LEVEL OUTPUT MOD#1 DEPTH MOD#2 DEPTH										
DCA 1	56	ON	OFF	-	OFF	-	-	-		
DCA 2	34	ON	OFF	-	OFF	-	-	-		
DCA 3	-	OFF	OFF	-	OFF	-	-	-		
FREQ Q KEYBD MOD#1 DEPTH MOD#2 DEPTH										
FILTER	21	0	25	ENV1	63	KBD2	-8	-		
FINAL VOL PAN PAN MOD DEPTH										
DCA 4	63	8	LFO1	63	-					
FREQ RESET HUMAN WAV L1 DELAY L2 MOD										
LFO 1	10	OFF	OFF	TRI	63	0	20	OFF	-	
LFO 2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
LFO 3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
L1 L2 L3 LV T1V T1 T2 T3 T4 TK										
ENV 1	63	37	16	33	37	0	8	23	20	0
ENV 2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
ENV 3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
ENV 4	63	45	0	47	0	0	15	52	34	44
SYNC AM MONO GLIDE VC ENV OSC CYC										
MODES	OFF	OFF	OFF	0	ON	ON	ON	OFF	-	-
SPLIT/LAYER S/L PRG LAYER LAYER PRG SPLIT SPLIT PRG SPLIT KEY										
	OFF	-	OFF	-	OFF	-	-	-	-	-

ESQ-1 PROG: PHASOR										BY: JOE WARD
OSC	OCT	SEMI	FINE	WAVE	MOD#1	DEPTH	MOD#2	DEPTH		
OSC 1	2	0	0	VOICE1	LFO2	15	ENV1	3		
OSC 2	1	0	0	PULSE	LFO1	63	LFO1	63		
OSC 3	3	0	2	BELL	LFO2	15	ENV1	1		
LEVEL OUTPUT MOD#1 DEPTH MOD#2 DEPTH										
DCA 1	50	ON	ENV3	63	OFF	-	-	-		
DCA 2	45	ON	ENV2	63	OFF	-	-	-		
DCA 3	50	ON	ENV3	63	OFF	-	-	-		
FREQ Q KEYBD MOD#1 DEPTH MOD#2 DEPTH										
FILTER	22	0	18	ENV4	63	OFF	-	-		
FINAL VOL PAN PAN MOD DEPTH										
DCA 4	63	8	LFO3	55	-					
FREQ RESET HUMAN WAV L1 DELAY L2 MOD										
LFO 1	0	ON	ON	SQR	0	1	20	ENV4	-	
LFO 2	18	OFF	ON	TRI	0	1	20	WHEEL	-	
LFO 3	18	OFF	OFF	SQR	63	0	63	WHEEL	-	
L1 L2 L3 LV T1V T1 T2 T3 T4 TK										
ENV 1	11	9	0	49	0	0	33	0	0	26
ENV 2	-63	-63	-63	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
ENV 3	63	39	3	20	0	0	38	38	40	12
ENV 4	44	42	63	0	0	0	21	50	48	0
SYNC AM MONO GLIDE VC ENV OSC CYC										
MODES	OFF	OFF	OFF	0	ON	ON	ON	OFF	-	-
SPLIT/LAYER S/L PRG LAYER LAYER PRG SPLIT SPLIT PRG SPLIT KEY										
	OFF	-	OFF	-	OFF	-	-	-	-	-

ESQ-1 PROG: CHIFF										BY: DOUG FIETSCH
OSC	OCT	SEMI	FINE	WAVE	MOD#1	DEPTH	MOD#2	DEPTH		
OSC 1	0	0	0	SINE	LFO1	1	LFO2	1		
OSC 2	-1	11	0	NOIS3	KBD2	-63	OFF	-		
OSC 3	0	0	0	SINE	LFO1	1	LFO3	1		
LEVEL OUTPUT MOD#1 DEPTH MOD#2 DEPTH										
DCA 1	5	ON	ENV1	58	VEL	18	-			
DCA 2	12	ON	ENV2	25	ENV3	11	-			
DCA 3	8	ON	ENV3	36	VEL2	-20	-			
FREQ Q KEYBD MOD#1 DEPTH MOD#2 DEPTH										
FILTER	39	0	34	OFF	-	VEL2	4	-		
FINAL VOL PAN PAN MOD DEPTH										
DCA 4	58	8	LFO3	63	-					
FREQ RESET HUMAN WAV L1 DELAY L2 MOD										
LFO 1	21	ON	ON	TRI	0	0	1	TRI	-	
LFO 2	7	ON	ON	TRI	11	35	1	OFF	-	
LFO 3	20	ON	OFF	TRI	14	12	0	LFO1	-	
L1 L2 L3 LV T1V T1 T2 T3 T4 TK										
ENV 1	18	63	63	36	16	13	12	12	42	10
ENV 2	63	32	57	33	0	0	26	28	20	0
ENV 3	61	34	0	32	14	3	24	63	20	9
ENV 4	63	57	63	8	0	0	39	48	20	0
SYNC AM MONO GLIDE VC ENV OSC CYC										
MODES	OFF	OFF	OFF	0	ON	OFF	ON	OFF	-	-
SPLIT/LAYER S/L PRG LAYER LAYER PRG SPLIT SPLIT PRG SPLIT KEY										
	OFF	-	OFF	-	OFF	-	-	-	-	-

ESQ-1 PROG: ZUITAR										BY: ERICK HAILSTONE
OSC	OCT	SEMI	FINE	WAVE	MOD#1	DEPTH	MOD#2	DEPTH		
OSC 1	0	0	0	BASS	OFF	0	LFO1	14		
OSC 2	0	0	0	BASS	OFF	-	LFO1	-11		
OSC 3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-		
LEVEL OUTPUT MOD#1 DEPTH MOD#2 DEPTH										
DCA 1	0	ON	ENV1	63	LFO1	0	-			
DCA 2	0	ON	OFF	-	OFF	-	-			
DCA 3	-	OFF	OFF	-	OFF	-	-			
FREQ Q KEYBD MOD#1 DEPTH MOD#2 DEPTH										
FILTER	75	17	24	ENV3	-8	OFF	-	-		
FINAL VOL PAN PAN MOD DEPTH										
DCA 4	63	8	OFF	0	-					
FREQ RESET HUMAN WAV L1 DELAY L2 MOD										
LFO 1	1	ON	ON	TRI	1	18	1	OFF	-	
LFO 2	63	ON	OFF	NOI	63	0	20	WHEEL	-	
LFO 3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
L1 L2 L3 LV T1V T1 T2 T3 T4 TK										
ENV 1	63	48	0	0	0	0	45	60	26	25
ENV 2	63	32	57	33	0	0	26	28	20	0
ENV 3	63	34	0	32	14	3	24	63	20	9
ENV 4	63	57	63	8	0	0	39	48	20	0
SYNC AM MONO GLIDE VC ENV OSC CYC										
MODES	OFF	OFF	OFF	0	OFF	OFF	ON	OFF	-	-
SPLIT/LAYER S/L PRG LAYER LAYER PRG SPLIT SPLIT PRG SPLIT KEY										
	OFF	-	OFF	-	OFF	-	-	-	-	-

The Interface

Letters for The Interface may be sent to any of the following addresses:

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

Electronic mail - GENIE Network: TRANSONIQ, CompuServe: 73260,3353, or PAN: TRANSONIQ.

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.

To: Transoniq Hacker,

1) I'm interested in purchasing an ESQ-1 librarian or editor/librarian for my Macintosh. I've seen Beaverton Digital Systems' ads in Transoniq Hacker, and I see that companies are providing patches in Blank or Opcode format, so those companies must have comparable products. Unless I've somehow missed it, none of these products have been reviewed in your magazine. So I have two questions here...

a) Is there any company besides those three that make ESQ software for the Mac?

b) In lieu of any in-depth reviews in TH, is there anything you can quickly tell me that would help me choose between them? Or do you know of any reviews of these products (in ANY magazine) that I could attempt to locate?

2) I've seen the ads for the products that let you put more memory in a Mirage so that an entire disk of sounds (3 banks) can be loaded at once. Do any of these memory upgrades work in the rack-mount version, or are they all only for the keyboard?

As always, thanks for a fun magazine.

Scott Harris

CompuServe 73717,1162

[TH - Scott, we assume that by now you've read Mick Seeley's review of Syntonix in last month's issue (I #33). Can't remember really seeing either Opcode or Beaverton Digital's software reviewed anywhere. Readers? Also, both of the memory expander products work on the rackmount Mirage.]

To the Interface:

I am writing to express my thanks for ironing out differences between myself and Valhala (the software company.) My problem was that in June, 1987 I had charged a \$100 piece of software on VISA and that by January, 1988 I had still not received the software. I wrote to you and you contacted Valhala, who in turn returned my money. I was also contacted by the company at this point. The representative explained that they had had trouble with the software and did not start to deliver until November, 1987. Thanks for getting my money back.

I now would like to share an undocumented feature (bug?) I found in the ESQ1. I use the ESQ as a master

controller in a multi keyboard setup and came across this by accident. First, pull up a sequence on the ESQ1 and assign one of the tracks to MIDI channel 7, MIDI mode, and assign a sound you like on the ESQ to that track. Now, go the Global MIDI section and change the keyboard to MULTI mode. Have your Mirage or other keyboard plugged into the MIDI IN of the ESQ (and the MIDI OUT of the Mirage) and set to MIDI channel 7. Okay, so you know what happens. When you call up that sequence on your ESQ, the Mirage will play that sound on the ESQ. This happens even if the ESQ is not in OMNI mode, even if the Mirage is not in OMNI mode. The undocumented feature is that the Mirage is still locked onto that voice even when you leave that sequence! The only way I have found to undo this is to switch the ESQ back into POLY mode on the Global MIDI page.

How I use this in my setup is to use the ESQ to play most all of the sounds from the ESQ and several rackmount synths that I have. The other keyboard I have on stage is a Mirage which is running under MASOS so I can dump sequences (program setups) to the ESQ. The Mirage I use for the typical sampled sounds you hear in top-40 music. The ESQ does most of the work, but sometimes I find a need to have access to more sounds than I can pull up on the ESQ keyboard at one time, and nothing that fits from my collection of Mirage disks. That's when I came up with the idea of playing the ESQ from the Mirage. For example, on one song I play a brass sound from an Oberheim Matrix-6R on the ESQ, a synth sound from the ESQ on the lower half of the Mirage, and a Mirage sample on the upper half (I sampled silence on the lower half to keep it quiet). My only qualm about this is that I'm uncertain about how much I can depend on this to always work. I would appreciate any suggestions on running the ESQ as master controller, or any other ideas on using the Mirage and ESQ in tandem. Your magazine has been a great help to me, I hope I can give others some ideas.

Sincerely yours,
Ed Perkins
Maitland, FL

[TH - While we have absolutely no desire to assume the role of "third-party police," we're glad we could help resolve your differences with Valhala. When readers write in with a serious gripe (not just, "I don't like so-and-so's sounds.") we always try to give the vendor a

chance to respond (either in print or directly to the customer).]

[Ensoniq's response - You have already discovered that each track of a sequence can receive on its own MIDI channel when the ESQ-1 is in MULTI mode. The confusion seems to be over the issue of "leaving" a sequence. If you simply go to some other (non-sequencer related) page, you haven't actually left the sequence. There is always a sequence (or song) selected on the ESQ-1, and if one of its tracks receives MIDI data, you will hear the track play that data no matter what page is showing on the display.

To really "leave" the sequence, select a different one on a Sequence Select Page. For example, you might want to create a new sequence and leave all the tracks "UNUSED." Whenever you select that sequence you can be sure that no tracks will receive anything.]

Dear Sirs:

As a professional musician, I was personally insulted by a question posed to Jim Johnson in the June issue of the Hacker (I #24). The question asked referred to the transposition of the ESQ. Perhaps a more realistic response should have been: This is a professional keyboard and direct methods of transposition were not included as part of the instrument. I also work with a variety of vocalists and play all the standard songs and then some in all keys at one time or another. The thought NEVER entered my mind to transpose the keyboard. This problem is amplified by the fact I use the ESQ as an auxiliary keyboard to a real piano. And, as we all know, a real piano cannot change pitch (spontaneously). The unwritten axiom is: if you play keyboards, you play in all keys. Another solution would be to tell your singer to experiment a little and try the tune a half step up or down. I wish those people good luck on their jobs.

Sincerely,
Woody Brubaker
Toledo, OH

[TH - Personally insulted?! We thought the whole idea behind not just electronic keyboards, but progress in general, was to make things easier and give people more choices and more ways to accomplish things. What would your grandfather say about musicians using ESQs to generate, say, horn sounds? "Learn to play a horn?" Eliminating the need for a particular skill in a particular

situation is not an attack on skill per se.]

Dear People;

I have heard from several sources now that Ensoniq does not plan on offering rackmount versions of their two new keyboards. Ensoniq's reasoning is that the new keyboard itself is vital to the operation of the machines. Am I alone in thinking that this is a ploy to sell keyboards?

Let's assume that we agree - the Poly-Key keyboards are what helps make the new machines what they are. In fact, I do like them! But what if we already have master keyboards that we are comfortable with? What if some of us just don't have the room for another keyboard, but plenty of rack space? What if some of us were planning on perhaps purchasing the EPS AND an SQ-80? Or what if those of us with MIDI virtual studios could use FIVE EPSs? That's not fantasy; it's not uncommon to find Mirage fanatics with several of those machines in their racks - the EPS promises at least as much! So who is going to buy five EPS keyboards? They would take up the whole room and cost thousands of dollars more than they have to.

What if you're a wind player? Who needs the keys?

A little arithmetic shows what an EPS might cost sans the keys and sequencer - very affordable! I hope Ensoniq reconsiders their decision to not offer rack versions. If there are others who feel as I do please let's hear from you. The new EPS, at least, sounds like a dream come true, but how many of us need another keyboard right now?

Thanks for letting me have my say. At least when we have opinions about Ensoniq products, we have a chance to work them out with TH.

Sincerely,
Ken Tkacs
Milford, CT

[TH - Actually, we've already had a few phone calls with similar comments.]

[Ensoniq's response - Both the EPS and the SQ-80 are designed first and foremost as expressive performance instruments. The loss of the Poly-Key keyboard, patch select buttons, etc. would greatly reduce their capabilities and make them less competitive products. Ensoniq is putting a great deal of time developing factory sounds which make use of these features.

Additionally, there is simply no way either the SQ-80 or EPS display/keypad can be made to fit in a standard 19-inch rackmount case. This would require us

to completely redesign the display and user interface, giving up much of the user-friendliness.

Finally, the cost difference between a keyboard version and non-keyboard version would not be that great. The metal rackmount case is quite expensive compared to our plastic keyboard case and the lower sales volume of rack products would require a higher sales margin than the keyboard products in order to recover the tooling and redesign costs.

The bottom line is that the effort to redesign both products into rackmounts is much better spent developing new products. There is absolutely NO intent to produce rack versions of either the EPS or the SQ-80.]

Dear Transoniq Hacker,

I am a guitarist/keyboardist who owns one of the very early (non-weighted keyboard) Mirages. I recently purchased an ESQ-M synth module at an outrageously low price from the folks at Roger Dodger Music here in Minneapolis, and I'm having a fantastic time finding my way around this truly incredible synth. However, as a disk-based storage type of guy, I find the Ensoniq Voice-80 cartridges (and their numerous third-party canned patch

clones) VERY tacky, not only due to the expense, but also because I inevitably find all but two or three patches completely useless! I program all my own sounds and I would prefer to download my ESQ-M sound banks to Mirage disks. I know that the Midicaster disk (from MIDI Connection) and Leaping Lizard's Iguana will give the ESQ this capability (due to its sequencer functions), but will these systems work with an ESQ-M?

Thanks for the great newsletter,
Paul T Higgins
Minneapolis, MN

[TH - Yup. Of course, if you shuffle things all around and fill up your own BLANK cartridge, then you'll have the advantages of both.

Dear Hacker,

I read David Ballo's letter in the February TH with much interest. David is hoping for someone (either Ensoniq or some third party) to add some of the features of the SQ-80 to the ESQ1 to further enhance its usefulness. As an ESQ owner as well as an electronics designer specializing in musical instruments, I'm afraid that the mods are not likely to happen.

While I'd love to have those 43 nifty

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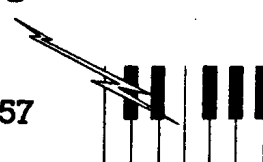
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waveforms in my trusty ESQ, this would require a major overhaul of the machine's hardware, software, and operating system. The ESQ is only designed to look at a specific amount of waveform memory, and it would take a hell of a lot of work to come up with a way to kludge in some more ROM, as well as rewrite the OS to recognize it.

On top of that, there would be some legal problems as well. You just can't walk into your local Radio Shack and buy a ROM prewritten with the waveform data. You would have to open up an SQ-80, swipe the waveform ROM, and copy the data. This is both illegal (as firmware is copyrightable), as well as highly unethical, and any company stupid enough to attempt such a stunt would find themselves in serious trouble.

What we could do, however, is get together and find someone willing to create NEW waveform ROMs for the ESQ. Get rid of that lame electric piano, change that pulse a bit, and maybe redo some of the other waves for something better. How about it, folks? Seems like this might be a lot easier to pull off at a decent price.

Sincerely,
Charles R Fischer
Mescal Music
Hercules, CA

[TH - Now, THAT sounds like a neat possibility.]

[Ensoniq's response - You've summed up the problems inherent in "turning an ESQ-1 into an SQ-80." Thank you.]

Transoniq Hacker:

Because I used "etc." in the middle of a sentence and deliberately didn't follow it with a comma (Mirage Sample Reviews, Issue #32), a statement referring to poor quality became a malicious command.

Original sentence: "Aliasing, loop clicking, etc. destroy this sound on all four programs."

As printed: "Aliasing, loop clicking, etc. Destroy this sound on all four programs."

Although neither sentence is positive in nature, I feel the original came off as a statement of opinion, whereas the other seemed like irresponsible reviewing.

Thanks for giving me the chance to correct this.

Dave Caruso
Southgate, MI

[TH - Apologies to both you and to Livewire Audio. We goofed.]

Transoniq Hacker,

I was disappointed to see space normally reserved for informative articles used for a commentary on reviews ("A Reviewer Review," by Alan Goldberg, Issue #32). This is inappropriate material for the successful format of this magazine. Although I can see the need for you to get reader response on this, maybe you should just act on it according to the number of people that write in, rather than print them as paid contributions.

Now, being a TH reviewer who escaped Mr. Goldberg's scrutiny, I have a few words in defense of the Hacker reviews. First, the words "in my opinion" are assumed for every non-factual sentence in a review. Without these non-factual sentences, you have no review. Instead, you have a prose version of a spec sheet (in which case you might as well get the spec sheet).

Secondly, because so much of a review is opinion, word choices will be subjective, and therefore hold a different meaning for each reader. Also, each reader will have his own idea about the validity of a word choice, based on his own instinct, his knowledge of the product/company, and his comparisons to comments made by the same writer in past reviews. In other words, if I watch "Siskel & Ebert" every week, and I disagree with Siskel 75% of the time, that fact alone adds an element of information to his reviews, and my reaction to them. If he says, "I hated it," I may even come to RELY on the fact that his hating the movie is an indicator that I will LIKE it. You don't have to agree with a reviewer in order for the review to be good.

Lastly, Keyboard Magazine has devoted many an editorial column to subjects such as this, where something is argued back and forth over several issues. Rather than use up our word space this way, let's continue to have TH be the information-packed magazine we read from cover to cover every month, and leave out any further submissions that don't relate to Ensoniq products and their use.

Dave Caruso
Southgate, MI

[TH - Didn't realize people were getting so tuned in to our lack-of-space problem! Most things we print are selected on a "information density" basis, but some things are also selected to try to maintain a balanced viewpoint and an open forum. We've (pre-) echoed your comments several times in this column regarding the subjective nature of reviews and the importance of using their consistency as a gauge.]

Dear Transoniq Hacker,

I thought you might like some feedback on the "New Look" of the magazine. I prefer the uncoated stock to the coated stock. I just bet that you are getting it printed on a heat-set web and are taking advantage of an open unit for some color. How about going back to the old paper and adding photos of some of the contributors instead of the gloss look? I personally look forward to the gray and black Hacker arriving in my mailbox. I don't mind desktop publishing but how about having it run out on a real typesetter (all you need is your text communicated in an ASCII file), or run out on a Linotronics 300 2040-dpi laser output device. The roughness of the 300-dpi printer bothers me a little. It's especially noticeable on the coated stock. The uncoated smooths it out a bit.

I love the Hacker! The information that I have gotten out of it is priceless. Keep up the good work. I think that the copy is top notch, and my compliments to all of the fine contributors. You've made my MIDI life a lot easier.

P.S. To 3rd party software companies - when is the Amiga software going to come out?

Robert Vernon
Thornton, CO

[TH - Well, actually the responses have been overwhelmingly in favor of the "New Look," so we'll probably be keeping it - maybe you should try reading it in poor light. You must have missed the early issues that were run off on a dot-matrix printer (much like the one you used for your letter, "cough, cough"). After that, we're pretty happy with 300 dpi! Maybe some day our resolution will go up. The frantic way this thing is put together precludes the use of outside typesetters. (Turn-around time!) We've been considering the use of photos. We don't want to start looking like People Magazine or anything, but we have decided to use an occasional ego-boo mug shot - on a space-available basis, folks. And, as for the Amiga, software vapors are starting to blow in the wind. Check out Sound Quest (last month's Hypersoniq) and Blank Software.]

Dear Hacker,

I would appreciate if you could answer my questions concerning System Exclusive messages. In addition to my ESQ-1, I work with a Mac SE, the Performer sequencing software from Mark of the Unicorn, and my interface is the Jambox 4+ (Southworth Music System). I keep my sounds with the Opcode Librarian.

I have some general questions concerning system exclusive and the ESQ1.

1. Can the ESQ1 receive a system exclusive message while playing a sequence sent by Performer? In other words, let's say a sequence on Performer is being played by the ESQ1. In the middle of the sequence, I need a sound which I rarely use (GONG, for example). I do not want to keep this sound in my internal memory, and I would like to avoid changing my RAM before every piece. I would like to be able to send via System Exclusive messages a patch to a specific location a few bars before the moment where I need this specific sound. Is this possible?

If not, could I send either a program dump or patch dump from Performer, via Jambox, to the ESQ1 before starting the sequence? Would it take a long time to do that if I'm performing?

2. I tried to send an All program dump request message to my ESQ-1 using the Send MIDI Message of my Jambox. It didn't work...Any hint on that?

3. While playing a sequence from Performer, would the ESQ be able to receive Virtual Keypads Events, via System Exclusive?

Any information on how to work with System exclusive, what is it made for, what to try and not to try, would be greatly appreciated. Thanks a lot!

I've heard good things about the SQ-80 and the EPS. Having a good computer and good sequencing software, I would like to see these fantastic machines sold as modules, and, for the SQ-80, without the sequencer. I don't like to pay for a sequencer that I don't use... Would you tell this to the big boss of Ensoniq for me? I'm sure I'm not the only one who thinks this. As far as I'm concerned, I'd buy an SQ-80 much sooner if it were sold as a module, without the sequencer. The same is true for the EPS.

I really love my ESQ and I dream of having more of their great products.

Pierre Vaillancourt
Quebec, Canada

[Ensoniq's response - There seems to be a mistaken impression that our built-in sequencers "cost a lot extra." In fact, except for the extra memory, most of the sequencer "cost" is software development. Without a sequencer, it's hard to justify the inclusion of a disk drive; so without those two features, the SQ-80 would not be an SQ-80.

Remember also that the sequencer tracks are what we use to play into the ESQ/SQ-80/EPS on different MIDI channels at once. So even if you use an external sequencer, it is the built-in sequencer that lets each of these products act like numerous "virtual"

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synthesizers.]

Dear Hackers,

Can you recommend an instructional video cassette for computer idiots like myself, to help me learn to utilize my Mirage effectively?

I especially have some difficulty making good quality samples - sometimes ANY samples!!

Thanks much,
 Ed Hoke
 Chicago, IL

[TH - M.U.G.'s Mirage Techniques videos, Vol. 1 & 2 are probably what you want - see TH review Issue #29. We don't know of any others specifically for the Mirage.]

Dear Hacker,

1. You are doing a great job! This has got to be the absolute best available support in the industry. Keep up the fine job.

2. \$20(US) is a reasonable price tag for this product.

3. \$30(US) for the same product mailed to Canada is relatively unjustified. It doesn't cost an EXTRA buck to send each issue to Canada. Why so much more? (That's well over \$40 Canuck-bucks....lotsa \$!)

4. Full marks to C. R. Fischer on the article "Build A Footswitch Adapter" It works great!

Thank you,
 Paul O'Conner
 Quebec, Canada

[TH - Actually, \$10 divided over 12 issues isn't an extra buck - more like \$0.83, which is just about what it costs. It's not just the added postage, it's also the added envelopes and added labor and hassle. Oddly enough, it costs us a little more to mail to Canada than it does to mail to Australia (or anywhere else on the planet). We send the overseas mail through a private "overseas mail service" which air ships them to England where they enter the postal system. It would be slightly cheaper to mail to Canada via this same route - but it just seems ridiculous to send them to England first. The US issues are sent via Bulk Rate. The Canadian issues we can't even send Third Class - they have to go First Class (which is even slightly more than US First Class), and they HAVE to be enclosed in envelopes. If you (or anyone who does a lot of Canadian mailing) knows of a way to cut down on this, please let us know.]

Dear Editor:

If advertisers in your magazine find it necessary to write a letter to the editor about something, or some injustice that has been done to them, I think that the copy should be edited to eliminate "free advertising." Specifically, I refer to Nick Longo's self-stroking letter in Issue #32. It is fine to respond to criticisms leveled at you or your company, but rambling on about your hundreds of satisfied customers and all of the services you provide is not appropriate copy in a letter to the editor. That is why you pay for advertising.

Sincerely,
 Alan Goldberg
 Still Voice Audio
 St. Louis Park, MN

[TH - Actually, Nick Longo's letter was shorter than most and in response to a review. We encourage our "review victims" to write a letter if they have a comment or complaint. (And, we try to keep our editing down to a minimum.) They certainly get attacked often enough in this same column.]

Dear TH,

I had my ESQ about 9 months without the Hacker and boy, did I miss out. It's like opening Christmas presents when I punch in the four Hackerpatches each month. My compliments to Doug Fietsch - he's got the sound construction art mastered, especially MATRX-6, Issue #29, and D-50, Issue #31. The ESQ sounds just keep getting better. Maybe someday I'll get the parameter manipulation down, too.

Only complaint about TH came with this issue: a reviewer review? Yeah, I know quality reviews are important but spending nearly a full page of new Hacker paper to pick at reviewer's personal writing habits is, in my opinion, really splitting hairs. Let's not get snowed under in reviewer reviewer reviews.

Second, I thought I might offer a helping hint to other beginning MIDI people, especially those using the ESQ to drive a drum machine. I own a Kawai R-100 and the instruction manual is like Japanese when compared with the easy reading of the ESQ, so I had to figure this one out on my own. Here's what was happening. I could not get the song from pattern sequences to follow the song position pointer when I selected the corresponding song on the ESQ. After many hours of wondering why blank song 87 kept showing up on the R-100 when I pushed the 3rd song on the ESQ, I discovered that by changing all my tracks to "local" on the MIDI/MIX page I was able to get the R-100 to follow the ESQ commands exactly. "Local" status also helps eliminate any

sudden volume drops on drum machines due to track volume levels less than 63. Unfortunately, the Kawai manual writers didn't think I needed to know about that, and were they ever wrong. Hope this helps somebody.

I've seen the SQ-80 and will be getting it when my meager income allows it. The disk drive is a godsend for me and other cassette data users. I would also like to see more companies offer patch sound sheets, since I've got more cartridges than I can use, and no room internally to load 40 patches at a time from cassette.

Finally, I've had the good fortune of using my ESQ to help me land some record contracts as a song writer. However, there is one little part of the contracts that makes me wonder; is it normal record industry procedure to ask a song writer to pay for "test recordings" to match the singer and the song? Since I am new at this I don't know if it's a valid request and I don't know any music industry lawyers to ask. Thanks for any help on this. I'd rather be paying for some patches or an SQ-80 than getting fleeced on "test recordings."

Keep the Hackers coming!
Dan Hobson
McPherson, KS

[TH - See our earlier comments regarding the "Reviewer Review." Thanks for the tips. Regarding the record contracts, this is a little (well, actually, a lot) out of our area but "from what we hear" this is NOT the standard way it's done. THEY pay for the test recordings. At worse, they take it out of future earnings.]

[Ensoniq's response - Assigning your tracks LOCAL status will indeed prevent sending program and volume changes to the drum machine when a new ESQ song or sequence is selected. This is a good thing to do to any track that you don't want to be sent out MIDI, as it will also prevent sending stray notes to the drum machine.

On the other hand, why your R-100 was going to Song 87 and why changing tracks to LOCAL fixed the problem is a complete mystery to us.]

Dear Transoniq Hacker People:

We all love the ESQ1, right? We all like the EPS and SQ-80. Wouldn't it be wonderful to hear Ensoniq say "Folks, you've got what you've asked for - SQ-80 waveforms we can install in your ESQ1." Happy days! More waveforms! The ability to play SQ-80 sounds on our ESQ1's. With that in mind, we could all move forward to purchasing our EPS samplers. So why don't we hear such good news? Well, not enough loyal

ESQ1 owners have asked the question to Ensoniq's R & D department.

It's great to buy the ESQ1 and its price is exceptional. I feel, however, if the factory option was available many people would be more than happy to spend the extra dollars. And many more current ESQ1 owners would do cartwheels to upgrade ESQ1 to SQ-80 waveforms! We'll pay the price and thank them all the way to the studio.

The only way we loyal ESQ1 owners have a chance to hear the good news of a waveform upgrade is to kindly let Ensoniq know how we feel. I sincerely feel that Ensoniq cares and I feel that a few thousand conscientious loyal ESQ owners sending letters may get their attention.

Sincerely,
Steven Taylor
Portland, OR

[TH - Before you go too far down this road, take a look at Charles Fischer's letter elsewhere in this issue.]

[Ensoniq's response - Unfortunately, there is no "easy" way of modifying the ESQ-1 without cutting traces, rewiring, and adding additional chips (not counting the waveform ROMs). New operating system software is also required.

While we would not object to these modifications, we cannot offer it as a factory upgrade due to the complexity involved. Also, this mod would void the factory warranty.]

Hi Hackers,

I just got my ESQ1 and have a few questions.

1. The organ sounds have a distinct layer of grit on them, particularly the "B-3" sounds, i.e., BEGONE. Is this a fault in the ESQ or the patches or both? I hope I don't have to get an FB-01 to have the B-3 sound. All other sounds seem to be great, very clean.

2. No headphone output. How could they leave the headphone jack out? Is it proper to get an adapter and plug it into the main outs, (2 1/4" male to stereo female.

3. I have a Mac Plus and want to get an editor/librarian and sequencer that will interface with the ESQ for storage/modifications of sequences and voices. In the Jan. '88 issue of TH there seems to be a void in this area in both advertising and topics. I assume Opcode or Passport must have the editor. They both have good sequencers. I want to create sequences in the ESQ environ-

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"SETTING THE STANDARDS"

ment and dump to the Mac to modify and then dump back to the ESQ for performance. I have the 20,000 note expander. In this same issue (#31) on page 29 in the response to question #5 you imply that this must be done one track at a time. If we can dump from tape, there must be software addressing this need.

Thanks for your support,
 Neville Pearsall
 Chimacum, WA

[TH - Check out Opcode, Blank Software, and Beaverton Digital for the software you're looking for.]

[Ensoniq's response - 1. It is assumed that the user will edit any patches to their liking by using the Programming Pages on the ESQ-1. However, if you want to see what else is available from Ensoniq and third parties, contact Ensoniq Customer Service.

2. It won't hurt anything, but the level will probably be low unless you use efficient, low-impedance headphones.

3. The tape interface is a self-contained mass-storage system which bears no relation to transferring data between different systems. The ESQ has no way of knowing about the track and data storage format of an external sequencer.]

Dear TH,

Sad as this may sound, the keyboard is not my primary instrument. After months of playing guitar in Waikiki, I recently acquired an ESQ1 to further my musical boundaries. Reality soon set in when I discovered that an ESQ as a first keyboard is like a Ferrari as your first car.

What I'm driving at is I am easily confused by all of the "basic fundamentals" of the ESQ1, which leaves me feeling more like a moron than a musician.

On page 16 of Issue #31 there is an ad for instructional video tapes for the Mirage keyboard. Does such a tape exist for the ESQ1? Although the manual does explain everything, I find myself drowning in a sea of computer language one page into Part 2 (the sequencer.)

Can you help?
 Robert Decker
 Honolulu, Hawaii

[TH - In Issue #32 Jim Grimes reviewed

an ESQ video cassette (\$59.95) produced by Key Clique, 3960 Laurel Canyon Blvd, Suite 374, Studio City, CA 91604. There are, in addition, several ESQ How-To books on the market, primarily from Alexander Publishing, some of which are addressed to the quivering-neophyte stage that we all go through.]

Dear Transoniq Hacker,

First of all, we would just like to congratulate you on an excellent publication. It is very informative, unbiased, and non-political. The reviewers are extremely accurate and informative. The extreme amount of praise you have received from your readers is well deserved. By the way, the new look is great!

We would also like to praise Steven Fox (Leaping Lizards) on his products. We have purchased several of his products which are not only powerful but the documentation supporting them is well written and in depth (something that is lacking in a lot of products). We would highly recommend these products and for the serious Mirage user these items should be included on your "must have" list. By the way, they are also very affordable.

Sincerely,
Michael Duhaime, Lee Graham, Alan Michaels
Softworx MIDI Systems
Bayonet Point, FL

Hi Guys,

I enjoy reading the Hacker thoroughly and was pleased to receive back issues recently. What are the chances of publishing a list of previous articles, PATCHES, reviews, projects (even ads for new products)? This would assist those of us who would like to take up the kind offer of getting photocopies of pages from people whose collections are more complete than our own.

Is there any word about whether Ensoniq will release a rackmount of the EPS? I know they would like us to have Poly Key to use it properly, but I have an SQ-80 and don't think I would miss the two extra buttons by the Mod/Pitch wheels.

L. Benny Sanders
Toronto, Canada

[TH - We'll have to leave the lists or articles, etc. to the people selling the photocopies. We really just don't have

the time - that's why we let them photocopy in the first place. At this time, Ensoniq has no plans for a rack version.]

[Ensoniq's response - See Ken Tkacs' letter in this issue.]

Dear Transoniq Hacker,

Can you please explain the rules by which greater than 8 notes played consecutively on a sequence are stolen? Also, can you recommend software for my ESQ/Atari setup which will allow me to print out sequences?

Have you had experience with the Midicaster from MIDI Connection?

Sincerely,
Paul Timmermans
Betekom, Belgium

[TH - A review on Midicaster is in the works. Early word is that it does exactly what it claims to do. For printing out sequences, we're going to be looking into Dr. T's Copyist III for our own needs (no review planned). As far as we know, it's the first Atari transcription program to have Postscript and Laserjet drivers and support standard MIDI files.]

[Ensoniq's response - The rule for voice stealing is always the same. The oldest voice playing is stolen; no matter which track is playing it or what sound it is playing.

For example:

- Track 1 plays (and sustains) a three-note chord.

- Simultaneously, Track 2 also plays a three-note chord with a different sound.

- Track 3 plays two notes.

Now all 8 voices are playing. If you (or the sequencer) play another note, the first note of the chord on Track 1 will be stolen to play the new note, because that is the oldest note playing. The next voice stolen would be the second note of the chord on Track 1, and so on.]

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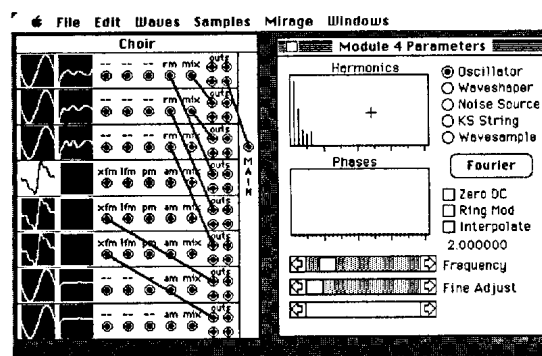
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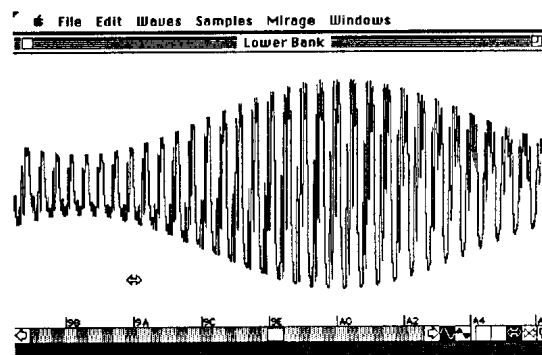
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